

St Paul's Church of England Primary School

Newnham Street, Bolton, Lancashire, BL1 8QA

Inspection dates 20–21 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils' achievement is outstanding. As soon as children enter the Reception class they progress well, and their learning quickly gathers momentum through each year group.
- By the time they reach the end of Year 6, the standards reached by all pupils, including pupils from minority ethnic groups, those who speak English as an additional language, pupils entitled to additional support through the pupil premium and pupils with disabilities and special educational needs, is outstanding.
- Teaching is exemplary. Teachers have exceptionally high expectations of all pupils, they plan challenging lessons, ask deep and meaningful questions, and meticulously plan lessons which involve and excite pupils of all abilities.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are first-class. They enjoy coming to school and their attendance is continuously improving and is above average. Pupils say that they feel safe and cared for and that they are proud to be members of the school family. They are highly cooperative and understand the importance of learning together.
- The school is managed and led outstandingly well. The headteacher has very high aspirations for the school. Supported by a very able senior leadership team, committed teachers, teaching assistants and knowledgeable governors, she ensures that the school's view for the future and ideas are generated at all levels and that all are part of 'one team, one mission, one family'.
- Parents speak very highly of the school. They describe staff as very approachable. Parents know how well their children are doing because the achievements of all pupils are captured in pupil mentoring folders which are regularly shared with parents.
- The school is currently seeking to further develop and enhance pupils' appreciation and awareness of the importance of the natural world and ecological matters.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons as well as small group activities, parts of lessons and the teaching of phonics (the links between letters and the sounds they make).
- Inspectors listened to pupils read from Years 3, 4, 5, and 6, and held discussions with two groups of pupils from across the school.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised during lessons.
- Too few responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were available to consider. Inspectors took account of the school's own surveys of parents' views, held a meeting with a parent, and held informal discussions with 15 parents. Questionnaires completed by 16 members of staff were taken into account.
- A telephone conversation took place with the school's independent consultant.
- A meeting was held with five governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Various school documents were examined. These included records of the checks made of the quality of teaching, school's data on pupils' progress, minutes of the governing body meetings, development plans, reports of external evaluations of the school's effectiveness, records of pupils' attendance, records of behaviour, and safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Lenford White, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Steve Rigby

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding through the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is more than twice the national average, and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is even higher.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has a breakfast club and a nurture group and offers a range of after-school clubs.
- The school has National Support School status. The headteacher is a National Leader in Education. The school is a Partnership Plus school for Edge Hill University and is a leadership placement school for the National Professional Qualification for headteachers (NPQH). The school is renowned for its work both locally and nationally, and shares its teaching practices with many schools.
- St Paul's Church of England Primary School converted to become an academy on 1 October 2012. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop and enhance pupils' appreciation and awareness of the importance of the natural world and ecological matters through providing as many opportunities as possible for pupils to have direct 'hands-on' learning experiences, and in so doing develop their knowledge and understanding of the nature of plants and animals.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- By the time they reach the end of Year 6, pupils' achievement is outstanding. Children enter the Reception Year with skills and abilities well below those found nationally. They benefit from excellent care, support and teaching which captures their interests and nurtures their learning. In every year group, pupils make at least good, and mostly outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children get off to an exceptionally good start in the Reception Year, and make outstanding progress in all areas of learning, especially those that relate to their personal, social, physical and emotional development. Teachers are very quick to identify children's skills and abilities and ensure that the curriculum, play equipment and all activities help children to learn effectively.
- Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils' progress is mostly outstanding, especially in reading and writing. Teachers take great care to provide the right level of support where it is needed through, for example, in-class teacher assistant time, targeted small group support in writing, and one-to-one support in reading. Standards are continuously improving and are broadly average by the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 1.
- The achievement of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is outstanding. The standards they reach by the end of Year 6 are significantly above the national average, and they do exceedingly well in reading. Older pupils who read for inspectors were passionate about their books. Good phonics teaching (the link between letters and the sounds they make) enables less confident readers to 'chop up', sound-out and read difficult words.
- One-to-one support, and small group teaching for pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium fund is outstanding. The standards reached by eligible pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, show that their achievement in mathematics, reading and writing is not significantly different to their peers in school, and are significantly better than similar pupils nationally.
- The school works with an array of specialist partners. This helps to ensure that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve outstandingly well in reading, writing and mathematics in relation to their starting points and abilities.
- The overall achievement of both boys and girls is exemplary, and the standards they reach are significantly above the national average by the time they leave school. All teachers work extremely well to ensure equality of opportunity, and any gaps that exist between boys and girls in reading and writing are rapidly narrowing.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The majority of lessons observed were outstanding. A scrutiny of pupils' books revealed that teaching is typically outstanding over time. Teachers have the highest possible expectations of all pupils and are determined to ensure that they realise their full potential.
- Teachers work in a highly cooperative learning environment. They are encouraged to discuss their practice and learn from each other. They enjoy being able to share ideas and initiatives with the school's senior leadership team.
- There is a sense of urgency in all classrooms, and teachers make sure that lessons move along at a productive pace. Good use of questioning and expertly targeted teaching assistant support ensures that no-one falls behind.
- Teachers make learning as interesting as possible, ensuring that pupils' experiences are widened through, for example, and visiting places of interest. In an outstanding lesson in the Reception class, children showed remarkable skill in identifying features from an aerial map which highlighted their recent journey from Bolton to Blackpool Circus. They took great pleasure in being able to identify motorways, 'farmers' gardens' (fields) and Blackpool Tower.

- Lessons are highly challenging, much to the delight of pupils who are eager to learn new things. In an outstanding Year 6 English lesson, pupils were asked to consider the similarities and differences between two very demanding poems about the weather, 'The Wanderer's song' and 'Morwenstow'. Skilfully asked questions and 'thinking time' enabled pupils to fully analyse both poems and begin to write their own.
- Teachers are highly diligent in their marking and take time to provide detailed written comments in pupils' books. Time is allowed for pupils to read comments and give their own views, both written and verbal, and to improve on their work.
- Individual mentoring files ensure that all pupils know how well they are doing and how to improve their learning. These files allow meaningful discussions to take place between teachers and pupils and provide opportunities for parents to discuss their children's work.
- Pupils are expert at assessing whether or not lessons achieve their objectives and are highly skilled at checking the work of their fellow classmates.
- Mathematics is a strength in the school. All pupils know that good skills in this area are essential in everyday life. In an outstanding Year 4 lesson, a teacher effectively linked the skill of 'rounding' numbers to shopping, asking why it was important to be able to round money up and down when estimating a shopping bill.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school, at play and when learning, is exemplary. They are fully conversant with the school rules and make it their business to stick to them while ensuring that their classmates do the same. Pupils say that they feel valued and know that they are a part of something special.
- Pupils are inquisitive about the world around them, though their knowledge and understanding of the natural world of plants and animals is not as secure as it should be. However, from the start of the Reception Year children quickly develop a love of learning.
- Pupils are very respectful towards their teachers, each other and visitors. They work exceptionally well together in class when asked to share ideas and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Teachers model outstanding behaviour, and have a detailed knowledge of the academic ability, family background and behaviour of every single pupil in their care. Because of this, and the consistent application of the school rules, they are able to skilfully ensure that behaviour is never less than good.
- Pupils are of the opinion that behaviour is almost always good and that bullying is very rare and always taken seriously. They have an impressive understanding of what constitutes discriminatory behaviour and say that 'it never happens here' because 'we are all one family and we look after each other', and that if it did, 'you would be in deep trouble'.
- Younger pupils say that they feel safe because the school play area is well fenced off, and because there is always lots of adults around. They say that playground monitors and peer mentors are particularly helpful in solving problems.
- All parents who completed the school's survey of parents' views, and all staff, were of the opinion that behaviour was always good.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of safe and unsafe situations. The school ensures that pupils learn about staying safe through their lessons and through regular visits from road safety, fire-fighters and the police to talk about their work. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe while using the internet, they know that cyber-bullying can happen on-line and though hand-held devices such as mobile phones, and not to ever give personal details to strangers.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is a committed and inspirational leader, dedicated to providing a first-class education for all pupils. Together with an exceptionally strong senior leadership team, highly skilled teachers and teaching assistants, knowledgeable governors, and with the support of parents, she has taken the school from strength to strength.
- The school uses data in a highly effective manner; leaders ensure that all information on pupils' performance is accessible and understandable and that all school staff know how well the school is progressing towards its main goals.
- The school is a National Support School, renowned for its work both locally and nationally, and for sharing its work with many schools. The school describes itself as a 'greenhouse school', having 'grown' five headteachers and many senior leaders.
- All teachers enjoy working at the school. They say that they appreciate opportunities to develop their practice and that the school is led and managed exceptionally well. All teachers and teaching assistants are very well trained. They all have leadership responsibilities and are well supported by senior leaders who give clear guidance about improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement. All staff are set challenging targets which contribute towards improving the quality of teaching and driving up standards.
- Pupils' love of learning is enhanced by an exciting curriculum, including English and mathematics. Pupils also learn Spanish and participate in a broad range of extra-curricular activities including choir, gardening, netball, cheer leading and orienteering.
- The school's excellent leadership ensures that the culture that many pupils experience outside of the school is celebrated within the school through culture-sharing activities, for example, the East meets West ladies tea party, and the Bollywood night.
- The school receives support from an external consultant who has recently worked with senior leaders to review the school's services.
- The school does all it can to ensure that learning is interesting and involving. This involves providing pupils with as many first-hand experiences as possible throughout the curriculum. However, the school seeks to further develop and enhance pupils' appreciation and awareness of the importance of the natural world and ecological matters.
- Safeguarding procedures are followed closely and meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school very well. They say that they are very proud to be part of the 'school family', that they are consulted with on every aspect of school life, and that they enthusiastically take on the challenge of keeping abreast of the constant flow of information and ideas that come from the school. Governors know exactly where the school's strengths lie, and what needs to be done in order for it to realise its vision of extending school services to children of nursery school age, and further broadening pupils' experience of the natural world.
 - Governors know teaching is outstanding and say that teachers work 'above and beyond the call of duty'. They observe teaching, meet with subject leaders, receive regular progress reports and whole-heartedly support staff in sharing their excellent practice with improving schools. Governors recognise the commitment and hard work of teachers, who are only ever awarded pay increases after they have achieved very challenging targets. Governors take their training very seriously and make sure that it is up to date. Governors are aware of the many ways in which the school uses its pupil premium funding and know, for example, that its breakfast club, nurture group and small group support for reading, writing and mathematics is raising the achievement of entitled pupils.

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

Unique reference number	138851
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	409882

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Bond
Principal	Karen Bramwell
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Fax number	01204 333742
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