

# Inspection of a good school: St Paul's Catholic School

Phoenix Drive, Leadenhall, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK6 5EN

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Inspection dates:

12–13 November 2019

## Outcome

St Paul's Catholic School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to the school and are proud of it. They get on well with their teachers and with each other. Pupils are safe, well cared for and valued. The headteacher and her staff have the highest possible expectations for everybody to do well together.

Leaders want the very best for all pupils. Staff know individual pupils well and work tirelessly to help them succeed. Pupils study a wide range of subjects throughout the school, with many of them choosing to stay for the sixth form. Pupils are learning more and achieving higher standards due to improved teaching at the school.

Pupils behave extremely well in lessons and usually around the school. A few pupils do not always behave as well as they should at breaktimes. Leaders know there is more work to do to make sure that everyone meets the high standards of behaviour that they expect at all times. Some bullying does occur; however, staff act quickly to address this as it is not tolerated.

## What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The quality of education at St. Paul's Catholic School remains good. Staff are ambitious for all pupils to achieve well, and most of them do. The school uses staff training well to share good practice. Across subjects, teachers know what they are going to teach and when. In English, science and mathematics, lessons are very well planned. Teachers of these subjects have thought hard about the knowledge and skills that pupils need. They know it is important to remember what has been done before and understand where things are heading next. Pupils are encouraged to think about how this works for them after their GCSEs, with many choosing to stay in the sixth form. Work to improve planning in modern foreign languages and physical education is at different stages. It is not as advanced as it is in the core areas. Leaders recognise this and have started to make the changes needed.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They establish clear routines and combine these with well-planned lessons. This leads to excellent behaviour in class. However, this high level of behaviour is not always the same during social times, when a small number of pupils are boisterous. Leaders have recognised this and have taken recent action, though they accept that more needs to be done.

The special educational needs team provides highly effective support for pupils. Staff have access to information and effective training to help them work with pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). All pupils have access to exactly the curriculum they need and are part of all areas of this inclusive school, which helps them to achieve well.

Provision for pupils' personal development is strong. Pastoral support teams provide excellent support to pupils when they need it, using an ethos fostered from their Catholic foundations. There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to join clubs throughout the day, including before and after school. All groups of pupils benefit from these, including pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with SEND. The uptake of these opportunities is positive.

Sixth-form students are confident young people. They are good role models for younger pupils. A large proportion of students stay in the sixth form after their GCSEs. They appreciate the breadth of appropriate courses they are offered. Support from staff is strong, which helps students achieve well. Most students go on to further study, employment and/or training when they leave the school, including those with SEND. Courses are established that give students an alternative route to A level.

Leaders are driven by a strong moral purpose to help every pupil do their best within their Catholic ethos. They act with absolute integrity. Their inclusive vision is shared by the whole school community, including governors. Staff are positive about leaders' concern for their workload and well-being and appreciate opportunities to develop their own leadership skills. There is a clear focus on giving more staff important responsibilities, which has led to a culture of togetherness for improvement.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a very well-established safeguarding culture. Clear systems, rigorously checked by governors, are in place to identify and support pupils at risk, so that pupils are safe in the school. Pupils know there are trusted members of staff they can speak to if they are worried about something. Staff are trained to know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil. The safeguarding team uses its wide expertise and experience to provide effective support for pupils. The team also works relentlessly within the local area to ensure that all agencies give the support expected when it is needed.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils' learning in some subjects is not sequenced as coherently as in others. This makes it difficult for pupils to build on what has gone before. Leaders need to ensure that the school's subject planning is sequenced well in all subjects.
- Some behaviour outside of lessons does not reflect the high standards leaders set. At social times, pupils' behaviour can be too boisterous. Leaders need to ensure that the number of incidents of poor behaviour outside decreases.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2016.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110517
<b>Local authority</b>	Milton Keynes
<b>Inspection number</b>	10111246
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1793
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	450
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair/Chair of trust/Chair of governing body</b>	Paul Herbert
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jo-Anne Hoarty
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-pauls.org.uk/">http://www.st-pauls.org.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15–16 March 2016

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new headteacher.
- The school has eight pupils who attend alternative provision at The Bridge Academy.
- The school has specialist provision, organised into three departments. These support pupils who have hearing impairment, those with visual impairment and those who require support with communication needs. There are currently 56 pupils in the specialist provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders. Inspectors also met with a range of teaching and support staff.
- Inspectors evaluated the quality of education. We did deep dives in English,

mathematics, science, modern foreign languages and physical education. Inspectors discussed curriculum design with leaders, carried out lesson visits, scrutinised pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers from the lessons visited about the curriculum.

- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding. The school's single central record was reviewed. Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead and his team.
- The lead inspector met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors considered the views of 89 members of staff who responded to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- Inspectors took account of the 101 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and the 102 free-text responses.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally about the school. Inspectors took account of the 263 responses to Ofsted's online pupils' survey.

### **Inspection team**

Gary Tostevin, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Patrick Harty

Ofsted Inspector

Patrick Taylor

Ofsted Inspector

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