

# Utkinton St Paul's CofE Primary School

Quarry Bank, Utkinton, Tarporley, Cheshire CW6 0LA

## Inspection dates

16–17 January 2019

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- There has been a lack of continuity in the school's leadership team over the past two years. This has contributed to the decline in the effectiveness of leaders' work and the progress that pupils make across the school.
- Too much of the school's drive for improvement currently rests with the acting headteacher. The actions of recently appointed subject leaders have yet to have an influence on improving standards.
- Some teachers have not been supported well enough to improve their practice. As a result, the quality of teaching is not consistently good.
- School leaders, including governors, did not ensure that members of staff were subject to appraisal during the last school year.
- Leaders do not make regular checks on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress in all subjects. As a result, weaknesses are not challenged in a timely manner.
- Although pupils have good attitudes to learning, the quality of their handwriting and presentation is poor.
- Pupils study a broad range of subjects. However, some teachers have weaknesses in their subject knowledge in science and history. They also have low expectations of what pupils can achieve in these subjects.
- Pupils do not make good progress in writing. This is because some teachers do not use assessment information well enough to help pupils to move on in their learning.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are well behaved, polite and friendly. They work hard in lessons and get on well with one another and the adults who teach them.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive good support and make strong progress socially, emotionally and academically.
- Provision in the early years is good. Children make strong progress from their starting points; the vast majority achieve a good level of development.
- The teaching of reading is effective. Younger pupils quickly develop good phonics skills and develop into competent readers. Many older pupils read widely and often.

## Full report

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

- Improve leadership and management by:
  - refining and clarifying the roles of all leaders and governors so that they are clear about what is expected of them
  - further developing the school's systems for checking the impact of teachers' work, so that information can be used to identify where and how teaching can be improved
  - ensuring that the appraisal of all staff, including school leaders, is undertaken each year.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that all teachers:
  - apply the school's assessment processes consistently, so that teaching promotes good progress
  - have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in subjects across all areas of the curriculum
  - have the necessary knowledge and skills to teach science and history
  - have high expectations regarding pupils' handwriting and presentation.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Lack of continuity in the school's leadership over the last two years has led to a decline in the quality of education. As a result, the school is no longer outstanding and now requires improvement to be good.
- There have been many changes at Utkinton St Paul's since the previous inspection. The school is now part of a soft federation and shares a headteacher with Huxley CofE primary school. Almost all members of the teaching staff are new to the school. A major building programme has recently been completed.
- The deputy headteacher took up the role of acting headteacher in June 2018. Since his appointment, he has worked with governors to develop their understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The acting headteacher has put improvement plans in place to address the weaknesses that now exist at the school. He has provided good support for staff during this challenging period.
- Staff are fully supportive of the school's current leadership. They appreciate the support and guidance they now receive. Over recent months, teachers have worked in partnership with senior leaders and external consultants to improve the quality of teaching. Although there are signs of recent improvements, leaders have not been able to ensure that teaching is of a good enough standard in all classes across the school.
- Leaders do not make regular checks on the impact of teaching on the quality of pupils' work. As a result, they have failed to prevent a decline in pupils' writing in English and in subjects across the curriculum. They have also failed to identify the weaknesses in some teachers' subject knowledge in history and science.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Leaders plan assembly themes around the school's core values. They ensure that pupils learn about different cultures and the main world religions. Pupils learn to treat each other with respect and to value diversity. They understand the importance of British values, such as democracy and the rule of law.
- There is a broad curriculum in place at Utkinton St Paul's. Pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences in subjects such as music and physical education. However, leaders do not make regular checks on the quality of pupils' work in all subject areas. As a result, pupils do not learn well enough in science or history.
- Pupils enjoy the many learning opportunities that are provided outside of the normal school day. As well as the many clubs that the school organises, pupils benefit from regular trips to support their learning. Older pupils also have the opportunity to take part in residential visits.
- The leadership of special educational needs is effective. The SEND leader ensures that pupils receive any additional support that they require. She reviews the impact of work closely and tracks the progress that pupils with SEND make across the school.
- Leaders ensure that the school's sports funding is used effectively. It has been used to provide additional opportunities for pupils to participate in a wide range of inter-school sports activities. A sports coach also works alongside teachers in physical education

lessons to enhance the quality of pupils' learning and develop teachers' expertise.

- Most parents and carers are supportive of the school. Parents who spoke with the inspector were positive about their children's experience of the school and the strong relationships that they enjoy with school staff. However, some parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View expressed concern about leadership at the school.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are committed to supporting the school's improvement. They have been fully involved in the recent remodelling of the school, which has included the creation of an additional classroom. However, governors' checks on leaders' actions to improve teaching and learning are not thorough. Governors did not ensure that teacher appraisal was carried out during the last school year.
- Governors understand the school's strengths and the areas that need improvement. They receive good-quality information from the acting headteacher and this is helping them to provide effective support and challenge.
- Governors check that the school's safeguarding arrangements are fully compliant with current requirements.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Systems for safeguarding pupils are fit for purpose. School leaders ensure that appropriate checks are carried out on all adults who work at the school.
- Staff are fully aware of the school's safeguarding policies and procedures. Staff receive regular training and updates. They know exactly what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil's well-being or safety.
- Leaders are rigorous in following up any safeguarding concerns that are reported to them. They liaise with external agencies where necessary. Leaders ensure that all incidents are recorded and contain an appropriate level of detail. All safeguarding records are stored securely.

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

### **Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. In some classes, teachers do not use what they know about pupils' abilities when setting work. As a result, the standard of teaching is not good enough across the school to ensure that pupils make good progress in their learning.
- Pupils do not make good enough progress in writing. Some teachers fail to support pupils' learning well enough by identifying errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling. The inspector saw many examples in pupils' books of teachers providing positive feedback, despite the work containing errors. As a result, pupils in some classes do not understand how to improve their work well enough. There are also weaknesses in pupils' presentation; teachers do not do enough to develop pupils' neat and fluent

handwriting.

- The weaknesses in pupils' writing also have a negative impact on the quality of their work in science and history. Some teachers have weak subject knowledge. They also have low expectations of what pupils can achieve in these subjects and often fail to challenge misconceptions.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Teachers ensure that younger pupils quickly develop their knowledge and understanding of phonics. They ensure that pupils use phonics to work out unfamiliar words. The inspector saw children in the early years using their phonics skills to read labels and match them up with photographs hidden in the outdoor area.
- Current pupils are making strong progress in developing their reading skills as they move through the school. Older pupils who met with the inspector read with fluency and confidence. They demonstrated a good knowledge of children's authors. They also have opportunities to access a range of different genres. Pupils read regularly in school, with each class sharing a class novel with their teacher. Older pupils read widely and often and develop good attitudes to reading.
- Mathematics is taught well in most classes. Teachers provide work which challenges pupils and helps them to make good progress. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge to solve problems. This helps them to develop their reasoning skills and develop good attitudes to this subject.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school has an active 'ethos group', consisting of pupils from across different year groups. These pupils were involved in establishing the school's core values of friendship, respect, trust, thankfulness, hope and forgiveness. The pupils make regular contributions to whole-school assemblies, feeding back on their activities, for example talking about a recent visit to a local food bank.
- Although some parents expressed concerns about behaviour and bullying on Parent View, the inspector found nothing of concern during this inspection. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 completed a questionnaire about bullying; all responses were positive. Pupils who met with the inspector said that behaviour was good during lessons and at breaktimes. They also said that bullying rarely happened and that members of staff resolve all behaviour issues quickly.
- The pupils who met with the inspector demonstrated an age-appropriate understanding about how to keep themselves safe online and in their everyday lives.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils get on well with each other at Utkinton St Paul's. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere at the school. Pupils move around school sensibly, showing respect for each other and the adults who teach them. Pupils are polite and well mannered towards visitors and politely hold doors open.
- Pupils behave well in class and have good attitudes to learning. They listen carefully to their teachers and work hard. However, in some classes, pupils do not show enough care in the way that they present their work.
- Although attendance has been below the national average over the past two years, it has improved significantly this term. The improvement shows the impact of leaders' diligent work with families in raising their awareness of the importance of good attendance. Punctuality has also improved. It is also closely monitored. Actions to encourage pupils to be at school on time have been successful.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Outcomes can vary considerably from one year to the next, due to the small number of pupils in each year group. The three-year averages for attainment at the end of key stage 2 show the following: reading was above average between 2016 and 2018, mathematics was in line with the national average and writing was below average.
- Current pupils are not making strong enough progress in writing. Although the inspector saw some good written work in Year 5 and Year 6, the quality of writing in other year groups was inconsistent. The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in writing at the end of key stage 2 in 2018 was below the national average. Over the past three years, no pupil has reached the higher standard.
- Pupils have made good progress in reading over the past two years. Almost all pupils have achieved the expected standard in the phonics check at the end of Year 1. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading at the end of Year 2 was above the national average in both years. All pupils achieved the expected standard in reading at the end of key stage 2 in 2017. Over half achieved the higher standard. The proportion exceeding the expected standard was also above average in 2018.
- The work in books shows that teachers are providing good levels of challenge in mathematics. As a result, current pupils are making good progress in their learning. Over the past two years, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in mathematics has been at or above the national average.
- Pupils benefit from a broad curriculum at Utkinton St Paul's. They have regular art and music lessons and are introduced to a range of different sports in physical education. However, the progress that pupils make in history and science is inconsistent. In Year 5 and Year 6, pupils learn well and make good progress. However, in other classes, learning is not as effective. Some teachers do not have the necessary subject knowledge to provide appropriate challenge for pupils.
- Many pupils start at the school at other than the usual time. These pupils are well supported and settle in quickly. They make progress at a similar rate to their peers.
- Pupils with SEND receive effective support and make strong progress. Leaders ensure

that these pupils' learning needs are swiftly identified. They also ensure that the right support is in place to help them to make the progress of which they are capable. However, weaknesses in the teaching of writing also restrict the progress that pupils with SEND make in their written work.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Most children enter the early years with skills and abilities that are in line with, and often above, those typical for their age. They make good progress from their starting points, because of the good quality of teaching that they receive. The proportion of children attaining a good level of development was above the national average in 2018.
- The early years is well led and managed. Leaders understand what needs to be done to ensure that children learn effectively, are well looked after and develop good attitudes to learning. Children are well prepared for the next stage of their education when they start in Year 1.
- Both the indoor and outdoor areas are well equipped and provide children with stimulating environments for learning. During the inspection, children were heard talking with each other about ice that had formed in the water tray. They had an in-depth discussion about the properties of ice, using a wide range of vocabulary.
- Children make strong progress in most areas of learning. However, too few opportunities are provided for them to develop their skills and understanding in art and design.
- Staff make regular assessments of children's progress. They use this information to identify children's development needs, to ensure that appropriate activities are provided to support further progress. Disadvantaged children and children with SEND are well supported.
- Routines and expectations are well established, so that children listen carefully to adult instructions. Children have positive attitudes to learning. They are attentive and enthusiastic. They show pride in their work and are considerate towards each other. They are cooperative, curious and willing to persevere with activities. They behave well and follow routines.
- Staff are vigilant about the safeguarding of children in their care. Children are well looked after and cared for. Leaders ensure that children's welfare requirements are met.

## School details

Unique reference number	111261
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10086864

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	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	68
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Lewin
Headteacher	Lorna Pleavin
Telephone number	01829732322
Website	<a href="http://www.utkintonce.cheshire.sch.uk/">www.utkintonce.cheshire.sch.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@utkintonce.cheshire.sch.uk">head@utkintonce.cheshire.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	4 December 2006

## Information about this school

- Utkinton St Paul's is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school is part of a soft federation with Huxley CofE Primary School. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work at both schools.
- At the time of this inspection, the headteacher was absent due to ill health. The deputy headteacher has been the acting headteacher at both schools since June 2018.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The number of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the normal time is above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups who attend the school is much lower than average. Only a small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.



- The proportion of pupils who have SEND is around the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is considerably lower than the national average.
- There is one Reception class. Children attend full time.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching, learning and assessment in all classes. Some observations were conducted jointly with the acting headteacher.
- The inspector scrutinised pupils' written work in subjects across the curriculum.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the improvement plan, attendance information and safeguarding records.
- The inspector held meetings with the acting headteacher and the SEN leader. The inspector also met with all members of the teaching staff.
- The inspector met with four members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed pupils' conduct during breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspector met with a group of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils to listen to them read and to discuss behaviour and other aspects of school life. Inspectors also spoke with many other pupils informally.
- The inspector met with parents at the start of the second day of this inspection. He also took account of the 45 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Paul Tomkow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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