

Inspection of St Paul's CofE VA Primary School

Coronation Street, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB2 1HJ

Inspection dates: 13 May and 10–11 June 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

St Paul's is a small, friendly school with a big heart. The school is a community where everyone is valued and welcomed. Pupils come from a wide range of different ethnic backgrounds and, sometimes, from different countries too. Pupils have different religious beliefs, disabilities and family backgrounds. These differences are celebrated, and pupils learn from and about each other.

St Paul's has become better and better, over the last three years, to become the good school that it is now. Leaders and staff now have much higher expectations of what pupils can do. They are determined that every pupil will do as well as they possibly can.

Pupils behave well in their classrooms and around the school. They have good relationships with staff and follow the instructions they are given. Pupils love learning and enjoy talking about, and sometimes debating, key issues.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and love spending time with their friends. They feel safe at school and know that the staff care about them and take action to help them when they need it. Bullying is now something that rarely happens at St Paul's. Leaders take it very seriously when it does happen.

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

The school has improved significantly over the last couple of years. The strong senior leadership team has moved the school forward quickly. Leaders have a clear vision for the school which is shared by staff and governors. Leaders' high expectations are clearly evident, for example in the neatness and care shown in pupils' work. The school is a happy place to work, where everyone pulls together for the good of the pupils.

A well-structured curriculum is now in place. It covers all the subjects in the national curriculum and all aspects of the early years foundation stage. In all areas of the curriculum, leaders have identified the skills that pupils need to develop, step by step, as they learn about each subject. In most subjects, including English, mathematics, science and music, leaders have also identified the specific pieces of knowledge that pupils need to know and remember. In history, geography, art and design technology, this knowledge has not yet been identified fully.

Reading is now at the heart of the school's curriculum. Leaders are determined that all pupils will be fluent and confident readers by the time they leave the school. As soon as children join the Reception class, they start to learn phonics. They are taught systematically, and they quickly learn the relationships between letters and the sounds they represent. The school has invested heavily in reading books that match the school's phonics programme. This means that pupils are given books to

read that only contain words and sounds that they have already been taught. This helps them to make strong progress in learning to read.

The mathematics curriculum is strong, including in the early years. Children get off to a strong start in Reception. They then build on their knowledge and skills as they progress through the school. Pupils are given plentiful opportunities to practise new learning and to revisit what they have learned previously. As a result, pupils become increasingly proficient mathematicians as they move through the school.

Leadership of some subjects, most notably English and mathematics, is well developed and very effective. The leadership of some subjects is less effective. This is because some subject leaders do not have the expert knowledge they need to be highly effective in leading the subjects they are responsible for.

The curriculum is delivered effectively and pupils enjoy their learning. The strong relationships between pupils and staff mean that classrooms are positive learning environments. Children begin to develop good learning habits as soon as they start in Reception. Throughout the school, pupils listen carefully and do their best. This helps them to learn well.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is strong. The curriculum is adapted well to meet individual pupils' needs. Pupils with SEND are valued as members of the school community. The school works in full partnership with parents to ensure that provision meets pupils' needs fully.

The COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic has restricted what the school has been able to do over the last year. However, the school's curriculum is usually enhanced by a wide range of educational visits. Normally, the school also runs a wide variety of clubs, such as chess, sports and computer coding. Pupils are given opportunities to take positions of responsibility, such as becoming a member of the school council or eco-council.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has a strong safeguarding culture. Staff are well trained to identify possible concerns. They know the action to take if they are concerned about a child. Records show staff are vigilant and share their concerns with leaders quickly. Leaders have excellent knowledge and understanding of safeguarding. They take prompt and effective action to safeguard pupils, whenever necessary. Leaders support individual pupils and their families very well. For example, they continue to ensure that they have daily contact with families who have found the challenges of the pandemic particularly difficult.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum for some subjects is not as strong as others. This is the case in history, geography, art and design technology. In these subjects, leaders have not fully identified the specific knowledge that they want pupils to remember. For example, the history curriculum states that pupils will learn about World War I but it does not identify the key aspects of this vast topic that will be taught. Some subjects have key vocabulary identified but others do not. This means that there is variability in the quality of pupils' learning in different subjects. Leaders now need to ensure that the small steps of knowledge that pupils are taught about, and are expected to remember, are identified in all subjects.
- There is variability in the quality of subject leadership, with some being more effective than others. Some leaders do not have the in-depth knowledge they need, about the subject they are responsible for, to be able to provide expert advice to their colleagues and to ensure curriculum planning is as strong as possible. This leads to an inconsistency of approach and to some subjects being less strong than others. Leaders now need to ensure that all subject leaders have expert knowledge of the subjects they are responsible for and that there is greater consistency of approach between different subjects.

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

Unique reference number	110839
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10184152
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	155
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Beverly Jones
Headteacher	Helen Darrell
Website	www.stpauls.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–27 June 2018

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in January 2019 following a period when the school was led by two part-time interim headteachers. The deputy headteacher took up her post in September 2019.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- We met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other leaders, teachers and pupils, a group of governors and a representative of the local authority.
- We considered a range of school documents.
- In order to check the effectiveness of safeguarding, we checked the school single central register of pre-appointment checks, met the school's designated safeguarding leads, spoke with staff and pupils, and checked the school's child protection records.
- We spoke with parents as they brought their children to school. We also considered 62 responses to Parent View and 15 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and science. We met with the leaders of these subjects, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, spoke with pupils about their work, spoke to teachers, and listened to pupils reading to their teachers.

Inspection team

Wendy Varney, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Liz Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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