

St Paul's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Chipperfield

The Common, Chipperfield, Kings Langley, Hertfordshire WD4 9BS

Inspection dates

12–13 February 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, including governors, have not ensured that the outstanding quality of education identified at the last inspection has been maintained. Until recently, too much attention has been placed on pupils' attainment and too little on their progress.
- In recent years, pupils' attainment at the end of key stages 1 and 2 has been broadly in line with, or above, national averages. Progress at key stage 2 has typically been in line with national averages. However, progress dropped to below average in writing and mathematics in 2018.
- The headteacher provides clear and effective leadership. She accurately assesses the school's successes and is taking appropriate action to ensure its further improvement.
- Teachers typically plan and deliver lessons that enthuse pupils. They are well supported by the team of teaching assistants. Consequently, teaching is mostly good. It is stronger in key stage 2 than it is in key stage 1.
- Pupils are proud of their school and its ethos. They are welcoming, caring and respectful. Pupils behave well and their enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance.
- Parents and carers and staff hold the school in high regard. Staff morale is high.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are looked after well and that they are kept safe. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They provide leaders with effective support and challenge.
- Children get off to a good start to their education in early years, although the most able children are not always challenged to exceed the early goals for attainment by the end of Reception.
- The school's curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of enjoyable learning experiences. However, the development of pupils' understanding in the subjects in the wider curriculum is weaker than it is in English and mathematics.
- Some pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 have not made as much progress as pupils in other year groups. They are now catching up.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve pupils' progress, by ensuring that:
 - the quality of teaching is consistently high in key stage 1
 - the most able children in early years are consistently challenged to make significant gains in their learning and achieve highly
 - pupils, or groups of pupils, who have fallen behind in key stages 1 and 2 continue to catch up with their classmates.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that teachers plan effective learning activities that develop pupils' subject-specific skills, knowledge and understanding
 - developing effective strategies to monitor the impact of the wider curriculum on pupils' learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders, including governors, have not ensured that the outstanding quality of education identified at the last inspection has been maintained. However, the headteacher has led the school well through significant changes in both leadership and staffing since the previous inspection. She has created a culture of high expectations and ambition for pupils and staff.
- The newly formed senior leadership team has a clear understanding of its responsibilities and discharges them effectively. Staff are very positive about the school and its leadership. They are committed to providing pupils with the best opportunities to develop academically, socially and morally. Consequently, pupils receive a good quality of education.
- Leaders set pupils challenging targets and they ensure that their work is assessed accurately. Although they monitor pupils' performance closely, leaders have previously focused too much on pupils' attainment rather than their progress. Pupils' attainment has often been high at the end of key stages 1 and 2, reflecting their often above-average starting points. However, their progress, especially at key stage 2, has been less strong.
- Leaders have made significant changes both to the way they monitor pupils' progress and to the extra support they provide pupils with if they fall behind. As a result of leaders' actions, current pupils make good overall progress. Those pupils who have previously fallen behind are catching up rapidly in key stage 2, but more slowly in key stage 1.
- Parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, are very supportive of the school. An overwhelming majority of parents would recommend the school to other parents. A similar proportion agreed that the school is well led and managed, and that their children are happy at the school. At the start of the school day, parents told inspectors that they particularly valued the school's inclusive nature, its 'open-door' approach to parents, and the good relationships that their children develop with staff and with their classmates.
- Leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their priorities for improvement are appropriate and they review progress against their plans routinely. Leaders are also accurate in their evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Staff, especially the school's newly qualified teachers, value the training and support that they receive. As a result of leaders' actions, the overall quality of teaching is good. Where teaching is less consistent, it is improving quickly.
- Leaders are very effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are taught to understand and celebrate differences. They value the importance of looking after each other and welcoming new members to the school community. One pupil, reflecting the views of others, commented, 'We always welcome people into the St Paul's family.' Pupils enjoy opportunities to broaden their horizons

through events such as the 'spirited art week', French week and Black History Week. British values, such as democracy and the rule of law, are embedded within the school culture.

- Leaders have a clear understanding of the barriers to learning that are faced by disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers are held to account effectively for the progress of these pupils. They understand pupils' needs, track their progress closely and provide them with additional support when needed. Leaders use the additional funding they receive to provide pupils with access to a wide range of support and to enable them to participate in additional educational activities. As a result of leaders' actions, disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND make strong progress.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium is spent very effectively. Leaders' plans focus successfully on developing teachers' skills, broadening the range of sports offered to pupils, and increasing pupils' participation in competitions. Positions of responsibility, such as membership of the sports committee, allow pupils to work alongside staff to develop new initiatives that support their schoolmates' physical and mental well-being. On a daily basis, pupil play leaders are effective at coordinating and encouraging participation in sports.
- Pupils' experience at school is enhanced by the range of extra-curricular activities that leaders provide. There are many sporting clubs and enrichment activities on offer and they are popular with pupils.
- Leaders are committed to ensuring that the study of English and mathematics is supplemented by a wide range of subjects, such as computing, history and art. Although pupils value and enjoy these subjects, they are not supported to develop subject-specific skills, knowledge and understanding to the same extent as they are in English and mathematics. Leaders' monitoring of the impact of the wider curriculum on pupils' learning is also less established than it is in English and mathematics.

Governance of the school

- Governors are well trained. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses through their participation in governing body meetings and their routine visits to the school. Governors check their own evaluation of the school's effectiveness with the support of external advisers. They have identified the reasons behind the recent decline in pupils' outcomes, including an over-emphasis on pupils' attainment. Governors now provide leaders with effective challenge and support that focus more closely on the progress that pupils make throughout the school.
- Governors ensure that their legal duties, especially in safeguarding pupils' welfare, are fully met. The link safeguarding governor checks safeguarding arrangements, including the record of pre-employment checks, routinely. Governors also undertake routine safeguarding audits. Governors receive valuable training that helps them to understand their responsibilities in regard to keeping pupils safe.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff at all levels receive regular safeguarding training and they know how to identify pupils who are potentially at risk. Staff understand, and follow, leaders' clear procedures for the reporting of any safeguarding concerns.
- School leaders ensure that safeguarding concerns are logged effectively. Leaders are tenacious in making sure that child protection referrals are dealt with appropriately. The maintenance of child protection files is effective and leaders work well with representatives from other agencies to ensure that pupils get the support they need quickly.
- All required checks are carried out when recruiting new staff to work with pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View agreed that pupils are taught well. Pupils who met with inspectors said that they enjoy their lessons and make good progress.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong. Pupils are not afraid to get something wrong, as they know that doing so will help them to improve. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils to design activities around topics that inspire pupils to add depth to their writing. For example, pupils in Year 5 enjoyed the opportunity to write haiku poems about ancient mythical creatures.
- Teachers use their classrooms very effectively to support pupils' learning. In a Year 4 English lesson, pupils systematically used prompts that were on display around the classroom to help them to use a wider variety of sentence types in their extended writing. Pupils in a Year 6 mathematics lesson made good use of a range of mathematical apparatus to help them solve complex problems.
- Many teachers question individual pupils, and groups of pupils, skilfully in order to provide them with specific guidance about what they need to do to improve their work. Good subject knowledge allows teachers to check pupils' understanding and provide additional support where necessary. For example, pupils in Year 3 benefited from high-quality individual, small-group and whole-class questioning from the adults in the classroom. Their understanding was deepened and they improved the quality of their writing.
- Pupils receive helpful advice from their teachers about how to improve their written work. Assessment in different forms is used well both to gauge exactly what pupils can do and also to provide them with additional guidance on how to improve further. Pupils value the advice that they receive from their teachers and can point to many examples where this approach has helped them make progress.
- The impact of teaching in key stage 1 is less consistent than in key stage 2. At times, learning activities are not sufficiently matched to pupils' starting points. Pupils are sometimes unclear about what is expected of them, and questioning is not always

effective in checking what pupils know and understand.

- Teaching in subjects other than English and mathematics allows pupils to study a wide range of new topics. Pupils enjoy the activities that their teachers devise for them. However, they are not supported consistently to develop subject-specific skills, knowledge and understanding to the same extent as they are in English and mathematics.

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's ethos has a very positive impact on pupils' personal development. Pupils are thoughtful, responsible and caring. They are taught to respect and look after each other.
- Pupils value the 'buddy' system that links every child in Reception Year with an older pupil who looks after them as they move through the school. Initiatives such as the 'friendship stop', a place organised by the pupil 'playground patrol' to support pupils if they have no one to play with, also contribute to a very positive atmosphere.
- Through a well-planned programme of personal, social and health education, pupils develop a good understanding of how to stay safe in a variety of situations, including when using the internet. Pupils said that they feel safe in school and that they have the confidence that staff will help them if they have a worry or a concern. Pupils also said that there is very little bullying in the school. When it does happen, pupils say that it is dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Pupils are well looked after. Staff know pupils well and consistently follow the school's procedures to keep them safe. Staff develop strong relationships with parents and they work effectively to support pupils and their families. Pupils know that there are nominated staff whom they can talk to if they have a concern. However, they are confident in talking to all staff.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are very friendly, polite and well mannered. Pupils behave well at lunch- and breaktimes. They are well supervised outside, where they socialise or play sensibly in small groups. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View agreed that pupils are well behaved.
- Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and there are clear systems in place that are well communicated to staff and pupils. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally very strong. They are keen to do well, and they work very hard.
- When teaching is not sufficiently challenging, some pupils' attitudes to learning are less positive. For example, some pupils do not always listen closely enough to their teacher

or work to the standards of which they are capable.

- Pupils enjoy school and very few miss school frequently. No groups of pupils are disadvantaged by poor attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In recent years, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the expected and higher standards has been either in line with, or above, national averages at the end of key stage 2. Pupils' overall progress at the end of key stage 2 has been broadly in line with national averages in the same period. However, in 2018, pupils' progress in mathematics and writing was below average.
- In 2018, at the end of key stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the expected standard was in line with national averages. In 2017, attainment across all three subjects was above average.
- Current pupils make good overall progress. Pupils in Year 5 are making particularly strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics, while pupils in Year 3 are making similarly strong progress in reading and mathematics. Year 1 pupils have also made a very positive start to their key stage 1 studies.
- From their starting points at the end of Year 2, pupils in Year 4 have not made enough progress in writing and mathematics, but they are currently catching up rapidly. Pupils' progress in Year 2 is less consistent than in other year groups because they made a slow start to key stage 1. The gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding are not closing as quickly.
- Pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged make good progress from their starting points. Their different needs are quickly identified by staff and they are supported effectively in their learning.
- The strong overall progress that pupils make across reading, writing and mathematics is not always replicated in other subjects. This is because pupils are not supported to develop subject-specific skills, knowledge and understanding to the same extent as they are in English and mathematics. For example, in key stage 2 history lessons, pupils do not receive the same high-quality advice about how to improve their work as they do in their English lessons.
- Leaders organise a variety of transition activities so that that pupils are well prepared, both academically and personally, for their transition to secondary school.

Early years provision

Good

- Most children join Nursery and Reception with skills, knowledge and understanding that are broadly typical for their age. As a result of effective early assessment, leaders ensure that children's individual needs are identified quickly and that learning activities support their progress. Consequently, children make good overall progress across early years and are prepared for Year 1 effectively.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of

Reception Year was above the national average in 2018. Leaders' assessments, evidence in children's workbooks and observations of teaching all demonstrate that children this year are currently making good overall progress.

- Leaders have a clear vision for the future development of the early years provision. Adults' work to support children as they join the provision is effective. They work closely with families and pre-school providers to ensure that children make a smooth start to their education. Parents appreciate the effective transition arrangements.
- Links with parents remain strong as children progress through early years. Parents are grateful for the very regular informal opportunities to meet and discuss any concerns with the early years team.
- The early years curriculum provides children with a wide range of opportunities to develop their academic, social and emotional skills. Children's learning opportunities are enhanced by an attractive learning environment, where they benefit from individual, small-group and whole-class support.
- Adults ensure that children behave well and that they are safe. Children collaborate well and they support each other effectively. The environment is safe, and adults are well trained to care for and protect the children. Safeguarding arrangements are secure.
- Teaching in early years is effective. Children benefit from a range of well-planned activities that interest them and allow them to develop their skills across the different areas of learning. However, there are times when questioning does not sufficiently challenge the most able children.
- The early years team regularly observes children to assess how quickly they are developing and to see if they need extra help. Although this ensures that children make good overall progress, there are times when some activities are not challenging enough to move children's learning and development forward.

School details

Unique reference number	117441
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10085470

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Morrill
Headteacher	Caroline Moore
Telephone number	01923 262340
Website	www.stpauls909.herts.sch.uk
Email address	admin@stpauls909.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 May 2014

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils or those who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is in line with the national average.
- The school is designated as having a religious character. It belongs to the Diocese of St Albans. In its most recent section 48 inspection for Anglican and Methodist schools, in June 2014, it was judged to be outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was initially scheduled as a one-day inspection, following concerns about the school's performance. The inspection converted to a full inspection completed by the lead inspector and two additional Ofsted Inspectors on the following day.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, the early years leader and governors.
- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Inspectors observed learning in 20 lessons, many jointly with leaders.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks were looked at by inspectors throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in class and around the school at breaktimes and lunchtimes to seek their views about the school.
- Inspectors met with three groups of pupils more formally to discuss many aspects of school life.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to them about their reading habits.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents, including assessment information and the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness. Inspectors also scrutinised leaders' improvement plans and their behaviour, safeguarding and attendance records.
- Inspectors spoke to parents before school and considered the 106 responses made by parents to Parent View.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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