

# St Paul's Roman Catholic Primary School

Pemros Road, St Budeaux, Plymouth, Devon PL5 1NE

## Inspection dates

21–22 March 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The school has improved rapidly under the strong leadership of the new headteacher and her team. Teaching has improved and pupils are making rapid progress. The school's leaders have the confidence of governors, parents and pupils.
- Governors have an in-depth knowledge of the school. They support and challenge the leadership on all areas of school improvement.
- Teachers are very supportive of the changes made. The headteacher has ensured that new, higher expectations are shared by nearly all staff.
- In a very small minority of classes, teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve.
- While pupils are now making more progress, standards are not yet as high as they could be, particularly in writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils receive good support and, in nearly all year groups and subjects, are making progress at a rate similar to other pupils.
- Children in the Reception class get off to a good start. They enjoy coming to school and are well taught, so they are ready to move on to Year 1.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive well-planned, targeted support and make good progress from their different starting points.
- Teachers plan interesting lessons and activities and pupils enjoy their learning. Teachers closely monitor progress and, supported by school leaders, give extra help to those who need to catch up.
- Pupils are well behaved and pay attention in lessons. They have good attitudes to learning.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are good. Pupils feel safe and know that adults will help and protect them.
- A very large majority of pupils and parents say that bullying is rare but, if it does occur, is dealt with well by the school.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers have the highest expectations of what all pupils, particularly the most able, can achieve so they make better progress and catch up on historic underachievement.
- Raise the standards in writing across the school by:
  - developing pupils' writing in different subjects and across the curriculum
  - improving pupils' handwriting and presentation.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The new headteacher and middle leaders are leading the school very effectively. Their positive attitudes and high standards are shared with teachers and pupils, resulting in a strong learning ethos. Leaders have the confidence of governors, parents and pupils. Several parents commented on how much the school has improved, while pupils said that behaviour is better and learning 'more organised'.
- The headteacher has strengthened the leadership team. All leaders are involved in analysing data, checking the quality of work in pupils' books and making sure that teachers' planning is appropriate. This is ensuring that high standards are consistent across the school. Middle leaders have worked successfully with other schools to develop their expertise.
- The headteacher has high expectations. She has ensured that nearly all staff share these expectations and are committed to the school's improvement. Staff are proud of how far the school has improved. Previous underperformance has been tackled robustly.
- Leaders manage the performance of teachers very well. Weak teaching has been robustly addressed, and leaders have ensured that teaching is now of a good standard. Leaders closely monitor all aspects of teaching and learning and have a good understanding of the strengths and relative weaknesses. They ensure that staff training is regular and closely matched to the needs of the school and individual teachers.
- Leaders check the work in pupils' books to ensure that progress is being maintained, and they have regular meetings with teachers to discuss the needs of individual pupils. Leaders act swiftly to address identified weaknesses. For example, they have introduced new mental mathematics activities to provide pupils with more opportunities to apply their mathematical understanding.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils are taught through themes which are carefully planned to ensure that pupils' learning covers a wide range of subjects. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their current theme of 'Architects'. They have been learning in some depth about the related topics and were able to tell the inspector what they now knew about people, buildings and bridges. Pupils demonstrate scientific skills and knowledge in line with expectations for their age. For example, pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of electricity and digestion. Key stage 2 pupils learn French with a specialist teacher. As well as developing their comprehension and listening skills, they have been comparing and contrasting life in France and Britain.
- The pupil premium is spent well to support disadvantaged pupils. Extra help given in lessons enables pupils to make good progress. The school ensures that disadvantaged pupils have the same opportunities to participate in activities as other pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities also benefit from well-targeted support. The school uses staff and resources well to enable this group of pupils to make good progress from their different starting points.
- The sport premium funding is used effectively to engage more pupils in a wide range of sporting activities and to develop teachers' skills. The school has annual visits from

the Birmingham Royal Ballet and this has resulted in a large increase in participation in dance club for both boys and girls.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strong feature of the school. Spiritual development is linked to the school's identity as a Catholic school with opportunities for reflection built into the school day. Pupils are taught about other faiths and cultures in a respectful way. Their social development is reflected in their confidence and friendliness, and the respect they show to adults and other pupils. They listen to each other in group work and to the teacher in lessons. Pupils are sensible and considerate when moving around the school and at playtimes.
- The school teaches British values, for example democracy and respect for the rule of law, through a range of thought-provoking activities. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 recently visited the Houses of Parliament; local councillors and the Member of Parliament are regular visitors.
- St Paul's has developed close links with a school in Uganda and, through this, pupils in both schools are involved in a joint project about growing food. This is developing pupils' understanding of, and respect for, other cultures.
- The school has received effective support from the academy trust and from other local schools. Senior and middle leaders commented that working with other schools has been helpful in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governance of the school is good. Governors' evaluation of the school's performance is accurate and they have a clear picture of its strengths and weaknesses. In partnership with the headteacher, governors have correctly identified the priorities which will improve the school further.
- Governors understand school performance data well and use this to hold school leaders to account for the progress made by different groups of pupils. They closely monitor where extra support is given and the impact this additional help is having on improving outcomes; for example, the effectiveness of pupil premium spending. Governors check the accuracy of information they are given through regular visits to the school.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Parents are confident that their children are kept safe in school and it is apparent that the school has a well-developed culture of safeguarding.
- Governors work closely with school leaders to ensure that pupils are kept safe. They understand their safeguarding responsibilities and all staff and governors have undertaken the appropriate training. All those spoken to knew what they should do and who to speak to if they have any concerns. Record-keeping is good and leaders check that everybody who works with children is suitable to do so.
- At playtimes and lunchtimes, there is a good level of adult supervision. The school buildings are clean and well maintained.
- Vulnerable children are well supported. The school works effectively with outside

agencies and records are up to date and comprehensive.

- Pupils are taught how to stay safe online; for example, they were able to tell an inspector why it is important not to divulge personal information.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly. They use the information to track their pupils' progress and decide if the pupil would benefit from any extra help to speed up their learning. Teachers are confident that their judgements are correct because of these in-school discussions, and through their work with other schools.
- Teachers know their pupils well. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive additional help which is closely matched to their needs. Typically, this is planned by the teacher and implemented by trained teaching assistants and is enabling pupils to make good progress.
- Teachers generally plan learning at an appropriate level based on pupils' skills and knowledge. At times, however, teachers in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2 do not have sufficiently high expectations of the most able pupils and, as a result, they are not challenged to work at the higher levels.
- The teaching of phonics is well planned and closely matched to pupils' reading levels. Phonics teaching mostly happens in Reception and Years 1 and 2, but pupils continue to develop their use of phonics across the school.
- Staff closely monitor what pupils are reading and measure the progress they are making. They encourage pupils to read regularly at home. However, they do not sufficiently check the level of challenge books provide for the most fluent readers and, as a result, these readers do not make the progress they are capable of.
- Good writing is celebrated each week in assembly and pupils who show commitment to improving their presentation are rewarded. In a very small number of classes, however, teachers do not insist on sufficiently high standards of presentation. This sometimes results in a lack of clarity in pupils' answers. Pupils also have few opportunities for writing across the curriculum and integrating the skills they learn in English lessons, for example in report writing, into written work in other subjects.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They spark pupils' interest through clear explanations and the use of stimulating resources. For example, pupils were thoroughly engaged in learning about earthquakes, tectonic plates and how to identify different types of rock.
- Teachers give effective feedback both orally and in writing. This ensures that pupils know how to improve their work. Year 6 pupils explained how English and mathematics targets help them know how to improve.
- Teachers plan interesting lessons and activities, resulting in pupils having positive attitudes to learning. The inspectors saw a high level of engagement and good behaviour in lessons.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Good**

## Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Staff know their pupils very well and make sure they are well looked after. This view is shared by pupils and their parents.
- Systems for protecting children are in place and any concerns are recorded and quickly acted on. Record-keeping is good and incidents are always followed up and reported to governors.
- Disadvantaged pupils are well supported, and a group of disadvantaged pupils told the inspector that their teacher gives them extra help.
- Bullying is rare and when it occurs it is quickly dealt with. Pupils have confidence that adults will 'sort things out'.
- Pupils are enthusiastic learners and enjoy their lessons.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons, pupils are usually attentive and get on with their work.
- Behaviour at lunchtimes and playtimes is good. Pupils have plenty of space and equipment to play on, and the footballers took reasonable care not to impinge on the other pupils. There is a good level of supervision. On returning into school pupils move between classes and lessons in a sensible way.
- Pupils are well behaved and attentive in assembly.
- Adults are polite and friendly to pupils and, as a result, pupils are polite and friendly to adults and to each other. Pupils share equipment sensibly.
- Attendance has improved and, so far this year, is broadly in line with the national average. Attendance for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved, but is still lower than the national figure. This is due to the low attendance of a very small number of pupils with specific needs. The school has successfully implemented a wide range of strategies, including working with outside agencies, to improve attendance for these few pupils.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Children start school with skills and knowledge below that typical for their age. They make good progress in the Reception class and, by the time they move on to Year 1, are in line with other children nationally in all areas except writing, where they are still behind national expectations. Boys and girls and those pupils eligible for free school meals perform at a similar level to other children.
- Year 1 pupils attained well in the 2016 phonics screening check, as did those who needed to catch up with phonics by the end of Year 2. Current pupils are on track to attain well again this year.
- Pupils currently in the school make good progress, and this is evident in their books. There has been a historic legacy of underachievement which school leaders have

successfully addressed. However, there has not been sufficient time for these changes to be fully reflected in the 2016 national assessment results.

- In 2016, end of key stage 1 assessments showed that pupils were broadly in line with national figures in reading and mathematics, but behind in writing. There was only a very small proportion of disadvantaged pupils in this group, and few with previous high attainment.
- In 2016, the proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining the expected level in reading, writing, mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling was below the national averages. The proportion was also lower for those attaining the higher standard in writing, mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling, but broadly in line for reading. This cohort had achieved scores significantly below the national averages at the end of key stage 1. Consequently, progress measures for reading and writing were broadly in line with national figures but below for mathematics.
- The current picture is much stronger. Changes made by the new leadership have effectively addressed the history of previous underachievement. As a result, reading, writing and mathematics progress for pupils currently in the school is faster than in previous years. This is shown in the school's tracking of pupils' progress and supported by work in pupils' books, where there is evidence of rapid progress. Teachers insist on higher standards and are challenging pupils with work more accurately aligned to their needs.
- Across the school, the most able pupils generally make good progress and are working at a level higher than that expected for their age. However, a small number of teachers do not yet have sufficiently high expectations of what their pupils can achieve and this results in pupils making less progress than they are capable of.
- School leaders spend the additional pupil premium funding well to support pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are now making rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics, enabling them to diminish the difference with other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who are behind and need to catch up quickly are well supported to make good progress. The school closely monitors how well they are doing and ensures extra help is given as required.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress from their different starting points; this includes pupils who have complex needs or significant learning disabilities. This group of pupils is well supported by the school, which works closely with external professionals.
- Arrangements for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to transfer successfully to secondary school are particularly good. Pupils are well supported with practical tasks like using a timetable and catching transport to school.

## Early years provision

Good

- Provision for children in the Reception class is good.
- The teacher and other Reception staff know the children very well. They assess them when they join the school and carefully monitor their progress. Extra help is put in place for those children who need it, and this enables teachers to accurately address gaps in children's knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Staff plan enjoyable activities which develop skills across the whole curriculum: physical, social and emotional as well as academic learning. As a result, children make good progress. Language development is a priority and opportunities are planned to help children to speak fluently, develop their vocabulary and to speak in sentences rather than give one-word responses.
- Staff keep parents well informed and provide useful information about how parents can support their child's learning at home. Parents know that they are welcome in school to see their child's work.
- Parents said that their children are happy in the Reception class and that arrangements for starting school were good. Most would unhesitatingly recommend the school to others.
- Staff have an accurate understanding of children's individual needs and make sure they are addressed through putting the appropriate support in place. This leads to good progress for vulnerable children, including those who are eligible for additional funding.
- School leaders and the local authority provide effective support for the early years staff, and this is ensuring high-quality provision. The Reception class is well led. All adults have a clear understanding of expectations and their role in children's learning.
- Children's behaviour is good. They know the routines well and quickly develop skills which enable them to listen to the teacher and each other. They share and take turns at a level appropriate to their age.
- Arrangements for safeguarding children are effective, in line with the rest of the school.



## School details

Unique reference number	140676
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10024900

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body/academy trust
Chair	Barbara Kirk
Headteacher	Maria Anderson
Telephone number	01752 365459
Website	<a href="http://www.st-pauls.plymouth.sch.uk/">www.st-pauls.plymouth.sch.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@stpaulsplymouth.com">admin@stpaulsplymouth.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- St Paul's Roman Catholic Primary School became an academy on 1 April 2014 and is part of CAST, a multi-academy trust set up by the Catholic Diocese of Plymouth.
- The current headteacher was appointed on 1 September 2015. The school now has a new leadership team and most of the teachers have been appointed since that time.
- This academy is slightly smaller than most primary schools.
- Pupils are taught in single year group classes.
- A large majority of pupils are of White British heritage with just a few pupils coming

from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is much higher than found in most schools. The school supports a few pupils who have severe learning difficulties.
- A larger than average proportion of pupils join or leave the school within the school year.
- In 2016 the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.

## Information about this inspection

- This is the first inspection of St Paul's Roman Catholic Primary School since it became an academy on 1 April 2014.
- The inspectors observed learning in 16 lessons or parts of lessons. They also watched small-group sessions, which help pupils to catch up. One inspector looked at work displayed around the school accompanied by pupils.
- The inspectors looked at the work in pupils' book and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils both formally during a meeting and at playtimes, lunchtime and during lessons.
- Meetings were held with governors, senior and middle leaders, a representative from CAST, the multi-academy trust and parents.
- Inspectors took account of 89 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the comments left by parents.
- The inspectors also took account of 17 responses to the staff questionnaire and 16 responses to the pupil survey.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documents including the school's self-evaluation and plan for improvement. They looked at evidence of tracking pupils' progress throughout the school.
- A variety of documents relating to safeguarding were examined.

## Inspection team

Janet Maul, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Phil Banks

Ofsted Inspector

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