

St Paul's Church of England Primary School

Brinnington

Brinnington Rise, Stockport, Cheshire SK5 8AA

Inspection dates

27 to 28 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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Strong leadership by the headteacher has provided clear direction and brought about improvement.
- After disappointing results in 2017, determined actions by leaders have resulted in almost all current pupils now making good progress across a range of subjects.
- Leaders have used professional development and training opportunities in the school and the local authority to improve the quality of teaching.
- Leaders receive effective and consistent support. This has enabled them to make the improvements necessary to raise the quality of teaching and learning.
- Governors have a wide range of skills. They are supportive of the school and contribute to its continuous improvement.
- Teachers occasionally do not give pupils work that challenges them sufficiently. Too few pupils attain a higher standard and greater depth in English and mathematics.
- The curriculum contributes both to pupils' personal development and the good and improving progress that they make.
- Subject leaders who are relatively new to their roles have not had the time to monitor the improvements to the curriculum or their impact on progress and attainment. Their action planning is not precise enough.
- Pupils generally demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. Strong relationships between teachers and pupils contribute to pupils' growing confidence and to the quality of learning.
- Children in the early years make good progress. Increasing numbers of children are attaining a good level of development.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported and so make good progress from their starting points.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is improving. These pupils develop personally, socially and academically due to the effectiveness of the school's support.
- Attendance rates for disadvantaged pupils have improved. However, overall attendance is still too low. Too many pupils arrive late for school.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Procedures for keeping pupils safe are secure and clear. The pastoral support for pupils is a high priority for leaders.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen middle leadership and management by:
 - continuing to develop the role of subject leaders to improve their understanding of pupils' attainment and progress further
 - ensuring that plans are precise and have clearly defined and measurable timescales
 - ensuring that teaching is sufficiently challenging so that more pupils attain at greater depth and the higher standard
 - further improving attendance and punctuality.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has brought about the improvements needed to improve pupils' overall achievement since the last inspection of the school. Working effectively with advisers and the local authority, she has improved the quality of teaching and learning. This has been key to the improved focus and direction of the school.
- Senior leaders know the school well, and they are accurate in their judgement of their judgement of its strengths and weaknesses. Improvements made so far are due to leaders promoting and 'living' the school's vision of 'Be the best that you can be', which has raised aspirations across the school community.
- Raising expectations and aspirations and improving consistency have been essential to the improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders have galvanised the staff team so that everyone is working together to achieve the school's vision. Leaders have high expectations of their pupils. They provide an effective pastoral support system to enable pupils to overcome any barriers to learning. It is clear that leaders know individual pupils and their circumstances well.
- The leadership of teaching and learning in English and mathematics is improving. Leaders of these subjects have used training opportunities well to improve their leadership skills and the teaching skills and confidence of staff. However, although they know their subjects well and use checking procedures to identify improvements, they do not have a clear view of the impact of their actions because their plans lack sufficient detail and precision. Nevertheless, the quality of teaching in both subjects has improved in recent years.
- The majority of staff feel valued and are positive about the leadership of the school. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved. This is because leaders have created opportunities for teachers to observe the effective teaching of their colleagues. Leaders evaluate teachers' performance through robust and supportive procedures.
- The curriculum is organised to give pupils the curiosity they need to learn, to develop resilience and raise their aspirations. It is underpinned by independence. Teachers prioritise an individual subject each term to ensure coverage of a broad curriculum across the school year.
- Leaders have introduced a range of pastoral and academic support to overcome pupils' barriers to learning. They have used the pupil premium funding to employ specialist teaching, and pastoral staff to raise the aspirations and achievement of disadvantaged pupils. This high-quality support and the interventions to meet their needs are improving the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils.
- The funding for pupils with SEND is used effectively. The recently appointed special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has improved the progress and attainment of these pupils. He has already developed clear procedures to support and monitor teaching and learning. Through this effective support, most current pupils with SEND are making good progress from their starting points.

- The physical education and sports funding for primary schools is used very well. Significant investment in sport has encouraged greater participation. Professional development for staff means that they are now more confident about teaching in this area. There is a range of sports and after-school clubs for pupils. Pupils who spoke with inspectors value these opportunities, and attendance at these activities is high.
- A broad range of opportunities for enrichment contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils elected to the school council respond positively to the responsibility for sharing the views of their classes. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to support charities and to develop their musical and artistic talents. They have a clear understanding of fundamental British values. The school environment promotes the school's values effectively, highlighting each term's selected value.
- Leadership of subjects other than English and mathematics is developing. Most subject leaders have identified the key skills and knowledge to be taught to each year group during the year. However, some subject leaders are relatively new to their roles and have not developed sufficient detail and focus in their written plans. Consequently, their monitoring of the improvements to the curriculum and evaluations of the impact of their actions on pupils' attainment and progress lack clarity.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are regular visitors to the school. They have improved their understanding of information on pupils' achievement, including that of different groups. They share in the drawing up of plans to address any areas for improvement, including how they will monitor the impact of leaders' actions. This supports governors in carrying out their functions effectively.
- Clear lines of communication between governors and the school ensure that leaders at all levels are held to account for the effectiveness of the education provided for the school's pupils. Governors were fully involved in developing and reviewing the pupil premium funding strategy. Their monitoring is now even more focused on the impact of this funding on the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils.
- There are good relationships between the governing body and school leaders. The governing body comprises a group of committed people who have the skills and expertise to monitor the standard of education provided. Governors engage with training both online and from the local authority to develop their knowledge and skills further.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding in which pupils feel safe and valued. The school's procedures and practices are fit for purpose. Safer recruitment processes are secure, ensuring that only suitable people are recruited to work with pupils. Leaders provide effective training and regular information updates to ensure that all staff are well aware of their responsibilities to safeguard pupils.

- Parents, carers and pupils feel that the school is a safe place to be. Leaders, including governors, ensure that staff receive high-quality training. As a result, staff know how to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse. They are very clear about the school's procedures for reporting and recording any concerns that they have regarding the safeguarding of pupils. Leaders are tenacious and also sympathetic in their work to protect vulnerable pupils.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. Leaders have implemented clear programmes to teach pupils about personal safety and healthy living. Teachers discuss the dangers associated with internet use, so that pupils understand their role in keeping themselves safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have taken successful action to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Most pupils now benefit from effective teaching that allows them to make good progress in a range of subjects.
- Teachers now ensure that pupils improve their fluency and speed of recall of important mathematical facts. They enable pupils to deal with larger and more complex numbers with increasing confidence. Pupils are gaining a better understanding of calculation strategies through the opportunities provided to reason and explain their thinking. However, teachers do not challenge the lower-attaining pupils to deepen their mathematical understanding sufficiently well. These pupils therefore draw on a relatively narrow mathematical vocabulary in their explanations. The proportion of current pupils attaining the school's higher standards is increasing, but, nevertheless, remains too low overall.
- In English, teachers have raised their expectations of the standards that pupils can reach in their writing. Teaching has been adapted to focus even more on vocabulary and the content of pupils' writing. Older pupils, particularly, are also encouraged to improve their own writing. These actions have helped to ensure that current pupils across the school make good progress and produce better pieces of writing. However, although a good proportion of pupils write with improved quality and quantity, as in mathematics even more pupils are capable of attaining a higher standard.
- The teaching of reading is effective. Year 2 pupils read well and have an accurate understanding of what they have read. Older pupils understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction. These pupils also enjoy a wide range of books by a variety of authors. They read with intonation and expression and have an improving understanding of what they have read. Younger pupils use a wide range of strategies, including phonics to read unknown words.
- Leaders have employed several teaching assistants across the school. They work effectively, particularly with small groups to support pupils with SEND. Teachers make accurate assessments of pupils' learning needs. Teaching and learning are well matched to these identified needs, so that pupils with SEND are beginning to make good progress from their starting points.
- The school's approach to planning and teaching the curriculum allows teachers to develop English and mathematics through other subjects. Pupils in key stage 2

appreciate the chance to apply their knowledge of writing structures and what they have read to an historical context. Mathematical charts and tables are used well to record and explain geographical and scientific findings.

- A growing strength of teaching across the school is the use of questioning to encourage pupils to think for themselves or to clarify misconceptions. Pupils of all abilities recognise the importance of this strategy in helping them to become independent and confident learners. Effective questioning allows pupils to understand how well they are acquiring knowledge, skills and understanding in a range of subjects.
- Teachers use assessment with increasing effectiveness to ensure that pupils are learning and making progress. When they notice any misconceptions, they use a range of strategies to work with individuals or groups to address them. Consequently, pupils are confident that they will get the support that they need to learn successfully. However, this is not always the case across the school. Occasionally, teachers do not challenge the most able pupils enough.
- Teachers have an improving subject knowledge. They mainly use it well to plan learning that engages pupils' interest and provides sufficiently challenging work for most pupils. In some subjects, such as geography and art, this results in high-quality pieces of work. However, pupils' development of subject-specific skills varies across other subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils feel safe in school and understand how to keep themselves safe. They recognise the many different strategies that leaders use to keep them safe, including, for example, lessons on road safety and cyber bullying.
- A typical comment, endorsed by the group of pupils spoken to during the inspection, was: 'School encourages us to think about our big ideas about what we will do after school.' Pupils value the support and encouragement that they receive from their teachers. They are developing the self-confidence and independence to be successful learners. They are particularly appreciative of the clarifications and reminders from staff about past learning. They described lessons as 'fun'. Presentation in their books is sometimes untidy, but generally they show a growing sense of pride in their work.
- Disadvantaged pupils have opportunities to participate in activities outside school that they otherwise might not experience, for example gardening and country dancing. Leaders and staff work effectively to raise aspirations and self-confidence. Pupils recognise that 'making mistakes means you're learning' and are sensitive to the additional support offered to their classmates.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are attentive in class and learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils generally conduct themselves well around the

school. They are welcoming to visitors and are polite and friendly to adults and to each other.

- Inspection evidence shows that the incidents of bullying and poor behaviour are well managed by leaders and are decreasing over time. Pupils involved in any incidents are guided to modify their behaviour.
- Pupils spoken to during the inspection stated that bullying in the school is rare. They are clear about the school's systems for promoting good behaviour. They have confidence in the staff to deal with any incidents of poor behaviour.
- Pupils' attendance last year continued to rise towards the national average due to leaders' actions. Leaders have established a series of robust and rigorous systems and procedures to address attendance, punctuality and persistent absence, including a breakfast club. These have had a positive impact on the attendance and punctuality of disadvantaged pupils, whose attendance has improved when compared with the same period last year. However, there is little improvement in overall attendance or punctuality over the same period.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders and governors took decisive action in 2017 to improve outcomes. This was because achievement across the school in reading, writing and mathematics was below national averages for pupils' progress and attainment.
- Actions included commissioning the support of an experienced headteacher to work alongside the mathematics subject leader to improve the quality of teaching. Leaders also welcomed the well-focused support and advice from the local authority. New leaders were appointed to monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- These strategies implemented by the school's leaders resulted in improvements in progress and attainment in 2018 in the national assessments in key stages 1 and 2. However, despite these improvements, in 2018, the combined reading, writing and mathematics attainment for key stage 2 pupils and attainment in mathematics for key stage 1 pupils remained below national averages. Attainment at the higher levels was also below national averages at key stages 1 and 2.
- Work in books and the school's own assessment information indicate that most pupils currently in the school now make good progress across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. This is because of the improvements in the quality of teaching, resulting from appropriate training and coaching. While many current pupils achieve well, some of the most able pupils do not achieve the higher standards of which they are capable.
- Work in pupils' mathematics books and the school's assessment information show that most pupils are making good progress. Pupils' knowledge and skills are improving and they are developing a deepening understanding of calculation processes. Opportunities to say how they came to their answers and develop their reasoning skills are encouraging pupils to draw on their increasing mathematical knowledge and understanding to explain their thought processes, especially in key stage 2. However, there are fewer opportunities for lower-attaining pupils to develop and apply problem-

solving and reasoning skills.

- Pupils' writing includes a variety of sentence structures and phrases to add interest. Pupils in key stage 1 use wider vocabulary and are developing their use of the language of traditional stories. Older pupils include similes and other descriptions effectively to create mood. Teachers have high expectations and share these well so that pupils know how to check whether their work is good enough. This approach ensures that most pupils make good progress. Older pupils produce emotive and cohesive pieces of writing. While the numbers of pupils attaining greater depth are increasing, even more pupils are capable of doing so.
- Pupils read with appropriate fluency and comprehension, considering their age and ability. They are beginning to use their knowledge of phonics effectively to read unfamiliar words. They read widely and for pleasure and enjoy reading. Pupils in Year 1 achieve well in the national phonics check.
- At the end of key stages 1 and 2 in 2018, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was not as strong as that of other pupils nationally. Teachers have devised more appropriate support for these pupils through their teaching plans. Leaders use reviews of progress and attainment each half term to determine the impact of this support on pupils' achievements. As a result, most disadvantaged pupils are now making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They are beginning to attain as highly as other pupils in the school.
- Pupils with SEND are making good progress from their starting points. The recently appointed SENCo manages provision efficiently and identifies pupils' needs effectively. Pupils benefit from carefully planned interventions with well-sequenced lessons and support that help them to make good progress. Increasing numbers of pupils with SEND are working at age-related expectations.
- Pupils acquire appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills in a range of subjects other than English and mathematics. Work in their books shows that most pupils are making good progress. For example, in Year 5, good teaching in geography enabled pupils to develop their understanding of a variety of maps and atlases. However, occasionally, the deeper development of pupils' subject-specific skills is less clear. In these cases, pupils have limited opportunities to challenge their understanding.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the early years with skills and knowledge that are below the level of those typical for their age and stage of development. Through good teaching, greater numbers of children than in previous years are making good progress and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Leaders' assessment records and work in children's books show that the proportion of children working at age-related expectations is increasing. However, the proportion of Reception children achieving a good level of development remains below the national average.
- Nursery children benefit from high expectations, especially in speech and language, vocabulary and phonics. Children are beginning to form recognisable letters and to attempt to write their own names. As a result of well-focused teaching activities,

increasing numbers of children are working within age-related expectations.

- Reception children listen carefully to instructions. Staff use carefully crafted and probing questioning and a wide range of experiences to assess and broaden children's knowledge. For example, children write about the signs of spring and about rainbows. Staff also intervene swiftly to address misconceptions, enabling children to develop their understanding further. Learning support assistants contribute to children's learning activities well and help them to make good progress over time.
- The leader of the early years has a very effective understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the early years provision. She is keen to secure improvements. She has identified, for example, that the development of speech and language and children's personal, social and emotional development are central to improved outcomes. She is determined to raise the proportions of children attaining a good level of development.
- Children who are disadvantaged make good progress. This is because staff provide a number of additional activities which support their learning effectively. These activities are particularly effective in phonics, early number acquisition and also in speech and language development.
- Leaders identify and support children with SEND effectively. Children with speech and language difficulties are quickly assessed on entry into the early years classes and receive additional help from specially trained staff. This effective practice helps to ensure that these children make good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders involve parents in their children's education in various ways. Parents accept invitations to join their children in school activities and workshops. Staff meet with parents before children start in the Nursery or Reception class to ascertain the children's needs and establish whether any additional support is needed. This ensures that transition into the early years is well managed.
- Children's behaviour and their attitudes to learning are good. They are confident in exploring activities indoors and outside, demonstrating that they feel safe. There are no breaches of the welfare requirements. Staff follow and know well the safeguarding procedures and policies applicable to the whole school.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Teachers provide well-planned activities that enthuse the children and are carefully matched to their learning needs. However, opportunities to challenge the most able children are limited. Staff use children's enthusiasm for writing to encourage them to retell favourite stories.

School details

Unique reference number	106108
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10082070

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	341
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Tropez Martin
Headteacher	Miss Joanne Harrington
Telephone number	0161 480 5403
Website	www.st-pauls.stockport.sch.uk
Email address	admin@st-pauls.stockport.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 to 5 November 2014

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is broadly average.
- The school is a voluntary controlled Church of England primary school in the diocese of Chester. At its last section 48 inspection in October 2015 it was judged good.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning throughout the school in all classes and in a range of subjects and scrutinised pupils' work. Some of these activities were carried out jointly with members of the senior-leadership team.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Observations were made of pupils' behaviour at the beginning of the day, at lunchtime, at breaktime and in the classroom.
- The inspectors met with pupils, formally and informally, to listen to their views.
- Meetings were held with the senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspection team scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including information about pupils' attainment and progress and the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan. Inspectors considered minutes of meetings and records relating to teaching and learning, pupils' attendance and behaviour and safeguarding of pupils. A scrutiny of the website was also undertaken.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents through informal meetings. They analysed 14 responses received through the free-text facility on Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. They also analysed 14 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Ian Shackleton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Suzanne Blay	Ofsted Inspector
Louise Corlett	Ofsted Inspector

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