

St Paul's Church of England Primary School

Penrose Street, Walworth, London SE17 3DT

Inspection dates

27–28 February 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- The school's effectiveness has deteriorated considerably since the previous inspection.
- The leadership team has not taken effective action to halt the decline in pupils' outcomes. Leaders' efforts to improve the standard of education lack rigour or urgency. This means that any improvements in pupils' progress are limited and not maintained over time.
- Governance is weak. The governing body provides leaders with too little challenge.
- Teaching and the curriculum fail to cater for pupils' needs. Leaders and staff do not ensure that pupils build well on their prior learning. Too few pupils leave Year 6 with age-expected skills and knowledge. Outcomes for the current pupils show little sign of improvement.
- Pupils who were in Year 6 in 2017, and those who were in Year 6 in 2016, made significantly less progress during key stage 2 than their peers nationally. The progress of boys and disadvantaged pupils was particularly weak.
- Extra funding to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils is not spent effectively. This is also the case for those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. These groups of pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Pupils do not gain a secure grounding in phonics. The proportion of pupils meeting the required standard in the phonics screening check has dropped considerably over the last three years. In 2017, standards were well below other schools.
- In the early years, leaders and teachers do not have an accurate view of children's outcomes. This prevents staff from ensuring that teaching meets children's needs. Children are not well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils do not take sufficient pride in their learning or have high enough expectations of themselves. In part, this is because teachers readily accept work from pupils that does not reflect their abilities.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders use the sport premium funding well to increase participation in physical activity.
- Pupils are kept safe in school.
- Leaders are taking effective steps to improve pupils' conduct and attitudes to school. Nevertheless, further work is needed before pupils' behaviour is typically good.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and staff raise their aspirations for pupils' outcomes, particularly those of boys and pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, including in the early years, by making sure that:
 - teaching is matched to pupils' needs and supports them to make good gains in their skills and knowledge in all curriculum subjects
 - assessment information on pupils' outcomes is accurate
 - teachers use assessment information effectively to identify and address gaps in pupils' learning
 - the teaching of reading enables pupils to develop the skills and knowledge they need to read accurately and understand what they read
 - teaching supports pupils to apply their knowledge of grammar, punctuation and spelling and routinely produce writing at the standard of which they are capable
 - all aspects of the mathematics curriculum are taught effectively and pupils deepen their understanding of key concepts
 - disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities receive the support they need to overcome any barriers to learning.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that:
 - leaders check that funding received specifically to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities has a positive impact on their progress
 - the curriculum is well planned, and builds pupils' knowledge and understanding over time
 - leaders, including governors, evaluate the school's performance accurately
 - leaders check that their actions secure the necessary improvements to the school's overall effectiveness
 - leaders take timely and effective action to diminish any differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils
 - staff are held to account for the impact of their work on improving pupils' outcomes

- governors provide leaders with sufficient challenge and ensure that leaders prioritise their efforts where they are needed most.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning by ensuring that teaching meets pupils' needs and motivates them to do their best.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders have not taken swift or effective action to ensure that pupils receive an acceptable standard of education. Pupils underachieved considerably in 2016 but leaders have only recently started to tackle weaknesses in teaching and the culture of low aspirations. Consequently, pupils' outcomes continued to be poor in 2017 and remain so for pupils currently attending the school. This demonstrates leaders' lack of capacity to secure the urgent improvements that are required.
- Leaders are too ready to use recent challenges in staff recruitment as an explanation for the poor quality of teaching and learning over time. Leaders have not held teachers to account or provided them with effective guidance on how to improve their practice. When leaders identify concerns about the quality of teaching, they do not follow these up with appropriate urgency or rigour.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is poor. Leaders know that pupils' progress is not good enough, but analysis of the reasons for this is superficial. In part, this is because the information that leaders have on how well pupils learn and make progress is unreliable, particularly in the early years. Leaders do not have an accurate picture of pupils' achievement over time and have not focused their efforts on the areas in need of most attention.
- This academic year, senior and middle leaders have introduced a raft of initiatives with the aim of raising standards quickly. However, leaders have waited too long to do this and remain unclear about how they will check the impact of their work. In addition, leaders have not made sure that teachers fully understand or implement these initiatives consistently. While some teaching shows early signs of improvement, it is too soon to evaluate the impact of leaders' actions on securing improvements to teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- The leadership team has not ensured that teaching promotes equality of opportunity and outcomes for different groups of pupils. In particular, boys, disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities do not routinely benefit from the teaching they need to make progress. In addition, as pupils progress from one year group to the next, they experience too much variation between classes. This means that, over time, any gains pupils make in their learning are weak.
- Leaders' use of the pupil premium funding is ineffective. Although disadvantaged pupils generally receive extra help with their learning, leaders have not made sure that this support enables pupils to achieve well. Too few disadvantaged pupils attain the standards expected for their age by the time they leave the school.
- Additional funding to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not spent well. Leaders have not ensured that these pupils' needs are planned for effectively. They do not check whether their actions are helping pupils to achieve as well as they could.
- The curriculum covers the full range of national curriculum subjects adequately. Pupils spoke positively about their learning in subjects such as art, physical education and science. However, leaders and teachers have not given enough consideration to how

the curriculum supports pupils' progress over time. This leads to gaps in pupils' skills and hinders their learning. Pupils are not adequately prepared for the next stage of their education.

- Leaders recognise that pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their education are not as positive as they should be. As a result, they have recently introduced a new approach to managing pupils' behaviour. Staff understand and implement the school's new approach consistently. While further work is needed, this approach is securing better standards of behaviour than has previously been the case.
- The leadership team makes appropriate use of the primary physical education (PE) and sport premium funding. Pupils benefit from opportunities to take part in competitive events and try out new sports. Pupils were positive about how these experiences help them to enjoy their time at school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is suitably catered for. The school's values of 'respect', 'compassion' and 'trust' provide a sound basis for this work. In whole-school assemblies, pupils reflect on how these values might guide their choices and behaviour. Displays around the school show that staff help pupils to be considerate of others and understand how they might make a positive contribution to both the school and the wider community. As a result, pupils typically develop the attitudes they need to be well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school may appoint newly qualified teachers (NQTs).

Governance of the school

- The governing body has been too slow to hold leaders to account. Governors have not helped the leadership team to acquire an accurate and comprehensive view of the quality of education that the school provides.
- Governors have a very limited understanding of the reasons that underlie the decline in the school's effectiveness. They have been too easily reassured by leaders that the quality of education is improving. They have not challenged leaders to provide evidence that their actions are raising standards for all groups of pupils.
- The governing body's oversight of the school's use of additional funding, including the pupil premium, is weak. Governors are uncertain whether the strategies used by leaders improve the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils or those who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Governors fulfil their statutory duties to ensure that pupils are safe. For example, they make sure that all the required pre-employment checks on adults working in the school have been carried out.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils told inspectors that they generally feel safe and happy in school. Most pupils agree that there are adults in the school that they can talk to if they have any concerns or worries. Of those parents and carers who spoke to inspectors, the majority agree

that their children are kept safe in school.

- Leaders have a sound understanding of the potential risks that pupils might face outside school, including risks connected to knife crime and gang culture. Through the curriculum, leaders make sure that pupils develop an age-appropriate awareness of what they might do to keep themselves safe from harm.
- Leaders ensure that staff have the understanding and knowledge that they need to keep pupils safe. Staff receive suitable training on many safeguarding issues, including their statutory responsibilities under the 'Prevent' duty. As a result, they are vigilant to signs or symptoms that could suggest that a pupil may be at risk from harm. For example, staff are alert to small changes in a pupil's behaviour that may indicate that they are suffering from abuse or neglect.
- When staff identify concerns, leaders take prompt and appropriate action to secure the welfare of pupils who may be vulnerable.
- Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding work well with external agencies and families to ensure that pupils who are at risk from harm receive help and protection as soon as they need it.
- Together with the governing body, leaders take effective steps to ensure that the school site is safe and secure. When pupils take part in off-site visits, leaders assess risks carefully and take appropriate action to minimise any hazards so that pupils' welfare is safeguarded.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time is typically poor.
- Pupils' learning is limited because leaders and teachers are not ambitious for pupils' academic outcomes. Teaching fails to support or challenge pupils to produce work at the standard of which they are capable. Too often, teachers accept work from pupils that is incomplete or poorly presented. This holds back pupils' progress and contributes to a culture of low expectations, from both staff and pupils alike.
- Across the school and in a range of subjects, teaching is not matched to pupils' needs. The learning of all groups of pupils is reduced, including boys, the most able, disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Pupils regularly receive work that is either too easy or too difficult. Pupils become demotivated and they lose interest in their learning.
- When teachers are aware of pupils' mistakes or misconceptions, they do not adapt activities to help pupils to overcome any difficulties. Teachers are slow to spot when pupils, including the most able, are ready for more demanding tasks.
- When planning learning, teachers give limited consideration to what pupils need to learn and know as they progress through the years. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils have considerable gaps in their basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders and teachers over-rely on additional sessions to help pupils in Year 6 to catch up, rather than ensuring that teaching throughout the school routinely caters for pupils' needs or abilities.

- The teaching of writing is too variable. Teachers' expectations for the quality and quantity of pupils' writing are low in the majority of classes. For example, work in pupils' books shows that teachers do not routinely correct pupils' basic errors, including misspelled words or omitted punctuation. Gains in pupils' writing skills are not sustained over time. Leaders are aware of these issues but they have not tackled them effectively.
- Teachers are slow to provide extra help when pupils struggle to develop age-expected handwriting skills. Similarly, work in pupils' books shows that teachers do not take action promptly when pupils' handwriting or presentation deteriorates. Leaders have not set out a clear approach to developing pupils' handwriting skills across the school.
- Mathematics teaching typically enables pupils to build arithmetic and calculation knowledge. However, other key aspects of mathematics, such as shape and space, are not taught effectively or in sufficient depth. This limits pupils' progress over time. Work in pupils' books shows that pupils in Year 3 and Year 5 completed work of a similar standard when they learned about perimeter and area.
- Teachers provide pupils with too few opportunities to deepen their mathematical understanding through reasoning. This is a key factor in pupils' underachievement. Work in pupils' books shows that leaders have not done enough to improve this aspect of mathematics teaching.
- Leaders have recently introduced numerous strategies to improve the teaching of reading. However, teachers are often unclear about which approach to use or why they are using it. As a result, phonics teaching does not ensure that pupils develop age-related spelling and reading skills. Pupils often guess at words and this prevents them from reading accurately or with understanding.
- Older pupils develop positive attitudes to books through reading well-chosen texts. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils in key stage 2 to practise reading fluently and with expression. However, teachers pay too little attention to making sure that pupils fully understand what they read. This hampers the development of pupils' comprehension skills.
- As a result of poor-quality teaching over time, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have not routinely received the support they need to make progress. Teachers and adults are sensitive to the emotional well-being of these pupils. They provide timely support to help pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to follow classroom routines and encourage them to try the activities planned.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Leaders and teachers have not taken sufficient steps to encourage pupils' positive attitudes to their education. Teaching does not inspire pupils to aim high and challenge themselves. Pupils told inspectors that they think school is 'fun'. However, work in their

books shows that they do not take enough pride in their learning or achievements.

- Leaders have reviewed the curriculum with the aim of raising pupils' aspirations, particularly those of boys. This work is relatively recent. It is therefore too soon to evaluate whether it will enable pupils to develop the attitudes they need to make the most of their education.
- Pupils are polite and considerate of others. For example, they hold the door open for adults and help to keep the lunch hall tidy. As one pupil put it: 'We are keen to make this a happy and healthy place to be.' Pupils develop a sense of community through whole-school assemblies and singing together.
- Adults respond sympathetically to pupils who are feeling upset or worried. Pupils told inspectors that adults are 'kind and friendly' and take care of them when they are unhappy or encounter a problem.
- The majority of pupils thought that bullying is unusual at the school and that staff deal with it promptly if it does occur. School records show that leaders and staff take any incidents of bullying or unkind behaviour seriously and that such incidents are managed appropriately.
- Leaders and teachers ensure that pupils learn to make safe and sensible choices in a range of situations, including when using the internet and crossing the road.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- When activities do not meet pupils' needs, pupils sometimes become restless or do not follow adults' instructions quickly. Adults generally deal with this promptly, but this causes lessons to be interrupted and prevents pupils from learning as well as they could. Pupils said that this is a further distraction that breaks their concentration.
- In recent years, the level of fixed-term exclusions has been high when compared to other schools nationally. In order to tackle this, leaders have recently introduced a new approach to promoting good standards of behaviour. Pupils were positive about how well this new approach is helping them to improve their own behaviour as well as that of their peers. As a result, pupils typically try hard to conduct themselves sensibly, both in classrooms and around the school. School records show that the number of behaviour incidents and exclusions has reduced this year.
- In the playground, pupils usually get on well together. Lunchtimes are calm and sociable. Adults supervise pupils carefully and encourage pupils to take part in the variety of sporting activities on offer.
- Pupils attend school regularly. Leaders work in close partnership with families to understand and address any issues that prevent pupils from attending school regularly. As a result, persistent absence rates have reduced this year and are now below the national averages.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Standards are low across all subjects and key stages. Pupils' outcomes have declined

considerably since the previous inspection.

- Widespread weaknesses in teaching mean that any improvements in pupils' achievement are fragile and not sustained over time. Current pupils continue to underachieve considerably. They have too much ground to make up in order to reach the standard of which they are capable.
- Leaders' and teachers' assessments of pupils' progress are overgenerous. Leaders were confident that current pupils are making better progress than previous cohorts. Work in pupils' books does not support this view.
- By the time pupils reach Year 6, they have considerable gaps in their skills and knowledge, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders and teachers overestimate how successfully pupils can overcome previous underachievement by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' progress in key stage 2 has been significantly below the national average for the last two years in reading and writing. Leaders have been unable to stop progress in mathematics from declining. In 2015, pupils' progress in key stage 2 was significantly above the national average. The progress made by pupils in Year 6 in 2017 was well below the national average. In all subjects, boys' progress was markedly lower than that of girls.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make weak progress over time. Disadvantaged pupils also underachieve considerably. Disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 in 2016 and 2017 made much less progress in reading, writing and mathematics over key stage 2 than other pupils nationally.
- Pupils' outcomes in subjects other than English and mathematics are also poor. In science, for example, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 has been below the national average for the last two years. Leaders have not explored the reasons for this.
- Assessment information shows that the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in phonics has declined markedly over the last three years. In 2017, the proportions of pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 who reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check were well below the national averages.
- Leaders and teachers have not made sure that they have reliable information about children's outcomes at the end of the Reception Year. This means that they are unable to identify pupils who fall behind in their learning.
- In key stage 1, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 improved in 2017, particularly in writing, where standards were broadly similar to all pupils nationally. However, it is difficult to judge how well pupils made progress over time because leaders do not have dependable information about pupils' starting points.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- The early years provision is inadequate. Information on children's outcomes is inaccurate and has been so for a number of years. Leaders are unsure how well

children learn or what they need to do to improve the quality of education for all groups of children. Teachers do not have the information they need to plan learning that caters for children's needs or interests.

- Poor-quality assessment information has also had a negative effect on the quality of children's learning when they move into key stage 1. Children are not well prepared for the start of key stage 1. Historically, leaders have been too generous in their assessments of children's outcomes at the end of the Reception Year. On paper, children appear ready for Year 1. In practice, they are not, and outcomes are inadequate. Leaders have not identified children who underachieve and have not provided them with support.
- Leaders and staff underestimate what children already know and can do well when they join the school. This has fostered a culture of low expectations. Staff do not set suitable learning that enables children of all abilities to make progress.
- Leaders have not promoted equality of opportunity for all groups of children. In the Reception classes, boys' attainment in writing is significantly lower than that of girls. Leaders have introduced a number of strategies with the aim of ensuring that all children achieve equally well. However, it is too soon to measure the impact of these initiatives on children's outcomes over time. Work in children's 'learning journals' and the school's most recent assessments of children's outcomes indicate that too few children are on track to achieve a good level of development.
- Following recent training provided by the local authority, staff are more effective in meeting children's needs and interests than in the past. Teachers choose resources that motivate children to join in and try hard, including in phonics, reading and writing.
- Staff are attentive to children's well-being. They provide children with the social and emotional support they need to settle quickly into school life and develop positive attitudes to their education.
- Classrooms are safe and organised learning environments. Staff ensure that children understand and follow routines so that they play together sensibly and typically behave well.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective in the early years and that children are well looked after and safe.

School details

Unique reference number	100838
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	10047632

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	326
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Chadwick
Headteacher	Maggie Brady
Telephone number	020 7703 4896
Website	www.st-paulsprimaryschool.co.uk/
Email address	office@stpauls.southwark.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 October 2014

Information about this school

- St Paul's is larger than the average-sized primary school. It is a one and a half form entry school. This means some classes contain a combination of pupils from two academic year groups.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is high when compared to other schools nationally, as is the proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced many changes in staff, including at senior leadership level.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classes in all year groups. A range of subjects were visited, including English, mathematics, geography and art. The majority of visits were conducted jointly with a member of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors reviewed work in pupils' books during visits to lessons. They also carried out an in-depth review of pupils' work with the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders to discuss their evaluation of the school's performance and their actions to secure improvements. Information on pupils' achievement was also considered.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and conduct, both during visits to classrooms and at other points during the school day, including lunchtime. Inspectors also visited two whole-school assemblies.
- Pupils from key stage 1 and Year 6 read to inspectors. An inspector also held a discussion with a group of pupils. The views of pupils were taken into consideration through informal conversations throughout the inspection, as well as the 44 responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils.
- The views of parents were considered through informal discussions at the start of the school day. Too few responses were received to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, to draw meaningful conclusions. However, inspectors took into account three written comments received from parents.
- A range of documentation related to safeguarding, behaviour and pupils' well-being was considered. This included the single central record of vetting checks on staff, behaviour and bullying logs and attendance information.
- An inspector met with a group of staff and took into account the seven responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body. Inspectors also reviewed written records of the work of the governors. Discussions were held with representatives from the local authority and the diocese.

Inspection team

Sarah Murphy-Dutton, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ann Pratt	Ofsted Inspector
Jeffery Quaye	Ofsted Inspector

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