

# Oswaldtwistle St Paul's C of E (VA) Primary School

Union Road, Oswaldtwistle, Accrington, Lancashire BB5 3DD

## Inspection dates

17–18 May 2016

### Overall effectiveness

**Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Outcomes for pupils

Good

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- St Paul's is now providing a good standard of education for its pupils. Strong leadership is at the heart of its considerable improvement, especially since the beginning of this academic year.
- Under the highly effective leadership of the headteacher, staff are working together with great determination to ensure that outcomes for pupils are now good.
- Teaching is now good because staff know the pupils very well and have high expectations. The contribution of teaching assistants is especially effective.
- Children's work, especially writing, is improving quickly across the school.
- Pupils are valued, feel secure and enjoy their time in school. Policies and procedures are effective and they are consistently applied.
- The governing body has high aspirations for pupils. It provides good support and challenge for staff.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is good and reading is given a high priority by staff.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning at the school is a strength. It makes a strong contribution to the school's inclusive ethos.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They respect the staff and each other. St Paul's is an orderly and happy community.
- Children in the Reception Year make good progress because staff know them well and plan their learning accordingly.
- Parents are very happy with the school's improvement and staff morale is high.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some of the work set is too easy for the most-able pupils and this means that they are not always sufficiently challenged.
- Despite improvements, rates of attendance and punctuality do not yet match those found nationally.
- Some of the teachers' questioning does not allow pupils to explain their learning clearly and thoughtfully. Pupils lack accuracy and confidence when trying to explain their learning.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and the rate of some pupils' progress by:
  - ensuring teachers' questioning gives pupils more opportunities to explain their ideas
  - providing the most-able pupils with more challenging work which enables them to reach higher levels of understanding
  - providing pupils with more opportunities to develop their speaking skills.
  
- Continue to improve the rates of attendance and punctuality for all children.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The new headteacher and deputy headteacher took up their posts in September 2015, and have been at the heart of rapid improvements throughout the school this year. The headteacher's clear vision, coupled with her unswerving focus on classroom practice, has meant that the decline in standards in 2015 has been arrested.
- Leaders have introduced revised policies and procedures which have challenged staff and pupils to improve. Staff have responded to this with enthusiasm and vigour. As a result, they are working well as a team to secure good outcomes for pupils, and morale is high.
- The headteacher is very effective at including all staff in the planning and monitoring of improvement activities at the school. Targets for all staff are linked clearly to actions in the school's development plan, and are regularly reviewed. She is also very skilled at reporting information to governors, and welcomes the challenge they provide. This has contributed strongly to improvements made so quickly this year.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the standards of teaching at the school and have been successful in improving teaching through regular checks in classrooms. Staff have benefited from well-targeted additional training.
- The use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils (the pupil premium) has ensured that these children are doing at least as well as their peers, or that they are catching up quickly. Leaders are vigilant in checking regularly that activities put in place to support these pupils are resulting in improvement.
- Pupils report an increase in opportunities to attend sporting clubs and activities. Information available during the inspection shows that participation rates in clubs and competitions have increased substantially since the beginning of the year.
- Representatives of the local authority have supported the school very well in assisting new leaders. They have helped to develop middle leaders, who are increasingly confident and skilled.
- Parents appreciate the regular information they receive about their child's progress and the fact that staff are quick to make themselves available to deal with any queries about their child's development. Attendance at parent consultation meetings has risen this year, highlighting the greater involvement of parents in their child's learning.
- The school's curriculum is developing well under the leadership of enthusiastic middle leaders. Science is covered well. While there is some work still to do in developing the more creative areas of the curriculum, for example music, topics have been enriched by an increase in trips and visits. These have stimulated children's interest, and led to good work back in class.
- The school is active in promoting British values. An 'Aspirations Week' held this year brought people from the police, health service, business and entertainment to the school and led to excellent written work about the role children could play in society when they grow up.
- The school is successful in promoting pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Leaders are vigilant in ensuring that differences are respected and pupils feel an equal part of the St Paul's family.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governance is a strength. Governors played a strong role in appointing a new leadership team, which matched their aspirations for the school. They have shown great determination in ensuring the school continues to improve during a significant period of change.
  - Governors provide a good balance between informed challenge to senior staff and regular support for teachers. Governors know the strengths and areas for improvement at the school very well, even down to the specific performance of groups within particular cohorts of children.
  - They oversee effective spending of both pupil premium and sports funding, and monitor its impact carefully. They understand their role in promoting equality for all, and have recently undergone online training related to the government's 'Prevent' duty.
  - Governors check that teacher performance is dealt with highly effectively. Governors have not shied away from tackling underperformance in the past and are well informed about decisions linked to pay progression of staff.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Governors take their responsibilities very seriously. Staff are very clear about what to do should they have any concerns.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching is good because expectations are high across the school. Lessons are taught in well-resourced and stimulating classrooms and there is a 'can-do' attitude which permeates each classroom.
- The assessment of pupils' work is good and, increasingly, pupils are very aware of what they need to do better through good marking and feedback. Pupils speak positively about how this helps them improve their work.
- Leaders have asked teachers to be more ambitious in their expectations of what pupils can achieve. Staff have responded well by improving their planning of lessons. However, some most-able pupils report their work being too easy at times. Work in books viewed during the inspection supports this view.
- The teaching of phonics is consistently good. Staff provide good modelling of both sounds and written scripts. Children make quick progress because their progress is regularly checked.
- Systems to teach reading are used consistently and children report enjoying a variety of books and text types. Boys in Year 5 spoke enthusiastically about reading a series of quite challenging books over the course of the year. The visits of professional authors have also inspired the pupils.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and there is much evidence of quality professional development supporting those staff new to their careers. Much of this training is provided by school leaders. The school has good capacity for the future development of teaching.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and have very good relationships with classes. Teaching is typically clear and well planned. On occasions, questioning limits the opportunities for children to expand on their ideas and opinions. This reduces the chance for pupils to develop good speaking and reasoning skills both in English and mathematics.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to learning. They know the pupils well, and are quick to intervene in a positive way. This helps to deepen learning and develop pupils' understanding. They provide good support when teaching phonics lessons and their modelling of standards is effective. For example, they write very well on the board and this has assisted handwriting and presentation to improve.
- Staff work very well to plan activities that match the new curriculum requirements. They share knowledge, and that of neighbouring schools, to accurately assess learning and plan progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The school's Christian ethos shines through in all areas of the school. This is a school where all pupils are valued and respected.
- Pupils also value each other and are welcoming to new pupils. 'Oh, he's fitted in just fine' is a typical comment about the inclusive nature of the school's ethos.
- Pupils say they are supported well in understanding how to stay safe (including how to stay safe online). Pupils are also very confident in the ability of staff to keep them safe in school.
- Initiatives such as the move to 'pupil conferencing' exemplify the school's commitment to pupils' development and well-being. Here, pupils are asked to contribute to key assessments, celebrate successes and develop new targets for future attainment. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes about themselves and their learning.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They move around school calmly, and are polite and courteous to staff. Their work shows an increasing pride and also how they regularly respond to the feedback given by teachers. This shows that they are valuing their learning and wanting to improve.
- Behaviour is typically good in lessons and pupils say it is getting better all the time. However, pupils still report that their learning is occasionally affected by disruptive behaviour. The school's records indicate that these incidents are declining at a quick rate.
- Historically, the school has excluded pupils at a higher than average rate. However, there has been a

significant fall in this number. Revised policies and procedures are now more consistently applied and many pupils have made significant improvement this year.

- Playtimes and lunchtimes are happy occasions with pupils mixing well. A high level of supervision assists in providing plenty of games and activities, which are appreciated by pupils. Pupils say that bullying and name-calling are very rare.
- The school has been successful in raising the levels of pupil attendance this year and this is now close to the average, with an upward trend. The headteacher is dedicated to reducing the numbers of pupils joining and leaving the school during the school year as this has affected the stability of the school in recent years. There is evidence that this has reduced significantly, and pupils and parents appreciate this greater stability within class cohorts.

## Outcomes for pupils

are good

- In summer 2015, the results for the Year 6 cohort were much lower than in previous years, and did not meet the government's floor targets. However, a significant factor surrounding the performance of this group of children was the regularity of pupils leaving and arriving at the school. Information seen during the inspection showed that pupils who had been at the school throughout key stage 2 did much better and made average progress.
- The rates of pupils leaving and arriving at the school are significantly higher than those found in other schools. For example, less than half of the current Year 6, and half the current Year 3, started the school in the Reception class. This has had a significant impact on attainment at the end of each key stage because the school has had to invest time and resources to support those children new to the school.
- While small numbers of pupils in many classes make comparisons somewhat less reliable, revised information based on pupils who have been at the school since the Reception Year indicates that progress is at least good from their starting points. This is confirmed when looking at the pupils' work this year.
- The progress of current pupils has been rapid in all subjects, especially in Year 5 and Year 6. This is largely because teaching is improving, but also because more rigorous systems are in place to support children whose attainment is still below age-related expectations.
- The school has a high proportion of disadvantaged children and their progress is similar to other pupils in the school. There are many initiatives in place to support these pupils, for example the recent appointment of a learning mentor, and new resources for a nurture room. Evidence in pupils' work is convincing in showing how these pupils are catching up to the national average in all subjects.
- There has been a sustained improvement in written grammar, spelling and punctuation throughout the school. Books show a reduction in errors over the year, indicating that the new marking and feedback policy adopted earlier this academic year has had a positive effect.
- The most-able pupils at the school have made progress this year, especially in producing more quality work. However, the attainment of these pupils is yet to be consistently strong. The school is aware of this, and initiatives such as the 'Mad for Maths' challenge in the local area are part of a wider approach to raising attainment for these children.
- The improvements in pupils' writing have been significant during this academic year. All pupils are given regular opportunities to write at length across a variety of styles and text types. There are also many opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across the rest of the curriculum.
- Children currently at the school with special educational needs or disability are making good progress. This is because they are assessed accurately and provided with skilled support from both teaching assistants and specialist teachers.

## Early years provision

is good

- Expectations are high for children in the Reception Year. For example, in a mathematics activity, staff were not content with children simply being able to name shapes, but persisted in asking them for their properties. Children were able to reply by describing the numbers of corners and sides.
- Areas of learning are clear and supported by well-stocked and attractive resources. Children are excited to learn, for example when trying to explore their ideas based on the art of Andy Goldsworthy. Here, a group of children were delighted to complete a flower design made out of pebbles, displaying both care and creativity.

- Leadership in the early years is a strength. The teacher, closely assisted by the headteacher, checks progress regularly. Parents are happy with the information they receive, both informally and formally.
- Children are able to sustain listening and attention well, helped by the good number of staff. This, allied to their good progress over the year, means that they are well prepared for Year 1.
- Leaders have a good understanding of children's abilities as they begin the school, but would benefit from developing wider partnerships with early providers in order to develop transition arrangements.
- Induction arrangements for new parents were taking place during the inspection and these were well attended by staff from all areas of the school. This is typical of how early years has a high profile for leaders and teachers at the school.
- The curriculum is varied and balanced. The teacher has been pro-active in securing the use of land at a neighbouring secondary school to enhance the environmental element of the curriculum, helping to develop the children's understanding of the world. Examination of children's work shows how this has captured their imagination, for example when they talked of building homes for 'dragons in the trees'.
- There appears to have been some inconsistency in the quality of early writing in previous years but this has now been corrected by staff. Children have good pencil control and are developing accurate letter formation. This is modelled very well by adults.
- Assessment is good. The children's learning journeys are well-kept and attractive. Observations are linked closely to end of year expectations. Good progress across the year ensures that children typically begin Year 1 close to national expectations in the key areas in learning. They are especially strong in personal, social and emotional development.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119451
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10012125

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	123
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev John Holland
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Alison Barron
<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 231026
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-pauls-ce12.lancsngfl.ac.uk">www.st-pauls-ce12.lancsngfl.ac.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:bursar@st-pauls.lancs.sch.uk">bursar@st-pauls.lancs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15–16 January 2014

## Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-size primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding (additional funding for disadvantaged pupils) is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above the national average.
- The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above the national average.
- The school has very high rates of mobility. This means that a significant number of pupils leave school or join the school during their primary education.
- In 2015, the school did not meet the government's floor targets, which set the minimum standards for attainment and progress in English and mathematics when pupils leave Year 6.
- The school has its own breakfast club.
- The school's headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher have all been appointed since the beginning of this academic year.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in eight lessons or parts of lessons. Three were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- He also analysed the work in books of pupils currently in the school, as well as the attainment and progress information of pupils, especially for the Year 6 class who were away on a residential visit at the time of the inspection.
- He listened to children read and sampled four sessions where pupils were being taught phonics.
- Several meetings took place with school leaders, one with representatives of the school governing body and another with representatives of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of conversations with a large number of pupils.
- He also had several conversations with parents on the school playground and took into account the five replies using Parent View.
- A range of documents were analysed which related to school improvement and the funding of disadvantaged pupils.
- The inspector took into account the 14 views of staff who completed the staff questionnaire and he also spoke to staff during the inspection.

## Inspection team

Jeremy Barnes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector



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