

St Paul's CofE (C) Primary School

Byatts Grove, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent, ST3 2RH

Inspection dates 13–14 January 2015

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Early years provision | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- This is a good and improving school. The strong leadership of the headteacher ensures that pupils from all backgrounds achieve well. All staff, leaders, governors and parents receive strong support and guidance from her.
- The leadership of the assistant headteachers, and of early years and special educational needs, are also very effective. They support the headteacher well to ensure that teaching, behaviour and achievement are good and improving.
- Governors are very supportive of the school. They ensure that money is well spent and helping pupils to achieve well. This is reflected in a recent national award for the way that the school uses money to raise the achievement of disadvantaged children in the school.
- Parents can be confident in sending their children to this school. Pupils are kept safe and well looked after. This is also the case for many pupils who join the school at different times.
- There is good attention to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in lessons, clubs and assemblies. As a result, pupils from different backgrounds get on well with each other, feel safe and are happy at school.
- From their different starting points, most pupils achieve well in reading, writing and particularly in mathematics.
- The quality of writing has improved well from the previous inspection. This is due to improvements in teaching.
- The quality of teaching and resources in the early years has improved well. As a result, most children make at least good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attendance is below the national average.
- Some children, particularly those who have joined the school after the beginning of Nursery, are not achieving highly enough by the end of Key Stage 1.
- There are some wide gaps in achievement between boys and girls in reading and writing in some year groups in the school.
- Pupils' overall good achievement in reading and writing is not as strong as it is in mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a range of lessons and looked closely at books across all classes. The headteacher joined three of the visits.
- There were insufficient responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to enable inspectors to take parents' views into account. However, inspectors took account of the most recent responses to a parental questionnaire recently carried out by the school. They also talked to parents in the school grounds.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils and inspectors spoke to pupils at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors also held discussions with eight governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and school staff.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, documents relating to the school's plans for improvement, its procedures for checking the quality of teaching, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Clarice Nelson-Rowe, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Julie Downing | Additional Inspector |
| Anthony Buckley | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- A significant minority of pupils join or leave the school other than at the start of the school year. This affects all year groups currently in the school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average. The term disadvantaged is used to describe those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for those children who are looked after by the local authority and are eligible for the pupil premium funding.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is around average with the largest group from Pakistani heritage, but more increasingly from Eastern European groups.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well above average.
- Children in the early years are taught in one Nursery and one Reception classes. Children in the Nursery attend full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve achievement to become outstanding overall by ensuring:
 - pupils achieve higher levels by the end of Key Stage 1
 - that gaps between boys' and girls' achievement are reduced
 - that progress in reading and writing is as consistently strong as in mathematics across the school.
- Improve attendance rates further, so that they are much closer to the national average by:
 - continuing to remind parents about the negative impact of absences on pupils' achievement
 - seeking other ways to enhance the strategies used to improve attendance.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and her senior leaders lead the school well. Staff morale is high and there is a strong commitment to raising the achievement of all groups of pupils. This has resulted in a trend of improvements in achievement and the quality of teaching across the school.
- The school's view of itself is very accurate. This is because the headteacher and assistant headteachers thoroughly check books and the quality of learning in lessons, and look closely at how well pupils are improving their grades over time. The information is used to support and set challenging targets for teachers to improve the quality of their teaching performance.
- Teachers value the feedback about the quality of their teaching, as it helps them to know how to improve. The headteacher ensures that all leaders and teachers get the appropriate training from each other and from educational experts and other schools. Such training is not only helping to improve the quality of leadership in the school, but also helping teachers to improve the ways that they help pupils to learn. Training is also ensuring that the school is being kept up to date with new curriculum requirements, including up to date technology to help pupils improve their computing skills.
- Leaders at all levels, including middle leaders, ensure that extra support given to pupils is always helping them to catch up quickly. Leaders have a very strong commitment and passion to checking that pupils from all backgrounds and with varying needs are doing well. Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, and particularly those who have joined the school at the usual starting times, achieve well.
- The school's high commitment to achievement for all is also reflected in the leadership of special educational needs support. As a result, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, also achieve well because their needs are well met.
- The curriculum is good and improving. Pupils enjoy a wide range of clubs including the school's rock band, Christian club and gym. The school ensures that children have access to experiences that they would not otherwise have, such as residential trips.
- The curriculum also ensures that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong as shown in their behaviour towards each other. They also understand the importance of the British law. Links with the local church and lessons in school help pupils to learn about the Christian faith. However, pupils enjoy the opportunities they are given to think about their own beliefs and those of different faiths.
- The school works well to encourage parents to bring their children to school regularly and have employed additional staff to improve attendance. The school's Learning Mentor and Home-School Worker work closely together and ensure that the absences of children who may be at risk are reported to the relevant authorities. The school's strategies to improve attendance are now helping to improve attendance. However, the school is aware that more strategies are needed to improve the situation further.
- The effective use of the primary school sport funding has led to a rise in the number of pupils taking part in a range of sports. This also includes taking part in local games with other schools.
- The school's most recent survey of parents' views shows that the majority of parents are happy with the school. The majority of parents that inspectors spoke to in the school grounds say that the school keeps them well informed of how well their children are doing.
- Due to the school being judged as 'good' in its previous inspection, the local authority has provided minimal support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors closely supervise the school's finances so that the school make the best use of available resources. Governors know how the pupil premium funding is spent and are aware of the positive academic and social impact of this funding on those eligible pupils.
 - Systems for managing the performance of staff and rewarding them appropriately through the pay scales are in place and understood by governors.
 - The governing body ensures that all statutory duties are fulfilled, including those for safeguarding.
 - Governors are dedicated. Most have a good overview of how leaders are addressing any areas for improvement in teaching and achievement since the previous inspection. Due to good information from the headteacher, they understand the strengths and weaknesses in the performance of the school compared to other schools nationally. They have recently reorganised themselves so that they can give even better support to the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons, attitudes to learning are at least good and sometimes outstanding. For example, pupils work very hard, help each other to improve their work and concentrate well for good periods of time.
- The relationships between pupils and adults are at least good and pupils are respectful and polite. Staff encourage pupils to work cooperatively and to listen and value each other's thoughts and contributions. Pupils say that behaviour is usually good in the school.
- Pupils are happy, settle quickly in individual and group work, and generally show a pride in the presentation in their work. They listen carefully to instructions so that they understand what they have to do.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel well looked after and feel confident that when concerns are raised they will be dealt with quickly and fairly.
- Pupils help to make the school a safe and happy place. For example, as play leaders, anti-bullying councillors and eco-councillors, they take their responsibilities seriously to help the school improve. Pupils feel that staff are always available to help, and do listen and respond to any concerns.
- Pupils move around the school building sensibly and safely. Outside, the playground equipment is used safely and pupils play safely. Pupils show care and respect for their school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe including when using the internet. They show good awareness of different types of bullying and what to do should it occur.
- The school has worked hard to improve attendance using a variety of strategies. This includes working more actively with families and to encourage the regular attendance of specific groups of pupils.
- Attendance is now starting to improve for some families. However, despite the school's efforts, some parents are still not regularly sending their children to school. As a result their children do not achieve as well as they should.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers capture pupils' interest in a range of creative ways and help to develop their literacy and mathematical skills well across a range of subjects. For example, in Year 6 work on understanding a character in a story, they used a graph to plot the frequency and type of emotions that a character experiences. Such activities help pupils to use and develop their mathematical skills in writing.
- Pupils say that they value the clear and interesting ways that staff use to explain how to use different mathematical methods when solving problems. This helps to increase pupils' enjoyment of mathematics and provides extra challenge for pupils of all abilities.
- Teachers plan lessons well and help pupils gain new knowledge quickly. Good questioning by teachers helps pupils to give good explanations about their work. For example, in a Year 4 science lesson where pupils were testing liquids, they explained well what equipment they used and why it was a 'fair test'.
- The teaching of reading is well established and effective. For example, pupils are regularly taught the link between letters and the sounds they represent, and are grouped flexibly across the school. As a result, learning is accurately matched to pupils' needs and any gaps in knowledge are successfully addressed.
- Teachers regularly check pupils' work. They make changes to tasks and activities if they find pupils are either struggling or finding the work too easy.
- Teaching assistants play an active part during lessons, confidently supporting pupils and responding sensitively to their needs as the lesson progresses. As a result, the pupils who work with them, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, usually make good progress.
- Marking is effective and consistent throughout the school and helps pupils to improve their work. Discussions with pupils show that they appreciate this and they know what they need to do to improve their learning.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The school is successful at promoting equality of opportunities for all pupils. Almost all pupils make good

progress in reading, writing and mathematics in most year groups across the school and some make outstanding progress. Work in pupils' books and progress in lessons demonstrate this clearly. Progress in mathematics is strongest. In 2014 pupils' overall attainment at the end of Year 6 was above average.

- Children enter early years with skills which are below those typical for their age. However, due to the high expectations that staff have of children, they make good progress, and for some outstanding progress, through the early years.
- Although improving, pupils' overall performance at the end of Key Stage 1 in recent years has been low in all subjects. This has been due to high numbers of pupils joining and leaving the school at different times, and high numbers of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. In addition, there has also been some weak teaching in the past which has now been eliminated.
- For those pupils who joined the school in Nursery, attainment is much closer to the national averages by the end of Year 2 than for others who did not join the school at this time. However, despite the good start in the early years, by the end of Key Stage 1, some pupils are still not achieving highly enough in relation to their levels of abilities at the end of Reception. Most Key Stage 1 pupils who did not perform well in 2013 and 2014 are now well supported and making good progress.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. The results of the Year 1 check on pupils' skills in phonics (linking letters and sounds) have been above average for those who do not have special educational needs. For those who do, they have at least been in line but often above similar pupils nationally. The good support in Year 2 for pupils who did not meet the expected standard ensures that they quickly catch up and make good progress.
- The detailed records kept by teachers show that any gaps in pupils' reading skills are quickly picked up and addressed. This has effectively closed the gap between the lower achievement of boys compared to girls although this is still too wide in reading and writing in some year groups. Nevertheless, overall pupils enjoy books from a wide variety of authors and are skilled at scanning factual books for information.
- Overall, pupils make good progress in writing. This is because they are given many opportunities to write at length in English lessons and in other subjects. Pupils have many opportunities to practise their writing skills across the curriculum. They take care to present work carefully and use a legible handwriting style. They use a range of language to explain events, describe characters and to share their thoughts.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is good and consistently stronger than in reading and writing. This is because daily mental mathematics, problem-solving activities and booster classes are used well to improve pupils' thinking and reasoning skills. Pupils are also encouraged to use their skills in different subjects.
- No meaningful comparisons can be made between the performance of pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those who speak English as an additional language, and their peers. This is because they have varied over time in the different heritage groups they have come from and many join the school at different times in the year. However, in general, school data show that their progress in all year groups is at least as good as their peers and sometimes above.
- The overall attainment of disadvantaged pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 was around two terms higher than other pupils nationally, and in the school, in reading and mathematics. In writing they were the same as these groups. The school has recently been recognised nationally for using special funding well to support the achievement of these groups.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are cared for well. Good partnerships are in place with specialists and parents. Teaching for them is also highly effective and ensures that their progress in reading, writing and mathematics is good across all years. For some it is outstanding in relation to the complexities of their needs. In 2014, their attainment by the end of Year 6 in reading and mathematics was above the national average.
- The most able are regularly provided with challenging work. For example, they are given enrichment sessions such as 'master classes' in how to solve crime and write different stories. For those who joined the school at the usual times, their progress is currently improving well, helped by some support from mentoring in English and mathematics from a local high school and a school governor.

The early years provision

is good

- Overall, children enter the Nursery with skills that are below what is typical for their age, and over two-thirds enter with particularly low levels of skills and abilities. Some children also join at different times speaking no or very little English.
- The quality of teaching is good. Adults continually monitor children's learning and are careful to ensure that good opportunities are available for them to develop their reading, writing, and mathematical skills. They ensure that children have a good range of activities and resources to help them to learn.

- As a result of good teaching, those who join the Nursery or Reception at normal times make good and sometimes outstanding progress from low starting points. Most children, including those who have joined at different times, are helped to be ready for Year 1.
- Children are inquisitive and mostly work well together. They enjoy sharing their resources, playing together and talking about their learning. This is because adults nurture good relationships where children feel important and cared for. Good routines are well established so that children know what is expected.
- Children make particularly good progress in their personal and social skills. Most behave well in a range of situations whether they are being supervised directly by an adult or not. They are able to take turns, and listen to adults and each other well.
- The quality of leadership and management are good. The early years leader is very knowledgeable. She has created an effective team who share high expectations of the children and know exactly what they are expected to do each day. The curriculum is planned well to make sure there are a range of interesting activities within a rich learning environment.
- There are good safety procedures in place and children learn how to stay safe in a range of situations suitable for their age.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | Grade | Judgement | Description |
|--------|---------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Grade 1 | Outstanding | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| | Grade 2 | Good | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| | Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection. |
| | Grade 4 | Inadequate | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 124227 |
| Local authority | Stoke-on-Trent |
| Inspection number | 448537 |

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

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|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 323 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | John Alessi |
| Headteacher | Sandra Hearson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 14 July 2010 |
| Telephone number | 01782 235051 |
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