

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

Park Lane, Cheshunt, Hertfordshire EN7 6LR

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 October 2022

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love to attend St Paul's and are proud of their school. Pupils talk passionately about how they respect that people are all different. 'There is something for everyone here,' is a typical comment from a pupil describing the school. Pupils enjoy supporting each other in their many roles of responsibility. These include as mental health ambassadors, which pupils started in response to the pandemic.

Behaviour at the school is orderly. Pupils understand the behaviour policy well. They learn to manage their behaviour successfully and are supported through 'zones of regulation' and the '20-20-20' provision. Pupils respond positively to the high expectations for everyone to achieve well.

Pupils say that bullying is rare, and any incidents are quickly dealt with. Pupils really like the way that they each have a 'special person' they can go to if they are worried about anything. This makes pupils feel safe. Older pupils enjoy buddying younger children and supporting them in their learning.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of opportunities to complement the curriculum. They regularly go to clubs, such as Irish dancing, netball, choir, speed stacking, cooking and chess.

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

Leaders have carefully considered the ambitious curriculum in place. They ensure this responds to the diversity within their community. Leaders' design of the curriculum has taken into account the knowledge pupils need to learn at each point, so they are prepared for their secondary education.

Teachers implement the curriculum well in most areas, for example in reading and science. They make lessons engaging and memorable, ably helped by support staff. Teachers ensure pupils use their knowledge in complex tasks, and skilfully ask pupils pertinent questions to identify any misunderstandings. Consequently, pupils build their

knowledge over time. However, while this is the case, there are a few areas in which teachers are not as secure in their subject knowledge expertise to be able to adapt the way they deliver the curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of their pupils. In these instances, pupils do not always achieve quite as well as they might.

In most curriculum areas, teachers make sure that pupils understand and review what they have studied, for example in the 'flashback four' during each lesson. This aids staff in quickly identifying if pupils do not understand, have misconceptions or have forgotten something.

Reading is prioritised. Leaders have invested considerable time in ensuring that the profile of reading is raised in the school and the community. Pupils love to read, from the early years to the end of key stage 2. Well-trained staff support weaker readers to apply their phonics skills. Books are well matched to pupils' knowledge. Leaders engage parents well. Parents comment that they 'love to read with their children'. As a result, pupils quickly become fluent and committed readers.

Staff provide well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff are trained effectively to identify, quickly and accurately, when pupils find learning difficult. Parents and pupils are closely involved with the plans that are put in place. Pupils use the strategies staff teach them to overcome any difficulties with learning. As a result, pupils with SEND become increasingly independent and successful learners.

Leaders have planned a curriculum that prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Leaders have established a community founded on the school values, such as being polite, teamwork, sharing and understanding. 'Caught being kind' is central to the positive ethos in the school. As a result, pupils learn to respect different lifestyles and beliefs.

Leaders have placed great importance on giving pupils opportunities to take responsibility for themselves, their school and their community. Pupils serve in many roles that help with the daily running of the school as well as with the school's improvement. For example, pupils help the chaplaincy team plan and organise events and ceremonies. Pupil ambassador roles play a clear role in shaping the school's future development.

Governors know the school well and carry out their statutory roles effectively. For example, they hold leaders closely to account for the safeguarding practices at the school. This ensures that all leaders, including governors, have a shared vision for providing pupils with a better quality of education.

Staff are confident in the leadership of the school. They are proud to work at the school and feel well supported. Staff praise the way that leaders manage their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained and know the risks that pupils may face in their lives. Staff are vigilant in looking for signs of potential harm and act swiftly when concerns arise. They understand and use leaders' system for reporting concerns.

Leaders maintain safeguarding records meticulously and are relentless in their pursuit of effective provision for their pupils, particularly that which requires the support of external agencies.

The curriculum content successfully teaches pupils how to stay safe in a range of day-to-day situations.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers are not secure in the subject knowledge they need to adapt the delivery of the curriculum effectively in some areas. This means that sometimes pupils do not do as well as they could. Leaders need to ensure staff have the training they need so that they know how to adapt the way they teach areas of the curriculum so that it supports pupils to achieve even better than at present.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2017.

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	117492
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10240961
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	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sharon Robson
Headteacher	Katie Worton-Geer
Website	stpauls.herts.dbprimary.com
Dates of previous inspection	24 and 25 January 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Paul's Catholic Primary School is part of the Diocese of Westminster.
- The school had a section 48 inspection for schools with a religious character on 18 November 2021.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator, a representative from the local authority, a representative from the diocese, members of the governing body, teachers, support staff and pupils.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, art and design and reading. For each deep dive, the inspector 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. In early reading, this took the form of listening to pupils read to a familiar adult.

- As part of the evaluation of the school's safeguarding processes, the inspector scrutinised the school's record of background checks on the suitability of staff to work with children. The inspector looked at a sample of staff personnel files. The inspector viewed the school's system for recording child protection concerns and discussed case studies.
- The inspector reviewed the 12 responses that were submitted by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and also considered the six free-text responses from parents. The inspector also considered 15 responses to the Ofsted staff survey, and the 38 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Ruth Brock, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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