

St Paul's CofE Primary School

Waterworks Road, Ryhope, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR2 0LW

Inspection dates

28–29 November 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders and governors have been wholly successful in creating a culture of excellence. Exceptionally high aspirations and expectations enable all pupils and staff to shine.
- The acting headteacher has an insightful and accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness. A steadfast drive for continuous improvement informs her every action.
- A joyful, distinctively Christian, ethos has been firmly embedded by leaders. Alongside the carefully crafted curriculum, this warm, positive environment contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders are unrelenting in their ambition for pupils in the widest sense. Pupils' development across the wider curriculum is highly effective. Horizons are broadened and dreams pursued.
- Subject leaders keep a close and watchful eye on their areas of responsibility. They shape and develop the quality of teaching and learning effectively. This means that pupils thrive in their development across subjects.
- Governors offer leaders and staff constructive challenge and well-placed support. They are keenly aware of their own performance and strive continuously to sharpen the effectiveness of their actions.
- The quality of teaching and learning in key stages 1 and 2 is outstanding. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, excel in reading, writing and mathematics. They make extremely strong progress, achieving standards well above national averages year on year.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are excellent. They are sociable, respectful and very kind to one another. Positive, empowering relationships exist between staff and pupils.
- Pupils take enormous pride in their own and others' achievements. They show especial skills and maturity in managing additional school duties and responsibilities.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are very well supported and challenged in their learning. Leaders have correctly identified that the attendance of some pupils with SEND needs close and regular scrutiny.
- Teaching and learning in the early years is good and improving. Children routinely make strong progress from their typical starting points. Over time, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is above national averages. Currently, however, the progress of some children in reading, writing and mathematics is less rapid.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of the early years to match the standards of excellence seen in key stages 1 and 2 by:
 - making sure that all children read frequently to and with adults in school
 - capturing children’s progress as writers and mathematicians more precisely.
- Ensure that the attendance of pupils with SEND improves and none are hampered in their learning and progress by frequent absence.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders and governors are highly ambitious for all pupils. Their unstinting belief in each individual, their well-thought-through actions and the exemplary way in which they model high expectations on a day-to-day basis ensure that their ambitions for pupils are realised. Enthusiasm is an infectious quality. Leaders compel staff and pupils to shine; they do so, brightly.
- Leaders have successfully established a uniquely Christian ethos of care, tolerance and respect. Warm, enabling relationships are modelled effortlessly by leaders, making this a happy place to be. Senior leaders and governors are mindful of teachers' workload, eradicating needless tasks where appropriate. Fun and joy envelop work and learning. The sound of singing and gentle burbles of laughter are ever-present.
- The acting headteacher knows the school inside out and strives determinedly for betterment. Self-evaluation is meticulously well detailed and accurate. Together with the leadership team, she pinpoints precisely where strengths are well embedded and notices the finest of details where renewed or further attention is needed. Leaders' calm efficiency and understated skills combine with their expertise to fuel continuous improvement effectively.
- Senior leaders' curriculum vision has been well communicated and instilled. Future artists, linguists, musicians and more, are fired with enthusiasm and encouraged to explore and pursue their dreams. A love and life-long habit of learning and discovery are fostered. As a result, pupils develop positive attitudes to education and succeed in their work across the primary curriculum.
- Subject leaders are wholly involved in improvement planning and school development. They meet frequently to discuss and plan their work, focusing relentlessly on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. All leaders report regularly to governors, making explicit the extent to which their actions are making a difference for pupils. No subjects, individual pupils or pupil groups are overlooked. Consequently, the quality of teaching and learning in key stages 1 and 2 across subjects is outstanding.
- Leaders build a wealth of experiences into the curriculum to ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in today's Britain. Innovative links with the local community promote pupils' understanding and appreciation of their immediate culture and heritage. Fundamental British values of democracy and individual liberty are aired and debated. All pupils who responded to Ofsted's survey, which amounted to more than half the total number on roll, say that they are actively encouraged to respect those from other cultures, faiths and beliefs. Their empathetic, respectful opinions give credence to this viewpoint.
- Leaders use additional funding for disadvantaged and pupils with SEND very well. Targeted support and/or challenge is based precisely on pupils' needs. The vast majority of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND make rapid progress from their different starting points, across subjects. Leaders are keenly aware, however, that although pupils' attendance overall is broadly in line with national averages, the attendance of a small proportion of pupils with SEND has dipped recently. Leaders have a deep understanding of the link between good attendance and pupils' future

success. They are working with pupils and families to ensure that no child is hampered by regular absence.

- Leaders successfully use the sport premium funding to improve the effectiveness of physical education (PE). Pupils and staff benefit from working closely with PE experts to enhance their knowledge and skills. Increasing opportunities to engage in competition are inspiring and motivating pupils; skills of teamwork, resilience and stamina are developed well. Pupils can confidently explain the importance of nutritious lunchboxes and how physical fitness correlates with healthy lifestyles.

Governance of the school

- Governors are very effective contributors. They are able to challenge leaders and managers skilfully because of their excellent knowledge and understanding of the school's performance in relation to other schools nationally. Governors' minutes show that they pose insightful questions and make unapologetic demands of leaders at all levels. Such work is part and parcel of regular monitoring visits and focused meetings.
- Governors are empathetic to the needs of staff and leaders. They offer well-targeted support appropriately and where specific needs arise. As a result, all staff feel valued and understand that while governors' expectations are high, their backing is unlimited.
- A commitment to continuing professional development strengthens the effectiveness of governors. Governors undertake an annual audit of their skills to make sure that they have the correct balance of knowledge and expertise needed to manage their duties well. There is no complacency.
- Governors ensure that financial resources are used to the benefit of all pupils. They are diligent in their work to recruit the right staff to keep pupils safe and achieving highly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and staff are thorough in their work to protect and care for pupils. They use their comprehensive knowledge of each pupil to inform and shape their actions and the curriculum. Pupils in the 'safety squad', for example, are guided in their work with the caretaker to identify potential hazards and risks in and around the school environment. They accrue skills of risk assessment, self-protection and close observation. Pupils thoroughly enjoy this work, take it seriously and report their findings to their peers. Mutual respect flourishes. As one pupil put it, 'They look after us and nobody gets hurt'.
- Senior leaders have introduced efficient systems to record incidents and any concerns that may arise. These are detailed, well maintained and examined regularly for any potential escalation, patterns or recurring themes. Such attention to 'the little things' enables leaders and staff to manage the needs of vulnerable pupils and families well.
- Staff understand their duties of care and protection towards pupils. They can confidently explain the signs to look out for that may suggest a pupil is suffering from abuse, exploitation or neglect. All staff are required to regularly update their knowledge and understanding of the most recent child protection guidance.

- Leaders have given due consideration to the mental health and well-being of pupils. For example, a member of staff trained in counselling works with and supports pupils where needs arise. In addition, pupils' mental health is high on improvement agendas.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching and learning are outstanding for many reasons, not least the exceptionally high standards that pupils achieve in mathematics, reading and writing in key stages 1 and 2, year on year. Teachers' subject knowledge across the curriculum is excellent, they make learning memorable and their expectations of pupils are limitless.
- Reading, writing and mathematics are embedded by teachers in subjects across the curriculum. Teachers build pupils' basic skills and fluency in mathematics in imaginative ways. They inspire and motivate pupils to develop enjoyment, as well as competence of mathematical concepts. While one class sings its times-tables to well-known tunes with verve and accuracy, others become completely engrossed in sophisticated word problems related to their history topic or class novel.
- The teaching of reading and phonics is exceptionally good. A recent investment by leaders in a wealth of new reading books for pupils is expanding pupils' opportunities to read widely and is fostering a love of reading. Staff read class novels with gusto, providing excellent role-models and enriching pupils' vocabulary. They ensure that pupils are wholly involved in their reading choices, matching books to pupils' needs and interests accurately. In phonics, staff articulate sounds clearly for pupils, making sure that books and tasks are well matched to pupils' phonics knowledge and skills.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning skilfully to challenge pupils to think deeply about their learning. They listen carefully to pupils' responses, giving them time to formulate their thinking and explain their ideas. Teachers shape their explanations and adapt tasks seamlessly where needed, ensuring that pupils make rapid progress.
- Teachers are aspirational for all pupils. They translate their high expectations effectively into planning that matches pupils' needs and interests accurately. Additional staff are utilised well to ensure that no teaching and learning time is wasted. Consequently, all pupils, including those with SEND and the most able, make rapid progress and achieve well across subjects. Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent.
- Teachers successfully make links between and within subjects across the curriculum. This brings learning to life and fosters pupils' creativity and imagination. Work in pupils' books, lessons and on display show that high-quality learning takes place in subjects beyond the core. Pupils' artwork, for example, is of a high standard. Pupils know a wealth of artists whose style of work they are simulating with increasingly adroit techniques.
- Teachers use subject-specific vocabulary across subjects and expect pupils to do likewise. In music, for example, they sing or play instruments with knowledge and skill. Pupils' understanding of progressively complex musical concepts and terminology, such as arpeggio, alto, sotto and tempo builds swiftly. Pupils therefore develop their talent as musicians as well as a love of music.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- All staff live and breathe by the school's motto, that 'something special happens here every day'. Teachers demand great things from pupils while making sure that learning is fun. Relationships are warm and mutual respect is evident. As one parent put it, 'The children are loved and well cared for.' Consequently, pupils' attitudes to learning are extremely positive; they are conscientious and become engrossed in their work.
- The overwhelming majority of parents agree that the care and welfare of pupils is of excellent quality. One parent commented that, 'This is a very special place... everyone is pulling in the same direction.' Another described the school as a 'caring' environment 'with children and their families at the heart of it'.
- All pupils who responded to Ofsted's survey said that they feel safe and secure in school. All agree that staff listen to what they have to say. Regular anti-bullying tasks and online safety discussions assist them in understanding how to keep themselves safe. Visitors, such as community police officers, fire-fighters and lifeguards, also help develop their awareness of personal safety. Pupils told inspectors that their peers also make them feel safe: 'Digital leaders help us with online safety; you can share problems with them.' In addition, they have complete confidence that staff would quickly sort out any small disagreements that may arise.
- Pupils know the signs and types of bullying that may take place but say, 'There's no bullying here.' Many and varied little acts of kindness colour pupils' daily experiences; older buddies look after their younger friends in a caring manner, pupils of all ages hold doors open for each other and invite those who are playing alone to join in with their games. A friendly, homely feel is tangible at lunchtimes and breaktimes.
- Leaders have a keen eye on pupils' emotional and mental health and well-being. Development plans make clear how this aspect of their work is adapting to meet the needs of pupils in today's challenging world. Staff have been trained in counselling and are skilled in supporting pupils where need arises. Worry boxes allow pupils to express any small anxieties. The curriculum is used innovatively to explore cultural methods of addressing and dispelling fears where appropriate. For example, some pupils were intrigued by the 'worry dolls' they made while learning about Spanish cultures. Pupils' welfare needs are high on everyone's agenda.
- Healthy lifestyles and physical fitness are actively promoted by staff. For example, pupils discuss and understand the potential risk of allergies and know that sugary drinks may damage their teeth. One group of pupils confidently explained how the climbing apparatus outside is regularly checked to make sure that their physical safety is secure to protect them from harm. Others explained how they have been trained to handle PE equipment safely.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils behave with respect for others. They display splendid levels of self-discipline needing little in the way of reminders to moderate their behaviour, tackle classroom duties or to stay on-task. Pupils are not easily distracted from their responsibilities or tasks and low-level disruption is extremely rare.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils and parents who responded to Ofsted's surveys feel that pupils behave well in and around the school. Pupils told inspectors that their friends are 'fun', 'fair' and 'helpful'. Playtimes and lunch breaks are cheerful, happy affairs.
- Pupils conduct themselves sensibly. They carry out additional classroom responsibilities in a dutiful, mature manner and contribute well to the school's positive climate.
- Pupils work in cooperation with staff to identify and tackle any potential issues of unpleasant or offensive language. They are alert to issues of online safety and work in partnership with staff to ensure that any rare instances of unacceptable online behaviours, including those outside of school, are addressed.
- Currently, pupils' attendance is broadly in line with national averages and has remained so over time. Few pupils are hindered by regular absence. Nonetheless, the absence of a small proportion of pupils with SEND has risen recently. Leaders have already taken action to ensure that all pupils and their families are supported and challenged to understand the importance of good attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- There are no limits or false boundaries set by staff or leaders across the school's curriculum. Pupils' progress and attainment in key stages 1 and 2 are outstanding across a wide range of subjects, over time. The work on display and in current pupils' books, teaching and learning in lessons and the school's own assessment information show that this picture of exceptionally high achievement is being maintained successfully.
- Currently, the very large majority of pupils in each year group in key stages 1 and 2 are working at least at the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. A significant proportion of pupils across year groups are working above the expected standards. In Years 1, 3, 5 and 6, for example, more than a third of pupils are working at greater depths of learning in mathematics.
- At St Paul's, pupils' experiences and opportunities beyond English and mathematics are rich and enriching. Pupils' artwork is of a very high standard and shows increasing skill in matters of perspective, tone and texture over time. Their musical skills, including use of voice, are expressive, lively and progressively sophisticated. Pupils' books show that their knowledge and understanding of key historical and geographical terminology is secure and often better than age-related expectations. Across subjects, it is evident that pupils make excellent progress from their different starting points.
- In Year 1, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check has been sustained at above national averages over time. In 2018,

almost every pupil successfully passed the check. Pupils are very well prepared for the demands of the Year 2 reading curriculum.

- Pupils in key stage 1 make excellent progress from their different starting points. Over time, the proportion of pupils reaching expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics has been consistently above national averages. A higher proportion of pupils also reach the higher standards of learning compared to the national average year after year.
- Pupils' attainment in key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics has remained well above national averages over time at both the expected and higher standards of learning. In 2017 and again in 2018, all pupils in Year 6 reached the standard expected for their age in science. Such achievement is due to the excellent quality of teaching, consistently high expectations and the exceptional progress that each pupil makes.
- In key stage 2, pupils' progress in writing and mathematics has remained considerably higher than the national average, and is in the highest 10% of all schools, over time. Progress in reading has been in the top 20% of all schools for at least two years. Disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 make similarly outstanding progress in each core subject. Pupils are very well prepared for the demands of the key stage 3 curriculum.

Early years provision

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment in the early years is good and improving. Children enter Nursery and Reception classes with knowledge, skills and abilities that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress over time and most leave the Reception class ready for the demands of the key stage 1 curriculum.
- In recent years, some turbulence in staffing has slowed leaders' development of the early years. While leaders have successfully maintained the good quality of teaching and learning over time, the exceptional standards of excellence seen in key stages 1 and 2 are not embedded in the early years. Nonetheless, new leaders are ambitious for children and staff. Because of their actions, the quality of the early years is now improving.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception is above national averages over time and is rising. Nevertheless, current pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics, while good, is not outstanding. Not every child reads regularly with an adult in school and children's progress as writers and mathematicians is not captured in a consistently effective manner. Very recently, early years leaders have amended day-to-day practices in teaching, learning and assessment to sharpen their systems. This is starting to make a real difference.
- Children are extremely happy and well looked after. The ethos is positive and good-natured smiles are plentiful. Staff are endlessly patient and caring. They genuinely respect children and ensure that children's dignity and self-esteem are protected and fostered. Children are kept safe and their welfare needs are met effectively.
- Staff are skilled in their teaching of phonics. In both Nursery and Reception classes, children are encouraged to listen attentively to stories and sounds in the environment around them. They join in repetitive storylines and poems with wholehearted

enthusiasm and thoroughly enjoy a good singalong. Children try out new vocabulary introduced by teachers and link sounds increasingly well to letters.

- Children behave well. They respond very quickly to any requests from staff and follow instructions carefully. Staff model high expectations of good behaviour, kindness and consideration effortlessly. Children use these excellent examples to cooperate, share and play nicely.
- Parents are full of praise for the early years. They are appreciative of the thoughtful, nurturing manner in which their children are looked after. 'My children have made very pleasing progress,' is one parent's comment that typifies others' viewpoints.

School details

Unique reference number	108836
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10053761

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Chadwick
Headteacher	Lisa Quinn-Briton (acting headteacher)
Telephone number	01915 210 055
Website	www.stpaulsryhope.co.uk/
Email address	office@stpaulsryhope.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 February 2018

Information about this school

- This is a slightly smaller than average-sized primary school.
- There have been several changes in staffing since the previous inspection. The acting headteacher has been successfully appointed to the role of permanent headteacher. She takes up the post in January 2019. There is an acting deputy headteacher. Several staff in the early years are either new to the key stage or recently appointed.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND who receive additional support is slightly higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils with SEND with an education, health and care plan is lower than the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Teaching and learning were observed jointly by inspectors and senior leaders across classes and key stages.
- Inspectors talked with parents face-to-face during the inspection. The views expressed by 132 parents in the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, were considered and 65 parents' free-text responses were also taken into account.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, scrutinised their work and talked with pupils during lesson observations. The views of 127 pupils who responded to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire were examined. The views of pupils were also considered during more formal discussions.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, subject leaders and a representative from the local authority as well as governors, including the chair of the governing body. A telephone call was held with the Diocesan director of education for Durham and Newcastle.
- A wide range of the school's own information and documentation was studied, including the self-evaluation document, improvement plans and records of the checks made on teaching and learning. Information about safeguarding practices was also examined, alongside policy documentation.
- The opinions of staff were taken into account via the 26 responses made to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and through formal and informal discussions.

Inspection team

Fiona Manuel, lead inspector

Gillian Nimer

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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