

Inspection of St Paul's Church of England Aided Primary School

St Paul's Church of England (VA) Primary School, Emsworth Crescent, Pendeford, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV9 5NR

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 September 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires Improvement

The quality of education

Requires Improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires Improvement

Personal development

Requires Improvement

Leadership and management

Requires Improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending St Paul's Church of England Aided Primary School. They enter school with smiles and are greeted by staff who care about them.

The school has a strong Christian ethos. This ethos is reflected well in how pupils look after one another. They are polite and respectful to each other and to adults. Bullying is rare. Pupils trust adults to sort any friendship issues out quickly. This helps pupils to feel safe at school.

Leaders have made recent changes to the way in which many subjects are taught. However, pupils' experiences in lessons are not consistently positive. The lessons that teachers teach do not help pupils to learn well enough. Sometimes, teachers' explanations are not clear and lessons do not always focus on the right things. All of this means that some pupils do not listen carefully enough or engage well in lessons. Many pupils do not know or remember the important information that leaders expect them to.

Pupils are eager to access activities that extend beyond their academic curriculum. Some take part in sports activities after school but these opportunities are limited. Leaders know there is more to do to promote pupils' character development.

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

There have been significant changes in leadership recently. Many parents recognise positive changes that the new headteacher and deputy headteacher have started to make. Senior leaders, along with those responsible for governance, have a clear vision. They are ambitious and want all pupils to succeed. However, this vision is not yet realised. Leaders are aware that there is much more work to do.

Senior leaders have recently introduced a new approach to teaching the curriculum. They have adopted several commercial schemes. They have checked that the key information pupils are expected to know and remember is set out clearly. As part of this work, they have made adaptations to the schemes to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities access the full curriculum. However, curriculum leadership is in the early stages of development in many subjects. Subject leaders do not yet have the experience or expertise to maintain a strong overview of how well pupils learn each subject.

There is variation in staff's expertise. Some teachers do not have the essential subject knowledge that they need to teach the curriculum effectively. Sometimes, the explanations that adults give in lessons are not clear. This leads to some misconceptions in pupils' understanding. Often, the tasks that pupils are asked to complete do not emphasise the key information that pupils are expected to learn. In addition, teachers do not accurately check the progress that pupils make through all

of the curriculum. As a result, there are gaps in pupils' knowledge. Pupils do not know and remember the subject specific knowledge as well as leaders expect.

Reading is a whole-school priority. Leaders have reviewed and refreshed the school's approach to teaching pupils how to read. All staff have recently been trained to teach phonics. Adults are now clearer about the key information they need to teach in lessons. From the very start, children in Reception Year benefit from daily phonics lessons. In addition, pupils practise reading books that are well matched to their ability. The renewed approach is starting to make a positive difference, although some pupils cannot yet read as well as leaders expect.

Pupils behave very well on the playground and around the school. For instance, they play together happily at lunchtime, enjoying a variety of games and activities with friends. School is mostly very calm. However, pupils' attitudes to learning in lessons are not yet consistently positive. Sometimes, when teachers do not set tasks that emphasise key knowledge or when explanations are unclear, pupils lose their focus and become distracted.

Staff promote equality and respect through the topics they cover in the curriculum, class discussions and assemblies. Pupils understand the importance of treating others with respect. However, the school's work to promote pupils' personal development is not well coordinated. Leaders have recently started to make improvements. For example, they have introduced a new personal social and health education curriculum. However, initiatives to promote pupils' character development remain limited. Pupils are keen to take part in a broader variety of extra-curricular activities.

School governors welcome external support. They work well with the local authority. They invite guidance from consultants and specialist advisers. Most staff are proud to work at the school. They are keen to support leaders in making necessary improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a positive culture of safeguarding at the school. Staff understand what to do if they have a concern about a child. Leaders maintain accurate records of such concerns. They respond quickly when a child is at potential risk of harm and work closely with external agencies when necessary.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. In addition, leaders arrange lessons to educate pupils about specific issues that affect them. For example, older pupils have attended workshops that teach about the dangers of gangs and knife crime.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some curriculum leaders are still developing expertise in leading their subjects. They do not yet provide the challenge and support that teachers need to help improve the way the curriculum is delivered. Senior leaders should continue to support subject leaders in developing their subject-specific expertise.
- There is variation in teachers' subject knowledge. The tasks that teachers set do not always help pupils to learn key information as effectively as leaders expect. Leaders should ensure that all staff know how to teach the curriculum well.
- When lessons are not taught well, some pupils do not focus closely enough in class. This limits their learning. Teachers should ensure that they present information clearly and plan tasks, so that all pupils engage in their learning.
- Teachers' approach to checking what pupils know and remember is not yet fully developed. Staff do not know the progress that pupils make through all of the curriculum. Leaders should put an approach in place for teachers to check that pupils know and remember the planned curriculum content in all subjects.
- The school does not offer a broad range of opportunities to develop pupils' interests beyond their academic studies. This limits pupils' personal development. Leaders should broaden the range of enrichment activities offered by the school.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

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	104382
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	10242094
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Gill
Headteacher	Jennifer Ferretti
Website	www.stpaulscofeprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher started in September 2021. The deputy headteacher started in September 2022.
- A new chair of the governing body was appointed in September 2021.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school is within the Diocese of Lichfield. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in October 2015. Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They restarted in September 2021. The next inspection will be within eight years of the last section 48 inspection.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders and members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector had a discussion with a local authority representative.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with the leader responsible for safeguarding. He also reviewed safeguarding records and checked the school's single central record.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, around the school and at lunchtime. They spoke to pupils about their opinions of behaviour at the school.
- Inspectors considered responses on Ofsted's Parent View including free-text responses. They also took account of responses to staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors visited the before-school provision and spoke to pupils who attend.

Inspection team

Jonathan Leonard, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Anne Potter

Ofsted Inspector

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