

St Paul's CofE (C) Primary School

Garden Street, Stafford, Staffordshire ST17 4BT

Inspection dates

24–25 May 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The outstanding headteacher, supported by a very capable deputy headteacher and governing body, has created a highly effective culture throughout the school.
- Leaders, together with a deeply committed staff, have high expectations, foster a love of learning and an insistence on the very best for every pupil.
- The governing body, led by a skilled and knowledgeable chair, challenge and closely monitor every aspect of performance. They make a valuable contribution to the ongoing development of the school.
- The quality of teaching is consistently outstanding. It excites, enthuses and engages pupils from the start.
- Outcomes have risen rapidly since the last inspection and are above national averages. The proportion of pupils reaching greater depth has increased significantly.
- The curriculum is broad and rich. Pupils spend quality time developing skills in subjects other than English and mathematics. The curriculum is supported by a variety of visits and extra-curricular activities, which pupils enjoy.
- Through assemblies, daily discussions and the curriculum, pupils learn about people from different backgrounds and the wider community. Fundamental British values and the development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills are deeply embedded in every aspect of the school's work.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is outstanding. Additional adults provide strong support and guidance. Pupils make substantial progress from their starting points.
- Behaviour around the school is exemplary. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning and enjoy coming to school. Rates of attendance are high.
- Provision for the early years is outstanding. The learning environment has been transformed since the last inspection. The curriculum is adapted to address pupils' interests and abilities.
- The arrangements to keep pupils safe are effective. All staff and governors are continually mindful of pupils' welfare and well-being. Parents are confident that their children are well cared for.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the accuracy of pupils' spelling and their use of punctuation and grammar.
- Continue to develop pupils' skills so that they can present their work to the highest standard.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The dedicated headteacher, together with his very able deputy headteacher, has shown a relentless commitment to improving the quality of teaching. This has fostered a daily learning experience which excites and engages pupils while promoting their well-being and social development. The ceiling has been lifted; mediocre is no longer acceptable. As a result, there have been rapid improvements in all aspects of the school's performance.
- Senior leaders have appointed and developed a highly motivated staff team since the last inspection. Almost all staff are new to the school. Leaders' passion and thorough knowledge of what makes excellent teaching and learning have enthused staff to provide exceptional opportunities for pupils to learn and grow together. Staff are unanimous in their praise for the school and comment that leadership is inspirational. As a result, all staff are fully committed and highly ambitious for the school and all of its pupils.
- Leaders maintain a constant focus on improvement. Their monitoring of teaching and learning is thorough and contributes effectively to the outstanding practice of teachers and excellent outcomes for pupils. Leaders monitor pupils' progress every half term and check this against the quality of work in pupils' books. Leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching. This information is used effectively to pinpoint future developments and identify appropriate support, especially for new staff. This has resulted in a highly reflective team of staff, who relish opportunities to grow and develop their skills.
- A measured approach is taken to school improvement in order to ensure consistency across the school. Policies and procedures are developed through discussion with the whole staff. High-quality training for staff is provided, followed by rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the impact. Leaders are skilled in taking the right action at the right time to improve the quality of education in the school.
- Highly effective partnerships exist between leaders. Together, the headteacher and deputy headteacher coach and mentor other leaders in the school. They ensure that the same high expectations are shared. Middle leaders drive developments in their subject areas with the same enthusiasm. Strong leadership in English and mathematics has been instrumental in driving up standards. Roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability are clearly understood by all staff.
- The school is highly inclusive. Leadership of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is very effective. Effective systems, including a bespoke assessment tracking system, have been developed. This enables leaders to keep a close check on the progress that these pupils make. Additional support and funding is monitored closely to ensure that it is having an impact. Intervention work is timely and appropriate to pupils' needs.
- The curriculum is interesting and engages pupils. Teachers bring it alive and teach it exceptionally well. A broad range of subjects, including science, humanities and the arts are taught regularly. This balanced approach enables pupils to excel in different

aspects and develop a wide-ranging and deep understanding. The curriculum is enriched by special days and events, such as plastic pledge day and a crime scene which unfolded to reveal a magical world of books. Visits to safari parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty and the theatre provide pupils with first-hand experiences, which further extend their knowledge.

- Pupil premium funding is used very effectively to reduce any barriers to learning that may be experienced by disadvantaged pupils. The progress of pupils supported by this funding is monitored regularly by leaders and governors. Data is analysed and pupils' work is scrutinised. Additional help is provided. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are included in everything the school has to offer.
- Funding from the government to promote sport and increase physical activity is being used successfully. Pupils enjoy swimming. More than 95% of pupils in key stage 2 can swim the required 25 metres. A change for life club helps pupils develop healthy eating habits and provides additional physical exercise. Leaders also use the funding to provide additional specialist sports coaching, enriching the provision open to all pupils.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The school's values of respect, love, belief, hope, perseverance and family are embedded in the ethos of the school. They are evident in the daily actions of pupils and adults alike. Through assemblies and the curriculum, pupils learn about the wider community, respecting people from different backgrounds and those with different characteristics. Opportunities to reflect and demonstrate tolerance, democracy, justice and individual liberty are woven into lessons and discussions. Pupils confidently share their thoughts, ideas and opinions and value those offered by others. Consequently, pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain and have a positive view of diversity.
- Parents are very positive about the school. They say that their children are thriving, love their learning and come home talking enthusiastically about what they have done at school. Several parents made the point, when talking to the inspectors, that the improvements since the new headteacher was appointed have been dramatic.

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school is highly effective. The governing board is led by a conscientious and extremely skilled chair.
- The chair of governors has been instrumental in developing a strong strategic group of governors who offer support and challenge in equal measure. They are deeply committed to ensuring the best possible education and learning experience for all pupils.
- Monthly strategy meetings enable governors to consider all aspects of the school's work on a regular basis. They engage in constructive, robust discussions and do not accept anything at face value. Governors cross-reference every report that they receive through discussions with staff and pupils. They also visit the school regularly to see the quality of provision for themselves. Governors know the school extremely well.
- Governors share the headteacher's high standards and expectations. They support the headteacher in actions to develop the quality of teaching further. Governors ensure that performance management processes are used effectively to motivate and challenge.

- The governing body ensures that the pupil premium and the PE and sport premium funding are spent effectively and make a difference to pupils. They scrutinise in detail every aspect of the school budget to see what difference it will make to the quality of education provided. They are aspirational for all pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Robust systems are in place, which are understood and used effectively by all members of staff. Appropriate checks are made when recruiting staff. Concerns about pupils are followed up swiftly and appropriate support offered to families in need. Safeguarding training for all staff and governors is up to date.
- Leaders ensure a high focus on well-being for all members of the school community. Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to care for themselves physically, mentally and practically. Pupils learn to manage risks safely during their weekly 'woodland school' sessions. For example, the youngest children know to stand well back when toasting marshmallows around the fire pit. Adults take time to discuss worries and feelings with pupils. Pupils say that they feel part of a family at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers and additional adults are a highly skilled, enthusiastic team. They constantly make learning interesting, engaging and fun. Classrooms are vibrant and a strong learning ethos pervades the school. The inspiring learning experiences that teachers plan and deliver encourage pupils to be curious. Consequently, pupils are quickly immersed in their learning and have very positive attitudes to school.
- Teachers have high expectations and a deep knowledge of the subjects that they teach. Carefully planned lessons link learning and deepen understanding over time. Teachers know their pupils extremely well and understand how different pupils learn. They effectively use a range of teaching techniques to ensure a suitable challenge for all pupils. They confidently adapt what they are teaching for each situation or group of pupils who they are working with.
- Tasks and activities have a clear purpose, which is shared with pupils. Teachers are skilled in modelling and showing pupils what they need to do. They use verbal and written feedback effectively with all pupils to deepen understanding and secure key skills. Pupils understand what they need to improve, to be even more successful.
- All adults are highly skilled in using questions to stimulate further learning. They use questions to provide appropriate support or challenge. Adults quickly assess what pupils know and understand. They know when to encourage pupils to think more deeply and when further support or explanation is needed. Adults manage time effectively in lessons to ensure that a high level of focus is maintained. As a result, pupils make rapid progress.
- The school environment both supports and celebrates learning. It is well organised, tidy and sets the high standard of presentation expected from all. Stimulating and

thought-provoking displays encourage pupils to reflect on their learning. High-quality work celebrated around the school reinforces the high expectations. The richness of the curriculum is clear for all to see.

- The development of reading skills and helping pupils develop a love of reading are high priorities for the school. Texts are chosen with care to expose pupils to a wide range of genres and ensure a high challenge. Teachers make the most of opportunities to develop reading across the curriculum and in different situations. Reading activities, such as the 'mystery reader' and 'reading river' homework, together with 'book bingo', are successfully enticing pupils to read regularly. Pupils who read to the inspectors did so confidently, using a range of strategies. They talk enthusiastically about their books.
- Mathematics teaching is a strength across the school. This is a result of additional training and support for staff led by a specialist leader of education. Pupils are constantly challenged to use their skills and knowledge. They solve problems and explain their reasoning from an early age. Teachers rarely give answers but encourage pupils to find out for themselves and use what they already know. They teach specific skills and expect pupils to use them in their work. For example, in Year 6, while problem-solving, pupils were asked to 'notice it, explain it and describe it'.
- Teachers provide many varied opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills. Pupils are encouraged to write as scientists describing experiments and making predictions. They analyse events in history and begin to note differences between countries around the world. Pupils reflect and express their feelings when studying key figures such as Martin Luther King. They successfully develop their ideas and vocabulary over time. Leaders acknowledge that there is still work to be done to ensure a higher level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Additional adults provide highly effective support and challenge. They know their pupils well and intervene at the appropriate time. They are skilled in giving pupils time to think and explore ideas for themselves.
- Support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is of the highest quality. They learn alongside their peers in a very nurturing environment. They are included and challenged successfully. Expectations for this group are high.
- Parents are clear about what their children are learning and comment positively on the enthusiasm that their children show for school. Homework enables pupils to extend their learning. Pupils say that they like the challenge and the chance to be creative. Work completed at home has the same level of expectation as that completed in school.
- Working relationships between adults and pupils are very strong. Pupils work equally as well in small groups or independently. They focus on their learning and are keen to have a go. Mistakes do not faze pupils and adults use errors and misconceptions effectively as learning opportunities.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- At the heart of the school is a desire to nurture every member of the school community and ensure their well-being. As a result of this, pupils thrive and flourish. They grow in confidence, developing a positive self-esteem. They are thoughtful and empathise sensitively with others. Every aspect of their development is encouraged and celebrated.
- Pupils enjoy their learning. They rise to the challenges posed and demonstrate great resilience and determination from an early age. They are self-assured learners. Pupils are motivated to learn and want to do their very best.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They take pride in looking smart. A Year 3 boy commented on how wearing his new uniform made him feel proud and ready for learning. Pupils hang their coats up and store bags carefully. They value and take care of the school environment.
- The vast majority of pupils take great care with the presentation of their work. They use rulers to underline, finish diagrams and pictures off carefully and use fluent, neat handwriting. Some pupils need further support and encouragement in order to do this consistently well.
- Reading ambassadors, play leaders and school council members are respected by the whole pupil body. Pupils aspire to these leadership roles and, once elected, carry them out diligently.
- Pupils feel extremely safe at school. Their perception is that there is no bullying at school, but if there was, they knew for certain that adults would help resolve it very quickly. They know not to share personal information when using the internet and talked confidently about road safety and stranger danger.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and their conduct around the school is exemplary. Adults set high expectations and lead by example. As a result, pupils are well mannered, considerate and friendly.
- Pupils work very well together and cooperate exceptionally well. They discuss their ideas and thoughts in pairs and small groups in order to improve the quality of their work further. They listen to each other.
- During social situations, pupils play sensibly. They involve others in their games, explaining the rules clearly. The dining hall is calm and orderly. Pupils who act as prefects take their duties seriously. They keep watch carefully, ensuring that others are safe during breaktimes.
- Behaviour incidents in the school are very rare. Pupils, parents and staff state that behaviour has been transformed. Pupils of all ages understand the new behaviour

system and appreciate the rewards for good behaviour. Pupils can explain and give examples of the 'golden 5' rules in action. They are motivated by the team gems they earn for good behaviour and talk enthusiastically about tea with the teachers for the team with the most gems.

- Attendance is above the national average and the vast majority of pupils, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities, have excellent attendance. There was a slight rise in the proportion of pupils who were persistently absent in 2016. However, this was due to a small minority of pupils – some with significant medical conditions and others who have since left the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- The number of pupils in each year group is small and, in the past, has varied from year to year, making it difficult to identify specific trends and variations in performance and outcomes. One child can make a significant difference to data outcomes. For example, in 2016 one pupil equated to 9% of the total cohort in the end of key stage 2 results.
- Senior leaders and governors are passionate about ensuring the highest possible standards for every pupil. As a result, attainment for pupils across the school has risen rapidly in the last two years. School assessment information for current pupils indicates that standards have been maintained and built on this year.
- Throughout each year group and across the curriculum, including English and mathematics, current pupils make substantial and sustained progress from their starting points. Their skills, knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects is excellent.
- At the end of key stage 1 in 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average. The numbers of pupils achieving at greater depth increased significantly in all three subjects. Books of current pupils show that substantially more pupils are achieving at the higher levels.
- At the end of Key stage 2 in 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was well above that found nationally. Similarly, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standards was also above that found nationally.
- Pupils in all year groups make very strong progress in reading. Effective teaching of specific skills such as comprehension and inference enable pupils to read well. Reading outcomes at the end of key stage 2 rose by 37% in 2017. Across the school, the proportion of pupils reaching greater depth in reading continues to rise.
- Outcomes in mathematics are strong across the school. This is a result of improved teaching and high challenge for all pupils. Pupils' books show that a sizeable proportion of pupils in each year group are making very rapid progress, enabling them to achieve the higher levels.
- The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in writing has risen significantly since the last inspection. Teachers discuss the judgments that they make with each other across the school and with other schools and the local authority. Leaders have identified a need to further develop pupils' accuracy in spelling, grammar

and punctuation.

- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support the small number of disadvantaged pupils. Three quarters of those who are disadvantaged also have significant SEN and/or disabilities. Adults are acutely aware of their needs and abilities and provide high-quality support. Pupils successfully make strong progress from their different starting points.
- Individual pupils with SEN and/or disabilities are tracked very closely. Leaders ensure that staff have the same high expectations of this group as for others. Small group work and 1:1 intervention, such as precision teaching, enable them to make sustained progress over time, particularly in their reading and writing.
- The number of pupils with English as an additional language has risen over the last eighteen months. As a result of swift support and intervention, pupils make rapid progress. They begin to read and write in English. They reach the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1.
- Following the last inspection, leaders rapidly took action to ensure that the most able pupils were appropriately challenged. A significant number of pupils are now reaching the higher standards across the curriculum. A new policy and procedure for identifying the most able and talented pupils is in place. Leaders monitor this group closely to ensure that outcomes remain strong.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- The early years provision is well led and managed. Leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths of the setting and the areas that they need to develop. They have taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching further and outcomes for all pupils since the last inspection.
- The learning environment has been transformed. It now provides a highly engaging, interesting space offering a wide variety of learning experiences. It is well organised and fosters independence. Children self-select equipment and tidy up after themselves. For example, they squeeze their own orange juice to drink and wash their cups up afterwards. They file their finished work in their 'faceboxes'. Children take responsibility for their learning.
- The majority of children start school with skills and knowledge broadly typical for their age. Detailed observations, before and immediately after they start, help adults understand their specific needs and abilities. Where gaps are identified, such as in reading, writing or number work, children are quickly supported and helped to acquire the necessary skills. The proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception has risen steadily over the last four years and is above the national average. Many more pupils in the current cohort are now exceeding the expected standards.
- Teaching is of the highest quality. Energetic, enthusiastic adults motivate children. Carefully planned activities ensure a balance between adult-led and child exploration. Skilled modelling by teachers enables children to quickly understand what to do and how to do it. As a result, children quickly develop the skills that they need to be successful in Year 1.

- The curriculum is creative and provides rich, varied and imaginative experiences. Regular opportunities to explore outside, in the woodland area, are linked to current themes. Children's interests are used to shape the curriculum. Themes such as magic and fairy tales spark their imagination and curiosity. Children talk excitedly about what they are learning to do.
- Children are encouraged to reflect on what they are learning. Adults use questions effectively to help them think carefully about what is working and what is proving to be tricky. At the end of each day, children identify a 'rose and thorn' moment and talk about how they felt. Perseverance is encouraged and praised. As a result, children quickly develop very positive attitudes towards school.
- A clear strategy is in place for the teaching of early reading skills. Teachers engage children in an energetic phonics session each day. Children focus carefully on each sound. They begin to blend the sounds together and use them in their independent writing. Children learn key words and quickly develop fluency in their reading.
- Children make phenomenal progress in their writing. Adults explicitly model how to write in simple sentences. They remind children about using full stops, capital letters and when to leave a finger space. Adults provide suitable prompts and scaffolds for children to use. Children quickly develop the skills to write independently.
- Relationships are very strong. Children play and cooperate well with each other. They share equipment and notice what their friends are doing. Children like to write notes for others and hang them on the 'tree of happiness'. They build positive relationships with the adults who teach them. Adults and children laugh, listen and learn together.
- Safeguarding is effective and all statutory welfare requirements are met. Children's health, safety and well-being are central to the early years' provision. Adults are constantly vigilant.
- Adults communicate regularly with parents. They tell parents how well their children are doing and the progress that they are making. Parents are supported to know how to help their child at home. They know that they can talk to a teacher if they have any concerns or worries about their child. Home-school links are strong.

School details

Unique reference number	124299
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10045203

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 controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	110
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jan Boulter
Headteacher	Matthew Davies
Telephone number	01785 337 436
Website	www.st-pauls-stafford.staffs.sch.uk
Email address	office@st-pauls-stafford.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 July 2016

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The number of pupils with English as an additional language has risen in the last year.
- Early years provision is provided by one full-time Reception class.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above the national average. The proportion of pupils requiring support for their SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average.
- Classes are taught in mixed-age groups.
- The vast majority of staff have been appointed since the last inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the SEN coordinator and subject leaders. A separate meeting was held with five members of teaching and non-teaching staff. The lead inspector spoke with the chair of governors and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors made visits to classrooms on both days of the inspection. All of these visits were with school leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide selection of pupils' books from across the curriculum.
- Pupils were spoken to formally and informally. A group of pupils met with an inspector. Inspectors heard pupils read. They observed behaviour in classrooms, in corridors, during an assembly and outside on the playgrounds.
- Inspectors considered the 26 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the start of the school day.
- Various school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan and records of monitoring. Minutes of governors' meetings and information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety were also analysed and discussed with leaders.
- Documents relating to safeguarding were checked and inspectors looked at published information on the school's website.

Inspection team

Nicola Harwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Steven Cartlidge

Ofsted Inspector

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