

St Paul's CofE Primary School

Gardon Street, Stafford ST17 4BT

Inspection dates

6–7 July 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Teaching, although improving, does not consistently challenge pupils to enable them to reach the standards that they are capable of.
- The rate of pupils' progress across the school varies too much.
- The teaching of skills to enable strong progress in grammar, punctuation and spelling is not yet consistently effective across all year groups.
- Reading activities are not sufficiently focused to stretch and develop pupils' reading skills.
- Teachers do not consistently follow the school's marking policy to ensure that pupils' work improves.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, leaders and the governing body have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Recent improvements are moving the school forward and improving teaching and outcomes.
- Other adults are skilled in supporting the learning of individuals and groups of pupils. They make a good contribution to these pupils' progress.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils feel safe in the school and say that staff look after them well.
- The school's physical education and sports activities are high quality and support the children's physical development well.
- Children get a good start in the early years. Good teaching and good leadership ensure that they achieve well and make good progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further and raise outcomes by:
 - ensuring that teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are consistently high
 - setting work at the right level of difficulty, especially for those who are most able
 - teachers enabling pupils to improve their work by consistently following the school's marking policy
 - continuing to develop the teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling, so that pupils' progress is consistent across all year groups, leading to raised standards at the end of Year 6
 - providing pupils with more opportunities for focused reading and making better use of the school reading diaries to encourage more pupils to read at home.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher is a highly determined and effective leader who has worked successfully to build a strong leadership team. In the relatively short time that he has been the substantive headteacher, he has established a positive culture, which drives continuous improvement in all areas of school life. The school has had significant changes in staffing since the time of the last inspection. The headteacher has worked hard to reduce any negative impact on pupils' progress and the staff work well as an effective team.
- The leadership and management of teaching are improving. The leadership team now checks more regularly on the quality of teaching and cross-references these observations with checks on pupils' work to develop teachers' skills and improve teaching. This is successfully raising the achievement of pupils across the school.
- The headteacher has improved systems for performance management. Teachers are held to account for the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make in their classes. Regular meetings are held to discuss pupils' progress, and staff are supported to address any underachievement.
- Leaders at all levels, including those responsible for subjects, are supported well in developing their roles and in how they use performance information to check that pupils are making good progress in each year group. Meetings with teachers to discuss the progress of individual pupils have enabled leaders to become more actively involved in school improvement. This has led to improvements in teaching in key stage 2, which have resulted in average higher expected standards under the new curriculum this year.
- Work to develop and embed the new primary national curriculum is well underway. Leaders are evaluating and reshaping the curriculum so that it better meets the needs of the pupils and, in doing so, are looking for gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. Termly topics such as 'Life' and 'Around the world' bring together aspects of many different subjects, including music and art, and are effective in capturing pupils' interests and curiosity. The wide range of extra-curricular activities like the cartoon and book clubs enhance pupils' experience and learning. There are also visits, such as the residential trip to Standon Bowers, that develop pupils' teamwork and problem-solving skills.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the school's clear vision and values, and is reflected throughout its work. Pupils learn about different world religions. For example, pupils have written and displayed biographies of famous British Muslims such as Nadiya Hussain and Mo Farah. They learn about democracy and were able to talk about the recent EU referendum. Leaders ensure that any form of discrimination is not tolerated. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The primary school physical education and sport funding is used very effectively to ensure that all pupils become more physically active. An extended range of after-school sports, such as rounders and dodge ball, increase the numbers of pupils participating. Sports coaches organise afternoon playground sports like five-a-side football and chase ball, increasing pupils' participation and improving their physical well-being.
- Pupil premium funding for pupils who have a disadvantaged background is used well. For example, these pupils benefit from additional small-group teaching and one-to-one support and assistance to ensure that they can participate in school activities such as class visits. The progress of these pupils is speeding up, and gaps in achievement with their classmates are closing.
- The local authority has supported the school well through the regular monitoring visits of an educational adviser. The school has drawn on a variety of other outside help and support. This includes specialist advice for the early years provision. It has encouraged links with other schools so that good practice can be shared to improve the work of the school.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body is actively engaged in the life of the school. Governors are linked to subject or specialist activities such as safeguarding.
 - Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses, including how it compares with other schools, how well different groups of pupils achieve and the quality of teaching. They ensure that leaders take action in the event that any teaching is weak.
 - The governors bring to their roles a wide set of qualities, such as professional skills and a good knowledge of the local community.
 - Governors carefully monitor the school's budget and spending, including the extra pupil premium funding, and can comment on the impact of the spending.
 - Governors make sure that the school meets statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Teachers' training is up to date and teachers are well

informed about the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. Leaders and managers work closely with external agencies and families to ensure the safety and well-being of children. The school helps parents and carers understand the importance of adopting safe practices, such as using the internet safely.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- The headteacher and leaders have taken action to improve teaching, which has resulted in pupils' progress accelerating. The impact of these improvements is too recent to iron out variations in pupils' progress as they move through the school. Therefore, teaching is not yet leading to consistently rapid progress for pupils to attain the standards expected for their age.
- Expectations are not consistently high and work is not set at the right level of difficulty for pupils. When this happens, pupils' learning slows down because the work is too easy and they are ready for more demanding work, especially the most able pupils.
- Teachers encourage pupils to read every day, but sometimes activities are not given a sharp enough focus or are not demanding enough. The recently introduced use of home-school link diaries has not had enough time to encourage more pupils to read regularly at home.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but not all apply the school's marking policy closely enough to ensure that pupils improve their work.
- Pupils write enthusiastically and with imagination, because teachers choose exciting resources to engage them. For instance, in a key stage 2 lesson, pupils made rapid progress in their ability to write descriptive sentences about drawings of flying frogs. Examples of the vivid sentences that they wrote are, 'The spotted frogs glided gracefully' and 'The big-eyed frogs drifted slowly'. Pupils' skills in using grammar, punctuation and spelling correctly are improving, although they are not yet consistently strong across the school because teaching does not yet fully develop pupils' skills.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving and helping pupils to secure their basic skills. For example, pupils in a key stage 1 lesson rose to the challenge and made good progress in measuring and recording different lengths accurately.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and have clear expectations of what pupils should achieve. They use questioning effectively to challenge pupils to think through questions and explain their answers in detail. Pupils are encouraged to discuss questions together and so develop their thinking skills.
- Other adults make important contributions to pupils' progress, sometimes teaching small groups and at other times providing support for individuals. Good liaison with the class teachers gives assistants a clear understanding of what is expected of them.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe in school and parents agree that the school keeps their children safe. The school site is kept secure and visitors' identities are checked carefully.
- Pupils have a high awareness of how to keep themselves safe in different situations, such as how to stay safe on the roads through the popular 'bikeability' lessons. They have an excellent understanding of how to use the internet safely and, what to do to avoid the potential dangers using social media.
- Pupils are proud of their school and carry out responsibilities eagerly and sensibly, such as helping out as play leaders. Pupils act responsibly on the playground, where they are supervised carefully. Pupils from different backgrounds enjoy each other's company and play happily together. The school buildings and grounds are free of litter, bright and filled with stimulating resources.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms bullying that can take, including those relating to race and gender. They say that it is rare but, if they ever have any concerns, there is always an adult on hand to help them.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are well equipped for their lessons and settle quickly to their work. Most books are neat and tidy. Pupils enjoy helping each other when working together on tasks and activities. They rise well to challenge and persevere, even when they are finding it difficult.

- Pupils are polite and helpful to adults in school. They were very happy to talk to inspectors about their work. Pupils willingly take on responsibility. For example, older pupils help younger ones organise their play.
- The school is effective in dealing with pupils who have behavioural difficulties. The poor behaviour of pupils has led to a few fixed-term exclusions. Through the school's support and guidance, the behaviour of these pupils has improved markedly.
- The school keeps thorough records of any incidents of poor behaviour. These show the effectiveness of the procedures for improving behaviour. Pupils respond positively to the newly established behaviour management system. The school's 'Golden five' and class rules, written in collaboration with the pupils and agreed by the school council, underpin the system.
- Attendance is above average, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school, and pupils arrive in time to school. The efforts made by the school to promote regular attendance continue to be successful.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- With small numbers in year groups, the performance of a few pupils can cause significant fluctuations in outcomes. Last year, test results at the end of key stage 2 showed that attainment dipped to below average. However, broadly, an average proportion of pupils achieved higher than expected standards under the new curriculum this year. The proportion achieving the expected standards in writing and mathematics was similar to other pupils nationally, although the proportion was lower in reading and English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Although increasing numbers of pupils across key stage 1 and 2 are making better progress, it is not yet good because it varies too much across year groups and subjects. Therefore, outcomes require improvement.
- Current pupils are set clear targets, but activities and work provided sometimes do not stretch them to reach the expected standards for their age. On occasions, most-able pupils are presented with tasks that do not allow them to deepen their knowledge, understanding or skills. For example, in science and topics, some of the most able pupils are provided with work that is similar to that of other pupils. This does not extend or challenge them sufficiently.
- Pupils get off to a good start in reading. The results of the most recent Year 1 phonics screening check show that pupils make a good start in understanding the sounds that letters represent. Pupils enjoy books and stories. However, at times pupils' reading tasks are not hard enough and they do not have enough chances to develop their reading skills in other subjects. As a consequence, pupils do not make the progress that they should in reading.
- Pupils' skills and standards of writing are improving. Pupils write well for different purposes and in different styles. However, pupils' accuracy in applying basic skills, including spelling, punctuation and grammar, is not as secure.
- A successful focus on the teaching of mathematics has accelerated pupils' progress in this subject. Pupils are becoming increasingly confident and skilled in applying their numeracy skills in solving practical mathematical problems.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress and are successfully meeting their targets. This is because the person responsible for them liaises effectively with teachers to ensure that their learning is well planned and that they receive good support from adults.
- Disadvantaged pupils progress well from their starting points. The school has been effective in improving their achievement. This has resulted in gaps in their attainment and progress, between different groups, having closed or closing rapidly across all year groups currently in school.

Early years provision

is good

- The early years provision is well led and managed, with all adults working closely together. Staff work closely with parents so that they are kept well informed and involved in their children's education. There are effective systems for checking and recording children's progress and attainment. This information is used well to plan teaching and learning.
- The school uses information from the children's pre-schools to plan activities for each child when they join the Reception class. Children settle quickly into routines and behave well, showing a desire to learn.
- The majority of children join the school with knowledge and skills that are typical for their age. By the end of Reception, children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, make good progress from

their starting points across all areas of learning and a large majority reach a good level of development. As a result, they are confident, independent learners well prepared to move into Year 1.

- Teaching is good. Children benefit from a good balance between activities led by adults and those that they themselves choose. Coupled with lots of opportunities for speaking and listening, and hands-on learning play areas, this means that children make good progress.
- Early reading and writing skills are taught well. Children quickly learn to read and to use their phonics when reading and spelling. During the inspection, children used joined-up writing and demonstrated good writing skills in their animal care plans on how to store Mr Crocodile safely on Noah's Ark, using capital letters and full stops.
- Children begin to write numerals accurately and to record simple number sentences as they learn to count, add and subtract. They enjoy making up their own challenges in mathematics. Through doing so, they demonstrate their increasing understanding of basic mathematical concepts.
- Children are safe and well cared for. Adults establish strong relationships with the children, and this leads to good behaviour. The children grow in confidence and relate well to adults and each other. Information contained in children's 'learning journals' shows that they make good progress and enjoy learning.
- Children share learning resources and take turns. The school has developed the outside area well so that children are able to work and play in stimulating surroundings.

School details

Unique reference number	124299
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10009269

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	106
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jan Boulter
Headteacher	Matthew Davies
Telephone number	01939 260306
Website	www.st-pauls-stafford.staffs.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@st-pauls-stafford.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 March 2014

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Early years provision is full-time in Reception.
- Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding to assist certain groups, which in this school applies to pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority) is below average.
- Classes are taught in mixed age groups.
- The headteacher was appointed in January 2016.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards in 2015. These are the minimum standards expected nationally for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, a representative of the local authority and the chair of governors.
- The inspector talked to parents as they brought their children to school and examined their online free text responses.
- The inspector took account of the 30 responses to the online (Parent View) questionnaire.
- The inspector considered the views of six staff who had completed the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector looked at many documents, including: the school's own information on pupils' current and recent progress; planning of work in different subjects; evidence of leaders' checking on teaching and learning quality; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding of pupils.

Inspection team

Steve Nelson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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