

# St Paul's Church of England Academy

Horntyte Road, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN37 6RT

## Inspection dates

9–10 January 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders have driven significant improvements. Pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2 have risen markedly over the last three years, as a result.
- The headteacher has a well-defined vision, based on the school's Christian values. This is driving improvement in all aspects of its work.
- The school works well with other schools, including those within the multi-academy trust, to develop its provision. This has had a substantial impact on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's priorities. They hold leaders rigorously to account for the progress of pupils. They provide an appropriate balance of challenge and support.
- Teaching is good and teachers build very good relationships with pupils. Where teaching is strongest, pupils make rapid and sustained progress. Where teaching is less effective, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could.
- The school makes effective provision for its vulnerable pupils and supports their learning well. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils is in line with that of other pupils nationally and they make strong progress.
- Pupils behave well as a result of the school's effective strategies for managing behaviour. Pupils have positive attitudes and learn well. They receive high-quality care that supports them to feel safe, happy and confident. Staff are vigilant in keeping pupils safe. Rates of attendance are improving and persistent absence is reducing.
- Early years teaching is good and the provision is effectively led and managed. The Nursery provides the youngest children with a particularly strong start to their education. More can be done in Reception to enhance children's play and independent learning. There is not enough challenge for the most able in Reception.
- Leaders monitor pupils' progress closely and take swift action to ensure that all groups achieve well. They support teachers well and provide effective training. Middle leaders are not yet having enough impact on ensuring that all teaching is highly effective.
- The curriculum is well planned. Leaders are ambitious and provide stimulating and engaging experiences. In some subjects, however, skills and knowledge are not developed as well as they should be. This particularly affects the most able.

## Full report

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

- Further improve the consistency of teaching, learning and assessment, so that it is all highly effective, by:
  - ensuring that tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities, so all make strong progress in all subjects
  - making sure that teachers use their informal assessments of pupils in lessons to move learning on quickly
  - ensuring that children's play and independent learning in Reception are used to challenge the most able.
- Develop the role of middle leaders so they contribute more effectively to improvements in teaching.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, based on its Christian values. All leaders are committed to ensuring that pupils achieve their full potential and enjoy learning, despite any individual barriers they might face.
- Working in close collaboration with the multi-academy trust (MAT), leaders have driven significant improvements in pupils' outcomes over the last three years. They work well with other schools in the MAT to provide training for staff. This continually improves the quality of teaching.
- Teachers have well-developed subject knowledge as a result of the training and support they have received. Initiatives to improve the quality of teaching in mathematics and English, in particular, are having a positive impact. For example, new approaches to developing pupils' reading have resulted in older pupils having sophisticated interpretation skills.
- Leaders are ambitious and have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They very carefully check on pupils' progress over time and work closely with teachers to adjust teaching as necessary. As a result of this close attention to pupils' achievements, staff are able to work together to strengthen progress where necessary. All pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make strong progress.
- Parents and carers speak highly of the school, saying that their children are happy and confident. They say that teaching is good and that they receive helpful information. One parent said, 'St Paul's has worked exceptionally hard to ensure my daughter feels safe and comfortable in school, making her transition from Nursery to school smooth. She always comes home smiling, talking about all the different learning she has done. Her teacher is always available during drop-off and pick-up, and is always happy to talk if I have any worries.'
- Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching. Leaders have a well-developed understanding of what makes teaching successful and evaluate the impact of new initiatives well. However, middle leaders are not yet having a strong enough impact on supporting teachers to improve. They are not as involved in monitoring the quality of teaching or providing support to colleagues.
- Leaders make effective use of pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. They check the progress of this group of pupils closely. They effectively evaluate the impact of the additional support provided, ensuring that disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as other pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils catch up well with other pupils nationally.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) leads the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. She has a good understanding of their individual needs and works well with staff to provide appropriate support. She provides training to develop the skills of teachers and support staff. She carefully checks on the effectiveness of the additional support provided and its impact on pupils' progress. The support provided in the Harbour (the school's special educational needs hub) is particularly effective because it is so well led.

- While the wider curriculum is well planned, in some subjects, pupils do not acquire knowledge and skills as well as they should. For example, the new scheme for teaching geography is at an early stage of development. Leaders are also aware of gaps in the religious education curriculum. These gaps have limited pupils' awareness of other faiths. Pupils respond enthusiastically to activities, such as the opportunity to use the purpose-built BMX track, and the majority can ride a bike confidently by the end of Year 3.
- Pupils have opportunities to develop their spiritual and moral awareness. For example, older pupils have explored what makes people unique and different, yet similar. Discussions about families help pupils to respect difference and prepare them well for life in modern Britain. Visits to the beach and examining the objects found there have enabled pupils to reflect on the environment. They feel strongly about the safe disposal of waste. One pupil said, 'Fish might suffocate.'
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium is effectively used to provide a variety of sporting and physical activities. The BMX track is a particularly popular asset of the school and pupils develop skills and confidence in cycling as a result.

### **Governance of the school**

- The local governing body knows the school well and holds leaders rigorously to account for pupils' progress. Governors regularly receive reports from leaders and staff, and appropriately question the impact of initiatives. They routinely receive updates on pupils' progress and challenge leaders about the progress of particular groups. Where there are gaps in progress, governors keep these in focus until there is improvement. Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for further development.
- Governors hold leaders rigorously to account for the spending of pupil premium funding. This funding is effectively used.
- They are vigilant in checking on the welfare and safety of pupils. They are kept up to date on all aspects of safeguarding. Governors are aware of the impact of good attendance and monitor attendance trends carefully.
- Governors have a detailed understanding of the school's priorities and oversee leaders' actions and their impact. They also evaluate the impact of the support and collaboration offered by the MAT. They use their visits to monitor the school's work. The challenge they offer is well informed and has a positive influence.
- Governors understand the needs of the local community well. Their understanding led to them setting up the school's Nursery department three years ago.
- Governors are uncompromising in their recruitment of high-quality leaders. They have helped to build a strong leadership team. They also took the decision to join the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust, which has brought support and many benefits to the school. They have been instrumental in ensuring that St Paul's provides high levels of nurture and support for its pupils. They have high aspirations for all.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The training of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and the deputies is routinely updated. They in turn ensure that all staff receive regular training and updates about all aspects of keeping pupils safe. The safety and welfare of pupils are given the highest priority by all staff. The culture of safeguarding is strong.
- Staff know how to refer concerns if they notice a significant change in a pupil's emotional or physical well-being that might suggest they are at risk of harm. Systems for recording and reporting concerns are efficient and easy to use. The DSL responds to concerns quickly. The school works well with external agencies to provide appropriate support. The DSL follows up referrals promptly, ensuring that pupils at risk receive support in a timely manner.
- The school has a well-maintained single central record of all the required recruitment checks, which are carried out before staff are appointed. The vetting of new staff is rigorous.
- Governors also keep their safeguarding training up to date and maintain oversight of the school's safeguarding arrangements. They regularly review the school's policies and check on its procedures.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils that support high-quality dialogue in lessons. Respectful relationships among pupils enable them to be confident when sharing their ideas.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and this enables them to deepen pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Year 5 are sophisticated in their use of technical vocabulary to describe how they can improve their writing. They have a well-developed knowledge of the techniques used by authors as a result of the successful teaching of reading. An example of this was their knowledge of how to use adverbial sentence starters and similes to aid description. They can create atmosphere in their descriptive writing. One pupil said, 'I like to think of myself as a writer.' Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to use their knowledge to edit and improve their work, resulting in good progress in writing.
- Teachers generally have high expectations. Where teaching is strongest, pupils make rapid and sustained progress. Teachers make good use of questioning to probe pupils' understanding and move learning forward. They frequently check on pupils' understanding and the quality of their work within lessons. They intervene quickly when pupils do not understand. Pupils are regularly challenged to explain their thinking and reasoning. They are confident to explain their understanding and justify their ideas. Teaching deepens thinking and conceptual understanding.
- Some teaching is less effective because it does not sufficiently match tasks to the skills and abilities of some groups of pupils. Sometimes, the tasks set are too easy or too difficult for some pupils and progress slows as a result. This particularly affects some of the most able and least able pupils.

- Where teaching is less effective, teachers are not monitoring pupils' progress during lessons well enough. As a result, pupils' misconceptions are not identified and addressed quickly enough. In a minority of lessons, pupils are waiting too long before they are able to move on to new, more challenging tasks.
- Recently introduced initiatives in the teaching of reading are having a positive impact on pupils' progress. By Year 6, pupils have become adept at interpreting text and making inferences. They use technical vocabulary to describe the writing techniques used by authors. Pupils' ability to read and interpret has become a real strength by the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils with SEND are very well supported in the Harbour. Well-trained teachers and support staff offer high-quality interventions. Tasks and materials are well matched to meet the needs of pupils. Adults offer the right levels of challenge and support to aid learning. For example, a pupil with speech and language difficulties was supported using visual resources to help develop their concept of time. Adults reassure and praise pupils to build self-esteem and confidence. Pupils are supported to respond positively to challenge. Adults providing additional support for pupils' reading are skilled in teaching phonics. The SENCo is aware that support for pupils with SEND in the main part of the school needs to be improved further.
- The teaching of phonics and early reading is effective. Pupils quickly learn to use their knowledge of letters and the sounds they represent to both read and write words. Pupils make good progress in developing their segmenting and blending skills, using them to write short sentences. Where pupils make mistakes, adults intervene quickly. However, in some groups, this is not as effective.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school is deeply committed to the well-being and personal development of its pupils. Leaders and staff do all in their power to ensure that challenges faced by vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils do not become lasting barriers to success. They have high aspirations for all pupils.
- The school provides a safe environment in which pupils develop confidence and learn well. Pupils feel safe and are happy. The pupils who showed inspectors around the school were confident and articulate. Their confidence is as a result of the atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance that leaders have created in school.
- Pupils' social and moral skills are well developed. Pupils said, 'We take care of our friends,' and, 'We are all equal.' They respect people from different backgrounds, cultures and faiths. However, pupils' knowledge of the different cultures and faiths represented in Britain is limited. They know what the school's values are, but found it harder to explain how to demonstrate these values in daily life.
- Pupils show respect to one another and towards visitors. They are courteous, and listen well to each other, and work collaboratively.
- The school's link with a school in Sierra Leone develops pupils' awareness of how life is

very different in other parts of the world. Pupils are also aware of issues of homelessness and food poverty. They have raised funds for charities in response to such issues. They are developing awareness of themselves as citizens within a wider community.

- Pupils have opportunities to take on responsibilities by becoming members of the school council, and through being librarians, eco-warriors, peer mediators and play leaders. These help them to develop their social skills and understand their roles as citizens.
- Pupils feel safe at school. They say that in the main bullying is not an issue. There have been a few instances of bullying, but these have been appropriately dealt with by staff and do not re-occur. Pupils feel that they can talk to adults if they have a concern and will be supported.
- Pupils know how to stay safe online. They know about the danger of talking to strangers, but they are not confident about keeping themselves safe in the local community.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- They are generally well behaved in lessons and around the school during breaktimes and lunchtimes. They have positive attitudes to their learning, though not all pupils take equal pride in their work. Pupils are respectful towards one another and work well together in lessons. They play cooperatively during breaktimes and eat lunch together in a sociable and orderly manner. They are polite towards adults and visitors, for example by standing aside for adults to pass in corridors.
- When tasks are not well matched to pupils' abilities or teachers are not monitoring progress closely enough, some pupils drift off task.
- Leaders have successfully introduced a variety of initiatives to improve behaviour. They have reviewed the behaviour policy and procedures. They appointed a behaviour support lead member of staff. These initiatives have reduced the number of incidents of poor behaviour. There is effective support for pupils who present challenging behaviours.
- There has been a sharp decrease in the number of exclusions over the last two years. A minority of pupils present challenging behaviours and they are well managed and supported. Pupils respond well to the school's rewards system.
- Attendance has improved over the last three years and is now in line with the national average. Persistent absence, which has been above the national average, with a number of pupils affected, is also improving significantly. Persistent absence has reduced and is currently in line with the national average. Leaders believe that this is largely as a result of the work of the family support worker and the nurture offered by the Harbour.

**Outcomes for pupils**

**Good**

- Leaders have been instrumental in improving outcomes at end of key stage 2. In 2018, progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 were significantly above the national averages. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the combined measure (reading, writing and mathematics combined), at the end of key stage 2, was 16% above the national average. This represents substantial improvement since 2016, when progress and attainment were below national averages. In 2018, key stage 1 attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was in line with the national averages, but was below for disadvantaged pupils.
- The progress and attainment of pupils currently at St Paul's are good. Where teaching is highly effective, all groups of pupils make strong progress. They are appropriately challenged and supported to move their learning on quickly. Where teaching is less effective, low-attaining and high-attaining pupils make slower progress because tasks are not sufficiently well matched to their abilities. This is particularly so in writing.
- In mathematics, the majority of pupils make good progress from their starting points. Most teaching ensures that pupils' skills and understanding develop appropriately over time. However, this needs to be further improved for some groups of pupils. Some of the most able pupils require greater challenge as teachers' expectations of what they can achieve are too low. For some pupils with SEND, gaps in their understanding of number need to be closed.
- There is some variability in the progress that pupils make in subjects such as history, geography and religious education. The scientific skills of some of the most able pupils are not yet at the higher standard. Leaders are aware of these variations and action is being taken to strengthen pupils' progress and attainment in the wider curriculum.
- Pupils with SEND are very well supported by the Harbour and make good progress as a result of well-planned interventions. Beyond the Harbour, interventions are not yet as well developed, which means that pupils' progress is slower. The SENCo is aware that there is more to do to support teaching in this area.
- Disadvantaged pupils are well supported and make strong progress during their time at St Paul's. At the end of key stage 2, in 2018, the progress of disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics was higher than the national averages, enabling them to catch up with other pupils nationally. Disadvantaged pupils continue to be well supported and they make good progress.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- The early years provision is well led and managed. The leader is new to the role and has introduced some changes to improve and develop the provision. These have not had time to embed and their impact on children's learning is not yet apparent. The leader has a clear view of the strengths of the department and the areas for further improvement. Leaders are aware that collaboration and links between Nursery and Reception need to be strengthened.
- Leaders have invested in the professional development of staff and this has improved the quality of teaching. The use of assessment is effective and starting to help close the gap in attainment between disadvantaged children and others. Records of learning



accurately assess children's achievements and identify their next steps, which teachers plan for effectively.

- The curriculum is well planned and resourced. Early years areas are attractively presented and engage children well. Teachers encourage parents to contribute to the overall picture of each child's development. Home visits prior to children starting in early years, the open-door policy in Nursery and Reception, and the use of email to keep parents updated are all effective in ensuring good communication between home and school.
- The Nursery provides an excellent start to children's learning. Staff are highly skilled in playing alongside children to ensure that they learn well and develop language and social skills. Two-year-old children are very well cared for and flourish in the provision.
- The quality of teaching in Reception is good and children learn well during activities led by adults. Children's independent activities are not as well developed. They are not challenging enough, particularly for the most able, and do not enable children to extend their learning.
- Children enter early years with starting points below those typical for children of similar ages. The majority of children make good progress from these starting points. Over the last three years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception has been in line with national averages. However, the proportion of disadvantaged children achieving this measure has been below the national average. Currently, this group is making good progress to close the gap. New strategies to ensure that a higher proportion of children achieve a good level of development by the end of Reception are at an early stage of development.
- The early years environment is orderly, tidy, clean and well presented. Children happily engage in adult-led and child-initiated activities, respect each other and are well supported in learning how to take turns. They behave well, and are happy, safe and very well cared for by the staff. Close attention is paid to all the requirements for this phase of education and all safeguarding procedures in early years are effective.

## School details

Unique reference number	143034
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10067182

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	663
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mr Tony Davis
Headteacher	Richard White
Telephone number	01424 424530
Website	<a href="http://www.stpaulsceacademy.org">www.stpaulsceacademy.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@stpaulsceacademy.org">office@stpaulsceacademy.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- St Paul's Church of England Academy converted to become an academy on 1 August 2016. When its predecessor school, St Paul's Church of England Primary School and Nursery, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good overall. The school is now part of the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust, a multi-academy trust (MAT).
- The MAT is overseen by five members and a board of directors. St Paul's has its own local governing body that holds the school to account and reports to the board of trustees. The school is led and managed by the headteacher and two assistant headteachers. The chief executive officer and director of improvement from the MAT oversee and support the work of the school.
- St Paul's works closely with other schools, including schools within the MAT.
- St Paul's has provision for two-year-olds.
- St Paul's is a voluntary-controlled Church of England school within the Diocese of Chichester. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in April

2017.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the inspection.
- Inspectors considered 64 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 58 free-text comments.
- The single central record of recruitment checks, the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, and several case studies were scrutinised.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes, often jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at their work across all subjects.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, the chief executive officer and head of improvement from the MAT, governors, and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors held meetings with staff from across the school.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils. Pupils' views of the school were also gathered through many informal conversations.
- Documents related to the work of the local governing body were reviewed.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluations of the school's effectiveness, development plans, the school's own information about pupils' progress and attainment, and behaviour and attendance logs.

## Inspection team

Peter Wibroe, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lynda Welham	Ofsted Inspector
Clementina Aina	Ofsted Inspector
Katherine Powell	Ofsted Inspector

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