

St Paul's Church of England Primary School, Bury

Porritt Street, Via Huntley Mount Road, Bury, Lancashire BL9 6LJ

Inspection dates

8–9 May 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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Gaps in pupils' writing skills, particularly grammar and punctuation, brought about by previously weak teaching, have not been fully addressed. Consequently, not enough pupils reach the expected standard in writing.
- Although improving, progress made by pupils, especially the most able pupils, is not good.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently strong and, at times, does not match the learning needs of the pupils. Teachers' expectations of the quality and quantity of pupils' work are too variable across the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is improving following a review of their barriers to learning. Revised approaches to teaching are having a positive impact on standards of work. However, the achievement of the most able disadvantaged pupils still lags behind that of other pupils nationally.
- In subjects other than English and mathematics, many pupils carry a legacy of underachievement. Weaker teaching in the past has left many gaps in their skills and knowledge. Although improving, gaps remain.

The school has the following strengths

- Recent actions implemented by the leadership team and governors are improving the school. Leaders have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve further.
- Pupils are polite, generally behave well and feel safe. They enjoy coming to school and their attendance is now broadly average.
- The teaching of reading and mathematics is effective and is leading to improvements in the acquisition of basic skills.
- Provision in early years is good. Outcomes at the end of Reception are improving.
- Leaders have developed effective systems to address pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs. Owing to this support, increased numbers of pupils are making improved progress and are working at the standard expected for their age.
- St Paul's has suffered from a turbulent past. It has had many changes in staff, which led to poor outcomes for pupils. However, there is now an improving picture of greater stability.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are making good progress due to improved identification of their needs and better teaching.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes, especially in writing, so that:
 - pupils, especially the most able and the most able disadvantaged, make at least good progress by the end of key stage 2
 - increased numbers of pupils write at the standard expected for their age, particularly in upper key stage 2
 - more pupils attain at greater depth in writing and reach the higher standards in reading and mathematics
 - pupils develop subject-specific skills and attain well in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, so that it is consistently at least good, by:
 - making sure that there is always a suitable level of challenge in lessons, especially for the most able pupils
 - developing pupils' knowledge of grammar and punctuation and ensuring that they use this correctly in their writing
 - ensuring that teachers have consistently high expectations of the amount and quality of pupils' work
 - tackling the gaps in pupils' skills and knowledge.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that teaching or pupils' outcomes are consistently good. Consequently, leadership and management require improvement.
- High levels of staff changes in the past have slowed the rate of improvement. The headteacher and her senior leadership team now have an accurate and realistic picture of the school's performance. Together, they have brought an ambitious culture to the school and begun to tackle the most pressing areas that require improvement.
- Historically, leaders did not ensure that assessment systems were sufficiently accurate. In part, they struggled with the complexities caused by the high numbers of admissions during the school year, often of pupils with additional needs. Although the accuracy of assessment information is improving, teachers do not always use it effectively to set work for pupils at the right level. Teachers' expectations are not high enough and inconsistencies in teaching remain. Progress and attainment are too variable, especially in writing and for the most able pupils.
- Most subject leaders are new to their posts and it is too soon to see any long-term impact of their actions on pupils' learning or outcomes. Current training is enabling these leaders to improve their skills and share their expertise. For example, the teaching of mathematics and reading is more effective because they have introduced agreed approaches that all staff are following. However, leaders have not challenged and supported staff to address the variability in practice and in pupils' outcomes in other areas.
- Leaders have addressed issues of balance and progression in the wider curriculum. Led and modelled by senior leaders, the curriculum is well matched to the specific context of the school and includes nurture and additional support. Clubs and enrichment activities broaden pupils' experiences, make learning interesting and are helping to tackle a legacy of underachievement in English and mathematics.
- Leaders have recently reviewed the school's use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. It is now better focused on the barriers to individual pupils' progress and supports their learning needs. This additional support is contributing to the improvements in pupils' progress, but is not making inroads into the legacy of underachievement for the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Recent external support through the local authority and local alliance of schools has been effective in helping senior leaders to identify weaknesses and bring about improvements. In particular, this support has enabled improvements to assessment systems and the teaching of mathematics and reading. However, improvements to the teaching of writing need time to embed.
- Physical education (PE) and sport funding has been used effectively to provide specialist teaching. This has had a positive impact on the quality of the provision, the popularity of PE, and training for class teachers. More pupils are joining after-school sports clubs and participating in competitive sport.
- Additional funding for pupils with SEND is used well. Pupils' needs are identified more effectively and these pupils now benefit from intensive, specialist support from

teachers and other staff.

- Managing the performance of teachers is more stringent this year than in the past. Reviews are directly linked to the teachers' standards and the progress that pupils make. The recent emphasis on staff training and improving teachers' subject knowledge is paying dividends. For example, staff talk about their growing confidence when teaching basic skills in mathematics.
- Leaders' work to promote pupils' rights, respect and responsibilities is evident throughout the school. Pupils are tolerant and respectful of each other and of adults. They talk with understanding about the need to respect other cultures and viewpoints. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils is developed well and pupils show a growing understanding of British values.
- The headteacher and her senior leaders have established a positive ethos and shared vision about how the school will improve. Their openness and honesty have earned the backing of pupils, staff and governors. A large majority of parents who spoke to the inspectors had similar views and believe that the school 'doesn't get the credit it deserves' for the support it provides for pupils and their families.

Governance of the school

- Over the past few years, governors have not held leaders sufficiently to account for ensuring that the quality of teaching and learning, and pupils' outcomes, are consistently good. This has contributed to a decline in standards. However, they have recently undertaken an audit of their collective skills and recruited new governors to complement their existing experience and expertise.
- Governors now have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are regular visitors into school. They have improved their understanding of information on pupils' achievement, including that of different groups. Governors now 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 to carry out their functions effectively.
- Clear lines of accountability and communication between governors and the school ensure that leaders are better held to account for the effectiveness of the education provided to pupils. Governors' monitoring is now focused on the impact of funding for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND on their progress and attainment. Through more effective monitoring, governors are able to meet their statutory responsibilities.
- Good relationships exist between the governing body and school leaders. The governing body comprises a group of committed people who now have the skills and expertise to monitor the standard of education provided.

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 employed to work with 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 and are well aware of their responsibilities to safeguard pupils. Staff 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 and recognise the systems and procedures leaders and governors have implemented to keep them safe. Leaders have implemented clear programmes to teach pupils about personal and internet safety. Teachers discuss the dangers associated with class visits outside school, so that pupils understand their role in keeping themselves safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- In most classes, especially in key stage 1, pupils are showing encouraging signs of improved attainment and progress. However, in some classes, pupils do not make good progress. In part this is because, in the past, leaders did not give strategies sufficient time to embed and also because of previous staffing instability. This has slowed leaders' efforts to develop a consistent approach to teaching and, consequently, limited the progress pupils have made. As a result, the quality of teaching requires improvement across some year groups and subjects, particularly writing.
- Many teachers have strong subject knowledge and plan interesting activities that capture pupils' enthusiasm. Some teachers, however, provide activities that do not build on what pupils know, so they become confused and lose interest.
- The teaching of writing is not fully effective. Some pupils are not writing at the appropriate standard. Where teaching has improved, pupils' ability to write at length and in a variety of styles has developed. Teachers give attention to teaching grammar and punctuation, but these skills are not transferred securely to pupils' writing. In some classes, teaching approaches restrict pupils' opportunities to write with flair and imagination.
- In mathematics, the quality of teaching is improving and is beginning to address the gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Effective training has ensured a consistent approach to teaching different methods of calculation. Opportunities are increasingly provided for pupils to deepen their understanding through reasoning and problem solving. Although pupils, particularly the most able pupils, tackle these effectively, teachers fail to insist on appropriate mathematical vocabulary in their explanations.
- The teaching of phonics is strong and is beginning to have a positive impact on improving standards of reading by the end of key stage 1. Teachers support the development of effective reading skills through a focus on literature in class topics and well-planned reading lessons. By the end of key stage 2, pupils' progress is good and they are confident, fluent readers with good comprehension skills.
- Many teachers do not provide enough challenge for the most able pupils. As a result, pupils sometimes repeat work unnecessarily or spend too long on insufficiently demanding tasks. These pupils do not make the strong progress of which they are

capable in a range of subjects.

- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support and challenge pupils' learning. This is particularly evident in the main part of lessons when pupils are working on their tasks. In addition, their work with groups of pupils with SEND and individual pupils is very effective and results in these pupils making good progress.
- Teachers use questioning with increasing effectiveness to probe pupils' understanding and to clarify their knowledge across a wide range of subjects. As a result, teachers are becoming more adept at adapting the support or challenge to promote improved progress and attainment. This was particularly effective in some of the Year 5 mathematics lessons observed during the inspection, which drew well on pupils' prior knowledge. However, such practice is not consistently established across the school. In some areas, the teaching of subject-specific skills is weak.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils value the support and encouragement that they receive from their teachers. They are developing the self-confidence and independence to be successful learners. Pupils 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 as they move through the school, pupils show a growing sense of pride in their work.
- The Haven, a classroom used as a base to help and support vulnerable pupils, particularly first thing in the morning, develops pupils' social and emotional skills effectively and raises aspirations and self-confidence. Pupils who have used this room have improved their punctuality and attendance. Pupils and parents spoke positively about the impact it has had on their personal development. Leaders are looking to develop this facility to provide greater support throughout the school day.
- Pupils benefit from several clubs and visits that the staff provide. Pupils appreciate the range of sports clubs. These activities, along with regular opportunities to support various charities and to learn about other faiths, enhance and enrich pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to take on positions of responsibility in the school. These include becoming a member of the school council. Pupils elected to these roles carry out their duties with pride and to good effect.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is good. They are polite and well mannered, frequently holding doors open for adults. Pupils behave responsibly and respect the points of view expressed by others.

- Records show that pupils' behaviour is well managed. Pupils understand the school's expectations, value the rewards available for good behaviour and recognise the consequences for poor behaviour.
- Pupils' attendance and punctuality are improving. Leaders have effective systems to follow up instances of absence or lateness. These systems have resulted in improvements in attendance and a reduction in persistent absence rates for all groups of pupils. These are now approaching or matching national averages.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Historically, progress across key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics was not good enough and standards were well below average in the 2018 national tests. A lower than average proportion of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, reached the higher standards, and pupils' progress from their starting points at the end of key stage 1 was not good enough. This was because the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics was too variable in quality in key stage 2, due to instability in staffing.
- In key stage 1, historically standards have also been weak. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils reaching or exceeding the standards expected for their age remained below average in 2018.
- Inspection evidence, gained in part from observing lessons and looking at work in pupils' books, shows that progress is accelerating and standards are beginning to rise, particularly in key stage 1 and Years 3 and 4. Nonetheless, the proportion of pupils working at a greater depth and reaching higher standards in their work is still too low, particularly in writing. Older pupils' progress across key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics is not consistently good.
- Across the wider curriculum, pupils' progress is slower than it could be because not all teachers have high enough expectations and systematically plan work that is sufficiently challenging.
- An increasing proportion of disadvantaged pupils are reaching the standards expected for their age due to the focused support they receive to catch up in their learning. However, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are most able and reach the higher standards at the end of key stages 1 and 2 is not high enough.
- Pupils with SEND are now making good progress as a result of tailored support for their individual needs. An increasing proportion of these pupils are reaching age-related expectations, indicating the effectiveness of the school's inclusive practice.
- Good teaching and provision in Reception mean that children have a good grasp of basic skills by the end of Reception and are well prepared to enter key stage 1.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in the Year 1 phonics check is above average due to effective teaching in this subject.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter early years with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for

their age. 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 children's work show that the proportion of children making good progress is increasing. However, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development remains below the national average, due to increased numbers of international new arrivals and children with SEND.
- 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 for independent writing in the outside environment are limited, particularly for the most able children.
- Children listen carefully to instructions. Staff use carefully crafted, probing questioning and a wide range of experiences to assess and broaden children's knowledge, for example of sharing buttons between two gingerbread men. Staff also intervene swiftly to address misconceptions, enabling children to develop their understanding further. Staff support children's learning activities well and help them to make good progress over time.
- Leadership of early years is effective. The early years leader has ensured that all staff are appropriately trained to identify and plan for individual children's needs. They use assessment information well to plan activities that capture children's imagination. The children are keen to participate in their learning.
- Children who are disadvantaged make good progress. This is because staff provide a number of additional activities that support their learning effectively. These activities are particularly effective in phonics 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 and receive additional help from specially trained staff. This effective practice helps to ensure that these children make good progress.
- Leaders involve parents in their children's education in various ways. Parents accept invitations to join their children in school activities. Staff meet with parents before children start school to ascertain the children's needs and establish whether any additional support is required. This ensures that transition into Reception 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.

School details

Unique reference number	105332
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10087816

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	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paula Heap
Headteacher	Joanne Morris
Telephone number	0161 764 3788
Website	www.stpaulsbury.co.uk
Email address	stpaulsbury@bury.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	28–29 March 2017

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The school had an increase in the number of pupils on roll of around 10% during the last academic year. Pupils joined the school at various times throughout the year and in every year group. Some pupils were international new arrivals who did not speak any English, while others joined from schools in the locality.
- 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 well above 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 well above average.

- The school is a voluntary-aided Church of England primary school in the Diocese of Manchester. At its last section 48 inspection in February 2013, it was judged outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning 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, 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 governing body meetings and records relating to teaching and learning, pupils' attendance and behaviour and the safeguarding of pupils. A scrutiny of the website was also undertaken.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents through informal meetings and the two responses received through the free-text facility on Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.

Inspection team

Ian Shackleton, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Christine Howard

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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