

St Paul's CofE Primary School

Hindle Drive, Royton, Oldham, Lancashire OL2 5LU

Inspection dates

21–22 March 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders, including governors, have not ensured that pupils make consistently good progress during their time at St Paul's. They have not devised effective assessment systems that capture pupils' attainment and progress with sufficient detail or accuracy.
- Senior leaders do not reliably check that their actions and those of middle leaders are making a difference.
- Outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics have declined. In 2016, they were low in comparison with national figures at the end of key stages 1 and 2. Too many disadvantaged pupils underachieved, including the most able.
- Inconsistencies in teaching mean that pupils make variable progress, with too few reaching the higher standards.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to use and apply their skills in English and mathematics in other subject areas.
- Teachers do not make best use of the time available. Learning slows as pupils wait to get started.
- Expectations of pupils' behaviour and the quality and presentation of their work vary across classes and subjects.
- Provision for pupils in the early years requires improvement. There is too much variability between the Nursery and Reception classes.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has an honest and accurate understanding of the school's performance. She is working on the right priorities for improvement.
- Recent interventions from the local authority and additional support for leadership have strengthened the provision. As a result, pupils are making better progress in reading.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered around the school.
- Leaders use the primary physical education and sport funding effectively. Specialist teaching has encouraged pupils to access a wide variety of activities indoors and outside. Pupils are engaging in more competitive sports.
- Leaders have successfully created a caring ethos. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - assessment systems capture the attainment and progress of all groups of pupils so that challenge and support is targeted appropriately
 - governors use information about pupils' progress more effectively to hold the school to account and offer sharper challenge to school leaders, including middle leaders, about the outcomes achieved by different groups
 - teachers have the skills and strategies necessary to ensure good behaviour for learning in all lessons
 - the school's website meets statutory requirements and provides parents with regular and relevant information about the school
 - additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is well managed and spent wisely to improve outcomes for these pupils, including those who are most able.

- Improve outcomes in English and mathematics across the school, including in the early years, by ensuring that:
 - pupils are given meaningful opportunities to use and apply their reading, writing and mathematical skills across all areas of the curriculum
 - teachers regularly offer opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical reasoning and use their skills to solve problems and investigations.

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and, as a result, raise standards in all phases by ensuring that:
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils are able to achieve
 - teachers have high expectations of the quality and presentation of pupils' work in books across the curriculum
 - all available teaching time is used effectively to promote learning
 - adults check on how well pupils are learning so that they can quickly help those who are struggling and offer greater challenge to pupils who are secure in their understanding.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that teaching or pupils' outcomes are consistently good. Consequently, leadership and management require improvement.
- High levels of staff changes have slowed the rate of improvement at the school. The headteacher is new to the school but has an accurate picture of the school's performance. She has brought an ambitious culture to the school and begun to tackle the most pressing areas that require improvement.
- Leaders have not ensured that assessment systems are sufficiently accurate or robust. As a result, leaders and teachers do not always have the necessary information to ensure that work is set for pupils at the right level. Teachers' expectations are not high enough and inconsistencies in teaching remain. Progress and attainment are too variable, especially for the disadvantaged and the most able pupils.
- Most middle leaders are new to their posts and it is too soon to demonstrate any long-term impact that they might have had on pupils' learning or outcomes. Current training is enabling leaders to improve their skills and share their expertise. For example, the teaching of phonics is more effective because leaders have introduced an agreed approach for the sessions that all staff are following. However, leaders have not as yet challenged and supported staff to address the variability in practice and in pupils' outcomes in other areas.
- Leaders successfully enrich the curriculum and make meaningful links between subjects through topics, themes and visits. These broaden pupils' experiences, make learning interesting and are helping to tackle a legacy of underachievement in English and mathematics. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use and extend their reading, writing and mathematical skills in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is not sufficiently focused or prioritised. Actions are very general, too broad, and improvement plans do not explain how the impact of the funding will be evaluated. Results in pupils' progress show that the impact is uneven across the school.
- Recent external support has been effective in identifying weaknesses at the school and in bringing about improvements. Following a request from governors, the local authority has brokered additional leadership challenge and support. A local headteacher who is a local leader of education (LLE) worked alongside an interim headteacher during the autumn term of 2016. This support has been supplemented with leadership support and training provided by a local teaching school. These collaborations have brought about improvements to assessment systems and the teaching of phonics but they need time to embed.
- Sports funding has been used effectively to provide specialist teaching which has had a positive impact on raising the quality of the provision, the popularity of physical education and training for class teachers. More pupils are joining after-school sports clubs and participating in competitive sport.
- Additional funding for pupils who have special educational need and/or disabilities is

used well. Pupils in the designated resource classes benefit from intensive, specialist support from teachers and other staff.

- Managing the performance of teachers is more stringent this year than in the past. Reviews are directly linked to the teachers' standards and the progress that pupils make. The recent emphasis on staff training and improving teachers' subject knowledge is paying dividends. For example, staff talk about their growing confidence when teaching problem solving in mathematics with older pupils.
- Leaders' work to promote pupils' rights, respect and responsibilities is evident throughout the school. Pupils are tolerant and respectful of each other and of adults. They talk with understanding about the need to respect other cultures and viewpoints. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils is developed well and pupils show a growing understanding of core British values.
- The headteacher has rapidly established a positive ethos and shared vision about how the school will improve. Her openness and honesty has earned the backing of pupils, staff and governors. A large majority of parents who spoke to the inspectors, completed the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, or who wrote directly had similar views. 'The changes she has introduced are already making a difference' is typical of the comments received.

Governance of the school

- Over time, governors have not held leaders to account for ensuring that the quality of teaching and learning, and pupils' outcomes, is consistently good. Governors have not monitored the deployment of the pupil premium grant well enough.
- Governors have not ensured that the school's website meets requirements. It includes information which is out of date; for example, key stage 2 results refer to pupil outcomes in 2015. The website does not include an evaluation of the impact of pupil premium funding spending on pupils' outcomes for 2016.
- Governance has started to improve within the last year. Governors made the right decision to seek external support to tackle a decline in standards.
- Governors have recently attended suitable training to update their skills, and this is enabling them to fulfil their responsibilities more effectively. For example, their meetings with school leaders and teachers now focus directly on improvements in pupils' progress.
- Governors have a frank and accurate view of the school's performance. The recently appointed chair of the governing body is ambitious for all pupils and is aware of the weaknesses that need to be addressed. The priorities for improvement agreed with the school leaders are the right ones.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders, governors and staff are vigilant in keeping pupils safe. They collaborate successfully to ensure that the school's safeguarding culture is secure.

- Staff are well briefed and have received recent, relevant training on safeguarding which follows the most recent national guidance. Staff are fully aware of the procedures to follow should they have any concerns about the safety or care of pupils.
- The school works effectively with local agencies to ensure that vulnerable children and their families are identified and supported. Leaders successfully engage with parents and carers to make sure that children are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment are too variable to be good. Inconsistent teaching and frequent staff changes have resulted in some pupils underachieving. Not all pupils are making the progress that should be expected of them. In particular, disadvantaged pupils and the most able are not reliably challenged or supported to improve rapidly.
- Recent improvements in assessment procedures are enabling teachers to track pupils' progress more accurately. However, staff are not using this information well enough to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Consequently, teachers do not regularly plan sufficiently challenging work for the most able pupils. For example, in English lessons, pupils often find the extension tasks too easy and complete them quickly. Their progress stalls because they are not working at the level of which they are capable. This helps to explain why too few pupils reach the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stages 1 and 2.
- Pupils in key stage 1 and the Reception class regularly move between classes, for example as they join their phonics groups each day. Time is wasted as they wait for others to join them. Transition periods such as these take too long and valuable teaching and learning time is lost.
- Pupils' workbooks show a variable picture of progress and quality. Not all teachers insist on pupils making their best effort in all subjects or taking pride in their presentation. Books also confirm that pupils have too few opportunities to use and apply their writing skills in subjects other than English.
- The teaching of mathematics across the school is inconsistent. In some classes, pupils' learning consists almost exclusively of working through different number operations. This gets in the way of attempts to encourage problem solving. However, where progressively more difficult challenges are embedded in classroom routines and teachers' expectations are consistently high, pupils of all abilities benefit and make rapid progress, for example in Year 2. In these instances, pupils are not afraid to make mistakes but confidently explain 'that's how we learn to get better'.
- Many pupils read well and love to talk about books that they have enjoyed. Improvements in the teaching of phonics in Year 1 are having a positive impact. Younger children can sound out words accurately and use this knowledge to help them read new words with confidence. In key stage 2, pupils' love of reading is growing and many show good levels of fluency and a range of comprehensions skills. This is reflected in steadily improving outcomes for reading during this academic year. Pupils understand the importance of reading to gain an understanding of areas of the curriculum.
- The quality of support provided by teaching assistants is good. High-quality support is

provided for all pupils, including those in resource classes who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are not as well prepared for their next stage of education as they should be. In some classes, pupils are over-dependent on adults to help them when they find work difficult. On these occasions, pupils do not have the skills or confidence to tackle new learning. Inconsistent teaching in classes across the school results in some pupils finding it difficult to maintain concentration.
- Where teaching is stronger and expectations of what pupils can achieve are higher, pupils flourish. In these classes pupils are confident and have a greater understanding of their critical role in the learning process.
- Pupils say that they feel safe, like their school and are proud of it. Health and safety monitors are selected in each class and they take their responsibilities seriously, drawing up risk assessments for their class. For example, one group explained that risks associated with 'fingers being trodden on as we sit on the carpet' could be avoided by 'keeping our hands on our laps'.
- Pupils understand the importance of e-safety and know what to do if they encounter anything that worries them online or when they are using mobile phones. They say that their recent training sessions in e-safety have left them feeling well equipped to deal with any incidents that they might encounter.
- Pupils report that bullying does happen in the school, but only rarely. They are confident that any misbehaviour will be dealt with firmly and fairly. They report that adults listen to them carefully and will help them to resolve any concerns that they might have.
- Pupils speak positively about how they are able to become more involved in making decisions about their school through the school council. They comment that the recently introduced house system and emphasis on rewards 'is much fairer and encourages us to try even harder'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- In a minority of classes, when the learning does not motivate them, pupils sometimes become distracted. Some teachers' expectations of behaviour are too low, and they do not deal with off-task behaviour quickly or consistently enough.
- Conversely, pupils' behaviour around the school, and in the majority of classes, is good. Pupils are polite, courteous and demonstrate good manners. Most pupils encapsulate the school's motto, 'Keep shining at St Paul's', as they go about their

everyday tasks in a cheerful manner.

- Pupils attend regularly and arrive on time. The incidents of persistent absence were high in the last school year. These have been halved during this year because school leaders have introduced more rigorous systems to follow up on any absences.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2016, pupils' attainment was well below the national average in all subjects at the end of key stages 1 and 2 and was particularly low in writing. Pupils did not make enough progress from their starting points and too many underachieved. This included disadvantaged pupils and the most able.
- Too few pupils achieved the higher standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 in 2016. Differences were particularly stark in writing and mathematics, with no pupil achieving greater depth in these subjects. The most able pupils underachieved and did not make the progress that they should.
- Evidence from the school's assessment information and confirmed by the work in pupils' books shows that current pupils are making stronger progress overall in reading, writing and mathematics. From different starting points, pupils' knowledge and skills are improving. However, variability in teaching means that progress for current cohorts remains inconsistent. Progress is still not as rapid as it should be for the most able pupils. Pupils are given too few opportunities to use and apply their knowledge of English and mathematics in other subjects of the curriculum.
- Disadvantaged pupils did much less well than other pupils nationally in 2016. This year their progress is improving in reading, writing and mathematics. There is now a smaller difference between their attainment and that of other pupils. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are also making similar progress to other pupils with the same starting points.
- Current pupils are making better progress in reading. Most enjoy books, talk confidently about what they have read and show good comprehension skills. Pupils are usually able to use their phonics knowledge to read unfamiliar words.
- Outcomes in the phonics screening check in 2016 dipped and attainment for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, was below average. However, pupils are learning phonics more successfully this year because of better teaching and a redesigned curriculum that meets their needs more closely.
- Pupils in the additional resource provision classes are making steady progress in English and mathematics. They are well supported and provided with appropriate levels of challenge by the skilled adults who work with them. Individual needs are clearly identified and pupils are provided with the necessary tools and resources to access the full curriculum.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management of the early years provision requires improvement.
- Staff changes and absences during this school year have had a disruptive effect. Leaders currently hold insufficient evidence about children's learning and progress to make a secure judgement on children's outcomes. Children's work does not show clearly enough how much progress they have made since the start of the current academic year.
- Children join Nursery with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. In 2016, the proportion of children who reached a good level of development by the end of the early years was close to the national average. However, leaders do not make comparisons with the full range of national data available in order to evaluate how well the early years is performing in all areas. This means that leaders are not fully informed about potential issues relating to the achievement of different groups of children.
- Teaching and learning across the early years is variable. It is stronger in Nursery where there is greater staff stability. Here, children enjoy access to a well-organised learning environment. They grow in confidence, learn to share and are developing a love of books. Daily stories are discussed and children's speaking and listening skills are developing well.
- Children's learning in the Reception class is more variable, not helped by staff changes. Much work has gone into improving the teaching of phonics, which is starting to pay off. Children are enthusiastic as they talk about the books that they read. However, time is wasted as children move between groups and join children in other classes to begin their phonics lessons.
- Relationships between children and staff are strong. Children show no concerns and are confident in their learning. They are steadily acquiring the necessary skills to do things for themselves. Despite current weaknesses in assessment and tracking of children's progress, observations of current Reception pupils at work indicate that they are reasonably well prepared to start Year 1.
- Behaviour of pupils is better in Nursery than Reception, where some children find it difficult to settle to an activity, especially when they are required to listen for long periods. A few become fidgety and drift from area to area. This adversely affects their learning and the progress that they make.
- Some parents are rightly concerned about staffing disruption and absences in the early years. The headteacher has met with parents and started to address the concerns that they have raised. Parents welcome the openness and honesty that she has brought to the discussions. It is too early to evaluate whether the changes that she has made in the early years have been effective.
- Children are well looked after. Staff give children's safety a high priority and make sure that statutory welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	131848
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10024322

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided/Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Wood
Headteacher	Hilary Henderson
Telephone number	0161 624 9019
Website	http://www.stpauls-school.co.uk/
Email address	head@stpauls.oldham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 October 2012

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website about key stage 2 results for 2016 and the impact of pupil premium funding spending on pupils' outcomes for 2016.
- The school is slightly smaller than the average primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is slightly below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and who are receiving support is above the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs and/or disabilities and an education, health and care plan is well above average.
- The school houses a resource base for pupils with speech and language difficulties and autism. Pupils transfer to this unit from schools across Oldham and when they arrive join St Paul's school roll.
- Since the last inspection there have been changes in school leadership. An interim headteacher was in post for the autumn term 2016. The current headteacher took up her post in January 2017.
- A new chair of governors was appointed in 2016.
- The school receives leadership support from two local primary schools. This was brokered through the local authority.
- In 2016, the school did not meet the national floor targets for pupils' achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Teaching and learning were observed across classes and key stages. During day one of the inspection, observations were conducted jointly by the lead inspector and the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, phase and subject leaders, as well as governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors also met with a representative from the local authority and two headteachers who were providing support for the school.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, scrutinised their work and talked informally with pupils during breaktimes. The views of pupils were also considered during more formal discussions with inspectors. The 23 responses made by pupils to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire were taken into account.
- A wide range of the school's own information and documentation was studied, including the self-evaluation, improvement plans and records of the checks made on teaching and learning. Information about the performance management of staff and safeguarding practices was also examined, alongside policy documentation.
- The opinions of staff were taken into account via 15 responses made to Ofsted's questionnaire and through formal and informal discussions.
- The 29 views expressed by parents in the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, were examined. Comments from parents communicated via free text, in letters submitted via the school and in face-to-face discussions during the inspection were also considered.

Inspection team

Mike Hewlett, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector
Joan Williamson	Ofsted Inspector

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