

Inspection of a good school: St Paul's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Lane, Swanley Village, Kent BR8 7PJ

Inspection dates:

28 January 2020

Outcome

St Pauls' Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Paul's is a happy, safe and successful school where pupils and staff flourish. Pupils have many opportunities to fulfil their school's vision: 'Life in all its fullness'. Learning extends beyond the classroom. The whole school site and local area are used well to widen the experiences from which all pupils benefit. There are a large number of interesting clubs for pupils to attend and they enjoy doing so.

Teaching staff work hard to help pupils achieve high standards. All staff share a relentless drive to continually improve the quality of the school's provision. The aim is to give all pupils the very best education in its widest sense. As a result, pupils develop positive personal qualities, such as confidence, independence and resilience.

Pupils told us that they like being in a small school because 'everyone knows each other'. This leads to excellent relationships between pupils of all ages, based on the school's Christian values. Pupils behave well throughout the school day. They get on together amicably and are untroubled by bullying.

Parents and carers visit the school regularly, for example to see their child's work. They are pleased that their children attend this school.

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

Leaders think carefully about what they want pupils to learn, when they will learn it and how it will be taught. In the strongest subjects, which include reading, mathematics and physical education (PE), teachers understand exactly how knowledge and skills should build over time. They use this understanding to ensure that their lessons give the right level of challenge to all pupils. They also frequently check that pupils are learning what is

intended. Leaders know that there is still some work to do to ensure that all subjects, including history and geography, are taught in this way.

Leaders have successfully introduced specific techniques to teach particular subjects, linked to their investigations into what works best in other schools. Consistent teaching across classes helps pupils to engage well in lessons, focus successfully on the intended learning and achieve well. For example, in mathematics, teachers often ask questions about what pupils learned last week, last term and last year. Recalling this learning helps pupils to remember it and apply it.

Reading is taught particularly well. Younger pupils quickly learn the phonics skills they need to sound out words. Older pupils learn how to think deeply about texts and their meaning. Resources are used well to help pupils express their ideas about what they are reading. Effective teaching ensures that all pupils become fluent and confident readers. Pupils are also enthusiastic about their reading. This is because they have access to high-quality, enticing books and teachers read to them often in an exciting and engaging way.

Teachers are quick to intervene if pupils need additional support. For example, a small group of pupils might read with a teaching assistant to boost their confidence. Some pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit from regular extra help. Skilful teaching assistants use a range of techniques, including effective questioning, to help these pupils join in the same lessons as their classmates.

Trips, visits and learning in the local area are used regularly to enhance learning in many subjects. These opportunities also support pupils' wider development. The many clubs that pupils join include mountain biking, art and computing. Despite its small size, the school participates in many sporting events with other schools. Pupils actively support charities such as the Poppy Appeal and the local foodbank. There are strong and purposeful links with the local community, including the nearby church.

Pupils know how the school expects them to behave. In lessons, they are attentive and focused. At breaktime and lunchtime, they enjoy socialising together. They find it easy to make friends and new pupils settle in quickly. Pupils told us that they had no concerns about bullying. Several said that they would tackle bullying should they encounter it, as they know it is wrong. Pupils have confidence that staff will help them if they have any worries.

All staff are proud to work at this school. They work hard for the benefit of the pupils, but know that senior leaders and governors consider their workload and well-being when developing new ideas. A cohesive staff team, led by an inspiring, outward-looking and energetic headteacher, is determined that the school should continue to improve. The chair of the governing body told us that the school is 'on the path to excellence'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are vigilant in their efforts to keep every pupil safe. Everyone who works at the school knows the importance of this part of their job. They ensure that the school site is safe and secure. Pupils told us that they feel safe in their school.

Staff have been well trained in how to keep pupils safe. Because they know their pupils well, staff are quick to spot if anything might be wrong. The school's safeguarding procedures ensure that vulnerable pupils swiftly get any help they might need. Staff work hard to support any families experiencing difficulty.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have thought carefully and in detail about the intended sequencing of knowledge and skills in many subjects. Pupils are subsequently learning these subjects well because teachers are clear about what to teach and when. In some subjects, this sequencing still needs to be described in more detail. Leaders should therefore ensure that this work is completed as soon as possible so that pupils' learning is equally strong across the whole curriculum.

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 on 19–20 May 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 the school and 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

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| Unique reference number | 118590 |
| Local authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 10122270 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 111 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | David Strachan |
| Headteacher | Ben Hulme |
| Website | www.st-pauls-swanley.kent.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 19–20 May 2016 |

Information about this school

- The current headteacher took up his post in January 2017.
- The school is designated as having a religious character and is located in the Diocese of Rochester. Its most recent section 48 inspection was in April 2019, which reported that this was a good Church of England school.

Information about this inspection

- We met with the headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector had a meeting with three governors (including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body). The lead inspector also had phone calls with a representative from the local authority and a representative from the diocese.
- We did deep dives in reading, mathematics and physical education (PE). This included meeting with senior leaders and subject leaders, visiting lessons, discussing learning with teachers, talking to pupils from different classes and looking at their work. The lead inspector also heard some pupils read to a teaching assistant.
- We met with the school's designated safeguarding lead and scrutinised the school's safeguarding records. This included a review of the single central record of recruitment

checks on adults working with pupils. We spoke to staff and pupils about safeguarding throughout the inspection.

- We observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at lunchtime. We talked to pupils throughout the inspection and considered the 89 responses they made to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire.
- We took into account the 36 responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including 28 written comments.
- We met with staff throughout the inspection and reviewed the 12 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.
- We looked at a wide range of school documentation and carefully examined the school's website.

Inspection team

Chris Donovan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Kirstine Boon

Ofsted Inspector

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