

St Pauls CofE VA Primary School

Coronation Street, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB2 1HJ

Inspection dates

26–27 June 2018

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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leadership has been unstable over time. As a result, the overall effectiveness of the school continues to require improvement.
- Different groups and abilities of pupils do not make consistently strong progress.
- The curriculum is uninspiring. As a result, some pupils have limited interest in their learning and make slow progress.
- Assessment information is not used well enough by teachers to plan challenging learning activities, including in early years.
- Some pupils do not make good progress in writing, particularly in key stage 1.
- Absence rates, especially for disadvantaged pupils, are too high. Too many pupils are persistently absent.
- Some parents are concerned about how the school communicates with them. They feel that they do not receive enough information about the progress that their children are making.
- The quality of teaching over time is better in some year groups than in others. Where practice is weaker, low-level disruption sometimes occurs.
- Leaders do not check children's starting points when they join the early years class. This makes it difficult for leaders to check how much progress the children are making in the Reception Year.

The school has the following strengths

- The school has started to improve rapidly since the two recently appointed interim headteachers took up their posts. Improvements in the quality of teaching, and in outcomes for pupils, are clearly evident.
- Leaders from a high-performing federation of schools are being used effectively to bring about improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Relationships between pupils are respectful and friendly. As a result, pupils enjoy being part of the school community.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - securing effective long-term leadership of the school
 - developing the curriculum so that it inspires and motivates pupils
 - ensuring better-quality communication with parents, especially about their children's progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - improving teachers' use of assessment information so that they can plan effectively for all groups of pupils
 - improving the quality of teaching in relation to writing so that pupils make at least good progress
 - ensuring that teachers provide sufficient challenge to differing groups and abilities of pupils so that they make at least good progress.
- Improve the quality of the early years provision by:
 - developing accurate and reliable procedures for establishing children's starting points when they join the Reception year
 - developing and extending the range of activities provided for children across the early years curriculum.
- Improve the quality of pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - raising the attendance rate, especially for disadvantaged pupils
 - ensuring that pupils develop consistently positive attitudes to learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- There have been frequent changes in leadership in recent years. This has meant that the school has not improved consistently since the previous inspection and, at times, improvement has been too slow. Some members of the school community are worried about the unsettling effect of continual change.
- A significant number of parents feel that communication with the school is not good enough. Some parents also said that they do not receive the information that they need about their children's progress. Parents told inspectors: 'I feel there's a lack of communication between the class teacher[s] and the parents. I'm not educated in what my child is learning,' and, 'I wish to see or hear more about what my child is learning in class.'
- The school's curriculum is not as effective as leaders want it to be, because it does not encourage a love of learning in pupils. The topic themes do not capture pupils' imagination sufficiently or help them to make important links across the different subject areas.
- Leaders and governors use the physical education and sport premium funding effectively. However, their evaluation of this is not sharp enough to ensure that they are well placed to make amendments that accelerate pupils' progress further.
- Leaders have wisely commissioned a review of the way in which the school spends pupil premium funding. This is because disadvantaged pupils are not making the progress that they could despite the interventions currently in place.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of the individual requirements of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Additional funding is used appropriately to provide well-judged support and additional staff where required. Several disadvantaged pupils also have complex SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders are now checking the progress of these pupils more closely. School leaders are improving the way that they work with external agencies to make sure that those pupils and their families who are in need of most support receive the best possible help.
- The interim headteachers are successfully accelerating the rate of school improvement. Their strong leadership is complemented by good-quality support from a high-performing federation of schools. Parents told inspectors that: 'The current heads are making a very positive impact. They are dedicated, involved and generally impressive.'
- The local authority is providing ongoing support from its implementation group. This support is contributing to the improvements seen in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and in leadership.
- Deputy headteachers from the supporting federation of schools are helping to accelerate improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and provide individualised support for teachers where it is needed. Weaker practice is being swiftly and effectively addressed.
- The interim headteachers have planned changes to the staffing structure. They have

introduced phase leads who will bring sharper focus and leadership to each phase. Effective leadership skills are not yet well developed across the wider school team. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is being developed thoughtfully as the school improves. Pupils enjoy daily whole-school assemblies which are linked to the rights of the child and provide them with an opportunity for reflection and prayer. The school's strong focus on 'perseverance' is helping pupils to prepare for their lives in modern Britain. Nevertheless, the role of pupils as leaders is not developed enough.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has not been consistently effective since the previous section 5 inspection. Governors have improved their practice since the most recent Ofsted monitoring visit through honest self-evaluation of their impact. Governors are now providing greater challenge and checking on the work of leaders more effectively.
- The governing body is made up of dedicated members who hold a range of professional expertise. The leadership of the governing body changed several times this year. The new chair is in post and is supported well by governors.
- Governors have acted to secure strong interim leadership arrangements until a permanent headteacher is appointed. They have also secured the support of a high-performing federation of schools. This is providing stable leadership that is bringing about necessary improvements at a greater rate.
- Parent governors see the potential of parental involvement in enriching the curriculum and enabling a range of educational visits through their professional links. They have pledged support to develop the curriculum in this way.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors ensure that keeping pupils safe from harm is given high priority. Leaders rigorously monitor the systems and processes that they have put in place to protect pupils.
- Pupils learn how to stay safe from a variety of risks, including those posed by working online or using new technologies. However, some younger pupils do not have an age-appropriate understanding of how to stay safe online.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They know who can help them if they experience a problem and are confident that adults will help to resolve any problems.
- Leaders have acted to raise staff and pupils' awareness of safeguarding matters. Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training and updates so that they are aware of the latest safeguarding guidance. Adults have a useful knowledge of the local services available to support pupils.
- Leaders also ensure that adults are appropriately updated about individual pupils' needs and are able to consider these needs when planning learning and support.
- Pupil records are well kept and detailed, minimising the risk that important information will be missed. The school works well with a variety of external agencies to help keep

pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Class teachers do not routinely use assessment information well to plan learning activities that provide appropriate support and challenge for pupils. Learning activities often do not take into account pupils' specific barriers to learning. This is particularly the case for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities or who are disadvantaged.
- Some teachers do not clearly identify the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn to make good progress. In some classes, too many activities are focused on finishing a task rather than improving knowledge or deepening pupils' understanding.
- Teachers provide too few opportunities for pupils to practise or demonstrate problem-solving and creativity. On occasion, the relevance of the learning tasks is not clear and the tasks do not deepen or extend pupils' learning. As a result, some pupils find it difficult to see the relevance of what they are learning and practising.
- Homework is not used sufficiently well to promote pupils' learning. A significant proportion of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, expressed concerns over the quality and amount of homework set.
- The impact of additional adults in the classroom on pupils' learning is mixed. There are examples of effective support for individual pupils, including for some pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. However, leaders and teachers have not ensured that all additional adults are clear about how they should help pupils with their learning.
- Current leaders have identified that, in the past, teachers' assessment has been inaccurate and their views on progress have been overgenerous. Leaders have taken prompt action to ensure that teachers have worked with successful leaders from other schools so that their judgements are now more accurate.
- Where teaching over time is most effective, teachers use good subject knowledge and well-constructed questions to challenge pupils to think more deeply about what they are learning. In mathematics, for example, teachers skilfully encourage pupils to use and develop their reasoning skills well. This helps pupils to consolidate and deepen their understanding.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is too high. Absence rates, especially for those pupils who are disadvantaged, are also too high. There is a marked difference between the attendance rates of pupils entitled to free school meals and other pupils.
- Too many pupils do not arrive punctually for school in the morning. As a result, they are missing important learning at the start of the school day.

- Pupils are not always positive about aspects of their learning, because lessons are not made interesting enough to make them curious and eager to learn more.
- Relationships between pupils are positive. Teachers and other adults help pupils, including those pupils who have difficulties in communicating with others, to interact well in a variety of social situations. Pupils follow routines and cooperate increasingly well with adults.
- Pupils learn about bullying in its different forms and understand the harm that it can cause. They are confident that, on the rare occasions that it does occur, teachers deal with it quickly.
- Parents spoken with state overwhelmingly that their children are safe and happy in school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Low-level disruption occurs in those lessons where learning activities are not motivating or inspiring for pupils. Some teachers do not challenge pupils when they chat or are not attentive during the teacher's explanation, and this has a negative impact on pupils' learning.
- Some staff are not skilled in meeting the needs of a very small number of pupils who are demonstrating very challenging behaviour.
- Pupils typically move around school in a calm and purposeful manner. Some pupils told inspectors that they would welcome a quieter place to spend breaktimes.
- Pupils are courteous and polite. The respectful interaction between 'response partners' in lessons is creating relationships that also support learning.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils do not make consistently strong progress across the wider curriculum or across year groups. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are too variable across different year groups.
- By the end of their time in the early years, the proportion of children reaching standards typical for their age is slightly below the national average. However, adults do not address children's slow progress consistently or quickly enough.
- Inspection evidence shows that most pupils for whom English is an alternative language make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across both key stages.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching expected standards by the end of key stage 1 in mathematics was broadly in line with the national average. However, the proportions reaching expected standards in reading and writing were below the national average.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching expected standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the end of key stage 2 exceeded the national average. However, some pupils do not make the rapid progress that they could, especially in

writing.

- In 2017, those pupils who had achieved high standards in key stage 1 exceeded the national averages for reading and mathematics in key stage 2. However, this was not the case with writing. Work in current pupils' exercise books indicates that the most able pupils could make better progress. The most able pupils do not routinely receive the learning challenge that they require to make equally rapid progress in all areas of the curriculum.
- Pupils' attainment in writing was below average at key stage 1 in 2017, especially for middle-attaining pupils, and writing progress was slow in key stage 2. Improving writing outcomes remains a priority for improvement across the school. Some pupils are not sufficiently challenged to extend and improve written work. However, where pupils have been supported to redraft and develop written work in their books, they are able to achieve higher standards.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Currently, teachers are not doing enough to ensure that children make the progress of which they are capable. Adults do not swiftly assess what children can and cannot do when they join the Reception year. Therefore, some children do not receive timely help to enable them to make progress at a faster rate.
- Some parents are not receiving enough information about their child's progress, and they find it difficult to use the electronic system put in place to find out more.
- The learning environment is not as motivating or inspiring as it could be. Leaders have recognised this and have plans in place to significantly redevelop the accommodation to improve children's learning opportunities.
- Leaders are not ensuring that learning activities offer children sufficient access to the full range of experiences that help them develop their understanding and language development well. As a result, the early years curriculum is not a successful enough vehicle to help children to be creative and develop independence.
- Almost all children are self-assured and confident and able to communicate their ideas well. Children collaborate well in the activities set out for them. Nevertheless, some children are not being suitably challenged to make faster progress and to be at a good level of readiness to start Year 1.
- Outcomes for early years children in 2017 were above average for mathematics, broadly in line with national figures for writing, but below average for reading. Consequently, leaders are now focused on improving the range and quality of reading books available for children.
- Children are well cared for in the early years. Leaders are vigilant about safeguarding, and they have made important improvements to the systems and processes that ensure that children are well protected.
- The early years leader has a clear view of what needs to be done to improve provision and standards. Leadership capacity has been strengthened by new appointments. The early years team has been strengthened by recent new appointments and, as a result, the pace of improvement has been accelerated.

- Leaders have carefully analysed the specific requirements of disadvantaged children in early years, including some who also have SEN and/or disabilities. Additional funding is used effectively to meet their particular needs.
- Weekly development work undertaken by early years leaders with the local authority adviser is providing an effective source of support so that the changes made are improving the quality of provision.

School details

Unique reference number	110839
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10041758

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Russell Re Manning
Interim Headteachers	Caroline Peet and Judith Osler
Telephone number	01223 568 840
Website	www.stpauls.cambs.sch.uk
Email address	head@stpauls.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 December 2015

Information about this school

- St Pauls C of E Voluntary Aided School is smaller than the average primary school.
- Just over half of the pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than in most schools nationally.
- There is a lower-than-average proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or a disability.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is lower than in most schools nationally.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 2.
- The school is receiving support from local authority advisers and from a local federation of schools.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classrooms. Some of these observations were carried out with the interim headteachers.
- Inspectors observed pupils during less structured parts of the school day, such as at the beginning of the day, at lunchtimes, breaktimes and when they were moving around the school. Pupils' behaviour was also observed in lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, governors, school leaders and leaders from the federation supporting the school to improve. Inspectors spoke informally with pupils in the playground and dining hall as well as in more formal group discussions with pupils in all key stages. The school did not access the Ofsted online pupil survey, but leaders did show inspectors the responses to their own survey undertaken during the first day of the inspection.
- The lead inspector met two local authority advisers who have been supporting the school.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and scrutinised work in pupils' books from a range of subjects and on display. They looked at a range of documentation, including minutes from governing body meetings, the school's current assessment information, staff monitoring and the school development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors took account of 19 staff questionnaires and 96 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 94 free-text responses.
- The lead inspector visited the Wrap-Around care club at the end of the day and spoke with pupils there.

Inspection team

Liz Cornish, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Teresa Skeggs

Ofsted Inspector

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