

St Paul's Church of England Primary School

Cross Lane, Salford, Greater Manchester M5 4AL

Inspection dates

27–28 March 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- A legacy of weak leadership has led to a considerable decline in the progress that pupils make.
- Attainment in mathematics, reading and writing, including for disadvantaged pupils, is low. By the time they leave the school, pupils underachieve significantly.
- Gaps remain in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding due to the weaker teaching they have experienced in the past.
- The quality of teaching is variable. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high enough.
- Teachers do not use assessment information consistently well to challenge pupils, including the most able, to make the best possible progress.
- Teaching assistants' skills are still developing.
- Although strengthening, the governing body has not held leaders to account over time. Previously, governors lacked an accurate and informed understanding of the school's performance.
- While a new assessment system is a positive step forward, teachers' skills in accurately assessing pupils' learning are not secure.
- The leadership skills of some subject leaders require further development.
- Pupils' reading skills are improving. However, some teachers do not plan learning that increases and enriches pupils' vocabulary.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills, including when they write in other subjects, are underdeveloped at times.
- Attendance is improving. However, some pupils still do not attend regularly.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and senior leaders have rapidly brought about much-needed change in most aspects of the school's work.
- Teaching is improving. It is strongest in early years and in upper key stage 2.
- Pupils' early reading skills are developed effectively.
- Pupils are kept safe and confirm that behaviour has improved. They are eager to learn. They try hard and take pride in their work.
- The curriculum engages pupils' interest well.
- Exciting learning opportunities help children to make a good start in early years.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further so that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make the best possible progress in key stages 1 and 2, by ensuring that teachers:
 - have high expectations of what pupils, including the most able, can do and achieve in lessons
 - identify and eradicate gaps in pupils' learning caused by historical weaknesses in teaching
 - use accurate assessment to set work at the right level of challenge to deepen pupils' learning in all subjects
 - move learning on once new learning has been grasped
 - develop pupils' skills, creativity and resilience as writers when they write independently and at length
 - continue to develop pupils' ability to reason and solve problems in mathematics
 - consistently develop the skills of pupils in subjects other than English and mathematics
 - enrich pupils' vocabulary as they learn in all subjects.
- Further strengthen the impact of leadership and management, by continuing to:
 - improve the accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' reading, writing and mathematics
 - ensure that teachers close the gaps in pupils' learning, including for the most able pupils, across different curriculum subjects
 - reduce the variation that exists in the quality of teaching
 - ensure that subject leaders gain the necessary leadership skills so that they make a greater contribution to school improvement
 - continue to develop the effectiveness of the governing body so that it holds leaders to account for the school's improvement, including in the use of additional funding to support the achievement of disadvantaged pupils
 - provide high-quality training to further develop teaching assistants' skills and subject knowledge so that they can fully support pupils' learning
 - provide opportunities for staff to learn from the best practice that exists in the school.

- Further build on the recent improvements in pupils' attendance, so that pupils attend school regularly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The school has been through a turbulent time since the previous inspection. Leaders did not respond quickly enough to concerns raised by the local authority. Moreover, subsequent staffing changes further contributed to a significant decline in the school's performance.
- Since her appointment, the headteacher has taken decisive action to challenge weaknesses in many aspects of the school's work. With steely determination, she has brought order to the running of the school. Furthermore, she has ensured that pupils and staff know what is expected of them. The headteacher has united the staff and injected a sense of common purpose to the work of the school. Pupils' behaviour is now good and teaching is improving quickly. There are signs that pupils' academic standards, which have been low for too long, are beginning to rise. Nonetheless, there is much more to do if pupils are to overcome a legacy of weak teaching and achieve as well as they should.
- The judicious and timely secondment of the acting deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher strengthened the school's leadership team. This arrangement increased the capacity of senior leadership and ensured that the headteacher has been able to concentrate on the most pressing weaknesses in the school.
- Leaders and the reconstituted governing body have shown that they can tackle difficult situations and bring about change for the better. Even so, there is more to do to strengthen leadership across the school to ensure that responsibility for school improvement is distributed more widely. For example, some subject leaders are still developing in their roles. All are keen to support colleagues. However, there has not been time to fully develop their leadership and management skills.
- Senior leaders' checks on the quality of teaching are thorough and accurate. Training and support have been, and continue to be, carefully targeted to sharpen and update teachers' skills, and to improve their subject knowledge.
- Over time, checks made by teachers on how well pupils are doing in reading, writing and mathematics have not proved wholly reliable. Some teachers have been too generous when making assessments and others have been over-cautious. This means that information about pupils' attainment and progress is not sufficiently valid as an indication of what pupils know and what they need to learn next. A new assessment system has been introduced. However, it is too soon to see a fully accurate picture of pupils' progress.
- Leaders' plans to improve the school identify the right priorities. They reflect the urgent pace of change taking place and the improvements being made.
- The new leader for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) provision has swiftly identified pupils whose needs have previously been unmet. However, it is too soon to see the full impact of this work on these pupils' outcomes. The school has forged strong partnerships with external agencies to ensure prompt and relevant support for these pupils. Parents and carers commented positively on the care and support their children receive.

- The personal, social and emotional needs of disadvantaged pupils are met effectively because their individual needs are understood well. Targeted teaching is beginning to lead to these pupils making stronger progress than that seen in recent years. However, these pupils have much ground to make up, particularly in key stage 2.
- The curriculum, which is taught in a series of topics, is enriched by a range of trips and activities. It captures pupils' interest and promotes their desire to learn. However, weaker teaching in the past means that many pupils, including the most able, have gaps in their skills and knowledge across different subjects.
- The school's Christian ethos lies at the core of its life. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils demonstrate respect and tolerance towards each other and the adults who care for them in school. Pupils talk knowledgeably about some of the different world religions and cultures. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- St Paul's is a nurturing school. The pastoral team provides effective support for all pupils, including those whose circumstances might make them vulnerable. Parents who spoke with inspectors and responded to the school's own survey and Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that staff care for their children well.
- Leaders use the additional funding for physical education (PE) and sport in primary schools effectively to support pupils' learning and well-being. It has been used to provide specialist sports coaching to develop pupils' skills. Pupils speak positively about the increased range of sporting activities available to them now. This work makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' healthy lifestyle.
- The online staff survey, completed during the inspection, indicated that staff are proud to work at the school. They feel well supported by school leaders and think that leaders care for their well-being.
- The school is now less reliant on external support than it was previously. The school's leaders for English and mathematics, for example, are successfully supporting their colleagues in sharing effective practice to bring about improvements in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has not acted promptly enough to halt the decline in the school's performance. Governors did not fully cooperate with the local authority when officers raised concerns about the school in early 2017.
- Since the appointment of the headteacher, governors have worked closely with a national leader of governance and representatives from Manchester Diocese to reconstitute the governing body and develop governors' skills. The work of governors has been reorganised and improvements made to the way that governors hold leaders to account for all aspects of the school's performance.
- Informative reports from senior leaders provide the governing body with an accurate view of the work of the school. As a result, the governing body provides increasingly effective support and challenge for school leaders.
- Most aspects of the school, including leadership and management and the quality of teaching, have needed 'root and branch' changes. Difficult decisions have not been

shirked. Governors are in no doubt about the urgent need to further improve pupils' outcomes.

- The governing body checks carefully on the spending of additional funding, including the pupil premium and funding for pupils with SEND. Governors understand the impact of spending decisions on the personal development and academic achievement of disadvantaged pupils. However, they have not yet ensured that these pupils achieve as well as they should.
- The governing body has restructured the school's leadership team to better meet the needs of the school. The process of securing a permanent deputy headteacher is at an advanced stage.
- The governing body ensures that statutory duties are met, including those for safeguarding. Omissions on the school's website were resolved before inspectors left the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- External reports about the school show that, following the headteacher's appointment, significant changes have been made to bring safeguarding arrangements up to the required standard. Issues with the security of the school site, supervision arrangements for pupils, and training for staff and governors were quickly addressed. Safeguarding systems, procedures and record keeping were overhauled as a matter of urgency.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school and inspection evidence confirms that the school's day-to-day practice helps to make sure they are. Staff are vigilant. They are very aware of their duty of care and are alert to any warning signs that a pupil's welfare or safety may be at risk. The school's procedures for following up on concerns are well organised. Staff clearly understand what to do. The school's work with families, and a variety of professional organisations when following up any concerns that do arise, is commendable.
- The curriculum develops pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe and deal with potential risks they may face.
- All the required checks on staff and visitors are carried out. The school site is now kept secure, supervision arrangements are as they should be, and pupils are cared for well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- In the past, leaders did not check well enough on the quality of teaching or the accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' achievement. This negatively affected the quality of pupils' learning across the school.
- Leaders' actions to overcome weaknesses in teaching are bearing fruit. The recent appointments, improved deployment of staff, high-quality training and a systematic approach to teaching some curriculum subjects, are beginning to resolve past weaknesses in teaching. Increased enthusiasm and improved teamwork among staff are leading to greater confidence and refreshed teaching skills. Nevertheless, there is still a way to go to ensure good-quality teaching is commonplace at St Paul's. Although

pupils are beginning to make stronger progress than in the past, particularly in upper key stage 2, too many pupils continue to have gaps in their knowledge and skills across different subjects. Too few pupils are acquiring the skills and knowledge that the school expects for their age or are doing better than this.

- Some teachers have quickly seized the updated approaches to teaching. These teachers make clear what is to be learned and build well on pupils' earlier learning. They take careful account of any gaps in previous learning and have high expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving. Work is carefully matched to pupils' needs. It challenges pupils of all abilities, including the most able. Pupils rise to this challenge, try hard and produce a good quantity of work. Pupils' progress is often strong as a result.
- Some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low at times. Tasks do not provide enough challenge. This slows down pupils' learning. At other times, work set does not take enough account of gaps in pupils' previous learning. When this happens, progress is hampered as pupils do not have the necessary skills, knowledge or understanding to cope with the demands of the work provided. This limits pupils' progress.
- Pupils' love of reading is fostered well. They enjoy the class books their teachers share with them and many read regularly at home. Early reading skills are developed well in early years. Leaders' actions to ensure this work is built on in key stages 1 and 2 are proving increasingly successful. However, work in pupils' books shows that many pupils lack the wide and rich vocabulary necessary to bring their creative written work to life.
- Most teaching assistants are making an increasingly valuable contribution to pupils' learning. This is most effective when these staff are briefed well by teachers and are aware of leaders' higher expectations of their role. However, some inconsistencies remain, meaning that some pupils do not benefit from the same high-quality support that others in the school receive.
- Pupils told inspectors that they like the way teachers use practical resources to help them understand new learning in mathematics. However, work in pupils' books shows that, over time, basic mathematical skills have not been developed systematically. Poor development of pupils' understanding and recall of multiplication tables and place value, for example, hinders pupils' ability to calculate effectively.
- The quality of the teaching of writing varies. Although some teaching is exciting and inspires pupils to write thoughtfully and skilfully, this is not consistently evident in pupils' books. In some classes, pupils waste time copying out sentences rather than using their skills developed previously to write independently and at length. Although well presented, writing in pupils' topic books is sometimes not of the same quality as that seen in English books. Opportunities to practise and develop skills previously learned are not seized. This hampers pupils' progress at times. Too many pupils, including the most able, are not developing the skills they need to be successful writers.
- Teachers often use questioning to probe and challenge pupils to think carefully about their answers. However, observations of learning in lessons and work in pupils' books show that, at times, learning does not move on quickly enough once the tasks set have been completed or concepts have been grasped. Specific gaps in pupils' knowledge

remain and are not always tackled, with the result that new learning does not build well enough on what has gone before.

- Pupils' handwriting and presentation of work show marked improvement over time. A whole-school focus on cursive handwriting is clearly paying off. Samples of pupils' best work displayed on the walls, particularly in upper key stage 2, are helping to lift expectations of what can be achieved. In all classes, there are consistent expectations for how work should be set out and pupils show an evident pride in the presentation of their writing.
- Teachers plan and teach a curriculum that captures the interest of pupils. Most teachers develop pupils' subject knowledge well. However, sometimes the development of pupils' skills is not strong enough. For example, pupils learn facts in science, history and geography, but sometimes opportunities to develop skills in these subjects are limited.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and are keen to contribute to its success. They take their responsibilities seriously. Those who act as pupil governors say that their views are taken seriously by school leaders. Others, who are nominated as 'helping hands', help their fellow pupils where they can.
- Pupils' personal development is well supported. Their welfare is important to staff. Adults know pupils well as individuals. Pupils, and their parents, speak well of the support that they receive. All staff are highly attentive to the needs of pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. They know about the different kinds of bullying, including cyber- and prejudice-based bullying. Pupils state that bullying incidents are rare and school records support this view.
- Pupils recognise that everyone is different but equal in value. Pupils of all ages are adamant that all are welcome at St Paul's.
- Pupils who are new to the school, many of whom speak English as an additional language and/or are recently arrived in the country, are helped to settle well. Pupils who act as 'welcome ambassadors' take their roles very seriously. They are trained to help new pupils settle comfortably and to quickly make new friends. Pupils who speak English as an additional language readily help others who speak their home language until they become more proficient at communicating in English.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Pupils say that the disruption to their learning, which occurred before the headteacher arrived at the school, has become a thing of the past. School records reflect pupils' views that behaviour has improved over time.
- Leaders' focus on improving the way in which pupils present their work in books is paying dividends. Pupils' books show that they take great pride in their work and try hard in lessons. Pupils' attitudes to learning are highly positive. Pupils concentrate well and show good perseverance when tackling the work set by teachers, even when work lacks challenge.
- Pupils are polite and considerate of others. They move around the school sensibly and play happily together on the playground areas.
- School rules and rewards are understood well by pupils and applied fairly and consistently by staff. 'Gold' cards, awarded to celebrate and reward good behaviour, are highly sought after by pupils.
- The breakfast club, which is open to all and for which no charge is made, is very popular. This is a sociable time where pupils of all ages get on very well together. Many older pupils take the opportunity to use the school computers or complete homework.
- A new system to record incidents of poor behaviour and any concerns of staff has been introduced. These records are regularly reviewed by senior leaders. This information is reported to governors. These records reflect the positive behaviour seen during the inspection, both around school and in class.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who contributed to the school's most recent survey and of those who spoke with inspectors said that their children enjoy school. They consider that their children are kept safe and the school makes sure behaviour is good and managed well by staff. Inspectors agree with this view.
- The pupil survey conducted during the inspection was overwhelmingly positive. These findings supported those from the school's own survey and the views of those pupils who spoke with inspectors.
- Attendance is improving due to the concerted efforts of pupils, parents and staff. It is now close to the national average. Fewer pupils are regularly absent. However, some disadvantaged pupils still do not attend school regularly, despite leaders' actions.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Outcomes are inadequate because pupils do not make sufficient progress from their starting points. In 2018, pupils' progress across key stage 2 was in the bottom 10% of all schools nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. For writing, this was the second year running that pupils' progress was so weak.
- Year 6 pupils left St Paul's ill-prepared for learning at secondary school in 2017 and 2018. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics were below the national averages.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 was lower than the national average in 2017. Year 2 pupils did better in 2018. Their performance in reading and mathematics

improved so that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards was in line with the national average. However, standards in writing showed further decline in 2018. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in writing remained well below the national average.

- Currently, pupils are taught key knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics in a more logical sequence than previously. However, a legacy of weak progress continues to hold pupils back and there is much ground still to make up. In writing and mathematics in particular, pupils have significant gaps in their knowledge and skills, particularly in key stage 2, which hamper their ability to tackle age-appropriate work.
- The progress of current pupils varies across the school. It is strongest in Year 5 and Year 6 where good gains in learning are made due to effective teaching. Progress in other year groups is weaker and pupils' gains in learning are not as convincing.
- Leaders' arrangements for spending the pupil premium funding effectively support the personal, social and emotional needs of disadvantaged pupils. However, those eligible pupils currently at the school continue to make inadequate progress over time.
- The level of challenge for the most able pupils varies. It is strongest in Years 5 and 6, where teaching often pushes pupils on as soon as they are ready. However, this is not consistent across the school. Often pupils who have grasped the concepts taught are not readily moved on and pupils are not able to deepen their understanding as well as they might. Much like other pupils in the school, the most able are still trying to overcome the legacy of weak teaching in the past and few are capitalising on their strong starting points.
- The emotional, social and behavioural needs of pupils with SEND are met well. There is no doubt that this aspect of the school's work is a key strength. In class, the academic progress of pupils with SEND varies. In part, this is the result of these pupils' different needs, but the variation in teaching that still exists across the school is also a contributing factor.
- The school has focused well on developing pupils' early reading skills. In the Year 1 phonics check, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard is in line with the national average. Pupils say that they enjoy reading and they like the way their teachers link the books they are reading to curriculum topics. However, this good start in early reading is not always built on well enough as pupils move up the school. In particular, pupils do not gain the wide range of vocabulary that they need to access more complex texts or to write maturely.

Early years provision

Good

- Effective teaching and strong leadership have maintained and built on the good provision in early years seen at the previous inspection.
- Most children start Nursery Year with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age. Communication and language skills, self-help and social development are particular weaknesses among the majority of children when they enter the school.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception has improved year on year and is now close to the national average. This

represents at least good progress for the children from their different starting points. These outcomes, observations of children's learning, plus a review of their individual books and assessment records, show that they are ready to take on the challenges of Year 1.

- The well-organised and attractive environment supports children's learning well. The outdoor area is an exciting and purposeful learning space. The activities on offer encourage children to be curious, to use their imagination and to talk about their ideas.
- Children are attentive, inquisitive and willing to work hard. They question adults readily when they work independently. They are keen to write and happily put their good phonic knowledge to good use when spelling and reading new words. They enjoy exploring a variety of books and are keen to share these with others.
- Children's imagination is sparked through carefully thought out activities. During the inspection, for example, children were fascinated by the 'footprint' left by the Big Bad Wolf of Red Riding Hood fame.
- Children's understanding of mathematics is developed well. Reception children recognise capacity, know number patterns and are confident enough to calculate mentally the answer to simple problems.
- Children respond well to the warm relationships they enjoy with staff. Good role modelling from adults means children treat each other, the environment and equipment with respect. They behave well, readily share toys and resources, and know how to keep themselves safe.
- Adults carefully gather children's views and take their interests and wishes into account when they plan the range of interesting activities provided each week. However, at times, there are limitations in the challenge the most able children are given.
- Through a range of support and high-quality training, teaching assistants are becoming increasingly skilful in knowing how to move children's learning on through, for example, asking the right question at the right time.
- Children new to early years, including those who speak little English on arrival, are helped to settle well.
- Staff in early years have a clear understanding of how to keep children safe and secure. All welfare and safeguarding requirements are met. Links with parents are strong and help children settle easily and happily. Parents are happy with the school's work to support their children.

School details

Unique reference number	105943
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	10082068

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Linda Chamberlain
Headteacher	Wendy Budsworth
Telephone number	0161 736 6871
Website	www.stpaulscephrimarieschool.co.uk
Email address	wendy.budsworth@salford.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 September 2014

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The number on roll remains relatively stable; however, a higher than average number of pupils join and leave the school at other than the usual time.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- Children attend the Nursery and Reception classes full time.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is more than double the national average. In 2018, 75% of pupils in Year 6 were eligible for pupil premium funding.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is high. In 2018, the proportion of Year 6 pupils with SEND was 42%. This is higher than in all other year groups.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced significant staffing turbulence, including in leadership and management. The headteacher took up her post in September 2017. The deputy headteacher left his post in October 2018. The acting deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher were seconded to the school

senior leadership team shortly after this time. A middle leader in the school was also appointed to a post as acting assistant headteacher. A number of teachers have joined and left the school since the previous inspection. Several staff have experienced lengthy periods of absence.

- The chair and vice-chair of the governing body took up their posts 18 months ago, when the governing body was reconstituted.
- The governing body runs an on-site breakfast club and an after-school club.
- St Paul's is a voluntary-aided, Church of England primary school. Its previous section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character was in February 2016. The report is available on the school's website.
- The local authority has brokered support for the school and provided human resources advice since the previous inspection.
- The school is a member of the local cluster of schools.
- The headteacher of Moorside Community Primary School, a national leader of education, has supported the school since mid-2017.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time. Learning was observed in all classes and when pupils learned in small groups. Inspectors made joint observations with the headteacher.
- Inspectors checked the safety of the school premises at different times of the school day. They observed arrangements for pupils' arrival at school.
- The inspectors talked with pupils informally as they played at breaktimes. They visited the breakfast club and the dining hall at lunchtime and observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around the school. They met formally with three groups of pupils.
- Inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work and talked with them about it. They listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of reading skills.
- Inspectors held a number of meetings with the headteacher to consider her view of the school and the school's plan for improvement. Inspectors spoke with senior leaders and met with middle leaders and other members of the school's staff.
- Inspectors held meetings with the chair of the governing body and seven governors.
- An inspector held meetings with a representative of the local authority and the national leader of education who is supporting the school, and spoke with a representative of the diocese by phone.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day. They took account of four comments provided for inspectors on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Inspectors also took account of 147 responses to the pupil questionnaire and 19 responses to the staff questionnaire, and of the school's most recent surveys of pupils' and parents' views.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including information about pupils' progress, the quality of teaching, school improvement plans and external views of the school. They reviewed the contents of the school's website and scrutinised records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding completed by school staff.

Inspection team

Lyn Pender, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Trish Merritt

Ofsted Inspector

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