

Bolton Parish Church CofE Primary School

Kestor Street, Bolton, Lancashire BL2 2AN

Inspection dates

20–21 September 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics have improved. A higher than average proportion of pupils reach nationally expected standards by the time they are ready to move on to the next phase in education.
- Leaders make good use of the pupil premium funding. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils, including those who are most-able, make better than expected progress from their starting points as they move through the school.
- By the end of Year 6 there are no differences between the standards disadvantaged pupils reach and those of other pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- Teaching is good. Leaders and governors have successfully tackled a legacy of weak teaching. Staff have frequent opportunities for training and their practice is continually developing and improving.
- The teaching of phonics continues to be strong and leads to pupils' development of good reading skills and enjoyment of reading when they reach key stage 2.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use questioning well to check on pupils' understanding.
- Strong leadership in the early years ensures that children swiftly settle into school and make good progress in their learning.
- Most-able pupils who are capable of developing their writing to a greater depth do not always have enough opportunities to fully develop their skills. As a result, the progress of these pupils in writing is less rapid than it is in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress across the wider range of subjects in the curriculum is improving but is not consistently strong in every subject. This is because leaders do not apply the same rigour in monitoring other subject areas that they do to English and mathematics.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved and is good. The number of fixed-term exclusions has reduced considerably over the last two years.
- Relationships are strong. Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school and they know that teachers will listen to any concerns and are willing to help.
- Attendance and punctuality have improved as a result of the school's good support for families, working in partnership with outside agencies.
- Governance is a strength of the school. Governors are well informed on the quality of teaching and pupils' standards and progress. They are effective in holding leaders to account for these.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress of the most able pupils in writing by making sure that they have frequent opportunities across a range of subjects to write at greater depth and develop their skills to the highest possible levels.
- Improve curriculum leadership so that pupils' progress across the full range of subjects is at least as good as it is in reading, writing and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders' and governors' determined and well-focused actions to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards have been effective. Weak teaching has been eradicated. Current staff appreciate the many opportunities they have for further training and development and use these to ensure that their professional expertise and skills are continually moving on to higher levels.
- Leaders and governors rightly prioritised improving pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics, including that of disadvantaged pupils, and their actions have been successful. However, pupils' progress across other subject areas such as history, geography and computing is not yet consistently good. This is because leaders do not apply the same rigour to monitoring these other subject areas and have yet to ensure that pupils build on and develop their skills systematically.
- The curriculum is supported by a variety of clubs and activities outside school. Additionally, themed weeks, based, for example, around scientific enquiry or Shakespeare, stimulate pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Visits to a variety of interesting places, including places of worship involving a range of different religious faiths, broaden pupils' horizons, develop their confidence and support their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Support from the executive headteacher and team of staff at St Paul's Church of England Primary School Multi-Academy Trust has been pivotal in the school's improvement. This support is currently 'light touch' as school leaders now have the capacity to move the school forward independently.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Collective worship sessions give them opportunities to reflect on their own faiths, feelings and experiences and to consider their rights and responsibilities in relation to others. Pupils have good awareness of values such as courtesy, tolerance and respect for differences.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make better than expected progress. As a result, the standards disadvantaged pupils reach are in line with or above those reached by other pupils nationally with similar starting points. Equally, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive a high quality of support. This secures their good progress from their individual starting points and full inclusion in the life of the school community.
- The physical education (PE) and sport funding is used effectively to increase the range of sporting activities on offer, to increase pupils' participation in physical activity and to provide professional development that supports teachers in improving their practice in teaching PE.

Governance of the school

- Governance is a strength of the school. Governors have undertaken training and development and currently offer a high level of challenge to school leaders on pupils' standards and progress. Their support for the acting headteacher in improving the quality of teaching underpins the success of the school. Governors face real challenges in managing the school's finances so as to pay for repairs to serious structural defects within the school grounds and buildings and to secure the safety and comfort of pupils and staff.

They nevertheless ensure that resources are appropriately directed to where they will have the best possible impact in improving outcomes for pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding has a high priority in the school. Policies are fully understood and rigorously adhered to by all staff. Leaders and governors take their responsibility to prevent extremism and protect pupils from radicalisation very seriously.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The impact of leaders' investment of time and resources in improving the quality of teaching is seen in pupils' increased progress as they move through the school.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use skilful questioning to help pupils think about their learning and to check on their understanding.
- Good teaching from the earliest days in Nursery supports children in rapidly developing their language and communication skills and in gaining confidence as learners.
- Pupils build on this in key stage 1. Skilled phonics teaching helps pupils make a positive start to becoming good readers. Pupils sometimes struggle to make the step from recognising letters and sounds to actually understanding how the words fit into the context of a sentence or a story. This is improving due to the recent introduction of a scheme that supports not only secure awareness of phonics, but also the next stage of learning to read with understanding and to develop skills in writing.
- Pupils in key stage 2 enjoy reading from a wide range of books and materials and read fluently and with understanding. For those pupils needing extra help, skilled support staff provide this effectively in small, focused group sessions that are particularly helpful for pupils in the early stages of speaking English.
- The most able pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their skills in writing across the full range of subjects at a greater depth than that expected for their age. This is why the progress of the most able pupils in writing is not as strong as it is in reading and mathematics. Occasionally these pupils waste time waiting for other pupils to catch up rather than moving on to more challenging activities to deepen their learning or extend their thinking.
- Teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' work in some subjects are not as high as they are in English and mathematics. Equally, lessons in some subject areas, such as in history and geography, do not always build well on pupils' prior learning and understanding and this reduces their progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- All members of staff, including the designated safeguarding leader, have received training to safeguard pupils and this is updated regularly. Staff understand the importance of rigorously following policies and procedures and recognise the signs that pupils may be vulnerable to abuse or radicalisation from extremist groups.
- Systematic checks are carried out on new members of staff, governors and regular visitors

to the school. As a result, pupils at Bolton Parish CofE Primary School are very safe in school.

- Leaders have developed a school-wide climate of tolerance and respect. They encourage pupils to value differences in views and cultures. Pupils know the school's Christian values of 'respect, love, friendship, forgiveness and peace' and that these values are held in common with those of other faiths and religions.
- Pupils say that on rare occasions there is some bullying or incidents of racist or homophobic name-calling. Equally they say that this is never tolerated and staff will always put a stop to it immediately.
- Attendance is slightly below average but has improved significantly over time. Leaders work well in partnership with outside agencies to support families in understanding the importance of attending regularly and bringing their children to school on time every day. Attendance awards give pupils an added incentive to make sure that they come to school unless they are ill.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders ensure that the school's behaviour policy is consistently applied throughout the school. Pupils know that they are treated fairly and trust that the adults in school will listen to any concerns and make sure that they receive any necessary help and support. Parents feel welcome in school where they know that their children are safe and happy.
- Most pupils are self-assured and confident learners. Disruptions to learning are rare because pupils know that this is unacceptable and the vast majority of pupils are really keen to learn.
- Pupils are polite and courteous. Behaviour is generally sensible in and around the school buildings. Pupils play well together at breaks and lunchtimes. Incidents of poor behaviour have decreased considerably over the last two years, as has the number of fixed-term exclusions.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe from harm. They are aware of e-safety and understand the dangers of giving out personal information on the internet.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have improved over the last two years. The school's information and preliminary outcomes from the 2016 national tests at the end of key stage 2 show that the proportion of pupils reaching expected standards or above in reading, writing and mathematics is above average.
- The proportion of the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, reaching beyond expected standards is well above average in mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling, and average in reading. It is slightly below average in writing because there are not always enough opportunities for these pupils to write at greater depth across the curriculum.
- Work sampled from pupils' books from the previous academic year, as well as that completed in the few days since the beginning of term, show that pupils currently in the school are making good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.

- The progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is better than expected from their individual starting points because they regularly have good support in the classroom as well as additional focused activities when needed. Similarly, pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress from their starting points.
- By the end of Year 6 there are no differences in the standards reached by disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- Improved provision for children in the early years means that the proportion of children reaching expected levels of skills and development at the end of the Reception Year has increased significantly over time. In 2016, three quarters of children reached the standards required to prepare them to access the Year 1 curriculum. In 2014, only a third of pupils reached these standards.
- Similarly, the proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in the Year 1 phonics check has improved. In 2016, 89% of pupils in the cohort reached the standard and are well on the way to becoming good readers.
- Progress in some foundation subjects, such as history and geography, is not as strong as in other subjects because the tasks set are not always demanding enough, particularly for the most able pupils.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter Nursery from a wide range of starting points, but their levels of language and communication skills are generally lower than those typically found for this age.
- The learning environment is vibrant and stimulating for young learners and makes them really eager to learn and play together, both indoors and outdoors. The 'mud kitchen' is a particular favourite with the children where they thoroughly enjoy messy play that supports their good physical development and learning about nature.
- Good teaching means that children make good progress in all areas of learning. The proportion of disadvantaged children reaching the expected standards at the end of the Reception Year is lower than that of other children nationally. However, these children benefit from high-quality support that is particularly effective in their development of language and communication skills, and the differences in outcomes are reducing over time.
- The early years is well led and managed. The leader knows the strengths and areas that need to improve because she makes effective use of observation and assessment information. She identified writing as an area to work on and took swift action to raise the profile of writing throughout the unit that is already having a positive impact on standards. The 'Fairy Garden', where children write letters to the fairies and receive a written response the following morning, is just one example of an engaging activity to entice children to enjoy writing frequently.
- Adults are skilled in intervening to extend learning and help children to think creatively. At the same time, they know when to let children continue their own learning and make choices that help them to become more independent.
- Relationships with parents are strong. Parents typically comment on their welcome in the school and the good level of information they receive on children's progress. The weekly 'stay and play' sessions are always well attended with younger siblings invited to come along too. This supports them in settling into school quickly when they are old enough to

attend Nursery.

School details

Unique reference number	105229
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10019795

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Wallington
Headteacher	Debra Meekings
Telephone number	01204 333433
Website	www.bolton-parish.bolton.sch.uk
Email address	meekingsd@bolton-parish.bolton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 September 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Children in the early years receive full-time education in the Reception class and part-time education in the Nursery class.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The school meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Four teachers are newly appointed to the school this term, including the assistant

headteacher.

- The school is led by an acting headteacher who has been seconded from St Paul's Church of England Primary School Multi-Academy Trust since September 2014. Over the last two and a half years, the executive headteacher of St Paul's and her team have supported the school in a number of ways. These include sharing good practice to improve the quality of teaching, and providing support to implement the revised curriculum and to improve pupils' behaviour.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a wide range of learning activities across all key stages, including in the early years and in a range of subjects. Two lesson observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher. Pupils' books from different year groups and subjects were looked at, including those of pupils who moved on from the school at the end of Year 6 in July 2016.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other school leaders. Inspectors met with seven members of the governing body. A meeting was held with a local authority representative. Inspectors also met with groups of pupils and spoke to pupils informally throughout the inspection.
- There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, for inspectors to take into account. Inspectors considered parents' opinions through informal discussions with a group of parents at the start of the school day, the free-text question responses from parents following the announcement of the inspection and a survey of parents carried out by school leaders in February 2016. Inspectors reviewed the 12 staff surveys and 15 pupil surveys completed online during the inspection.
- The inspection team studied information about achievement and the assessment of learning. They examined any records relating to behaviour and attendance, and looked at a range of other documents used by leaders to monitor and evaluate the school's work.
- A review of safeguarding records and procedures was carried out.

Inspection team

Jan Corlett, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ann Dimeck	Ofsted Inspector

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