

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

St Paul's Road, Withington, Manchester M20 4PG

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Inspection dates:

21 and 22 March 2023

## Outcome

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

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud and happy to attend this warm and welcoming school. Teachers develop strong and supportive relationships with pupils. They support and encourage pupils to meet their high expectations. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

Pupils treat visitors, staff and each other with kindness and respect. Older pupils take extra care to include any pupils who are feeling sad or lonely in their games during social times. Staff expect a high standard of behaviour in lessons and around school. Leaders have developed strong systems to swiftly resolve any incidents of poor behaviour or bullying. As a result, pupils behave well and feel safe in school.

Pupils enjoy a variety of experiences that enhance their learning. For example, some Year 6 pupils told the inspector that they enjoyed visiting a local mosque when learning about other faiths. Pupils also spoke enthusiastically about a visit from a humanist speaker, which helped them to understand other people's beliefs.

Leaders provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and talents. This includes sports clubs, arts and crafts, Chinese club and opportunities for pupils to write and publish a school newspaper.

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

Leaders have designed a broad, creative and ambitious curriculum, from the early years to Year 6. They have thought carefully about the organisation of the curriculum in the mixed-age classes to ensure that pupils can build on what they already know. Overall, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

In many subjects, leaders have defined the essential knowledge that pupils should learn over time. However, in a few other subjects, this work is in the earlier stages. In these remaining subjects, leaders have not clearly identified what pupils should learn in each

topic or theme. This means that, sometimes, teachers are not as clear as they should be about what content to teach. This hinders some pupils' ability to build a rich body of subject knowledge.

Teachers throughout the school have strong subject knowledge. In the main, they use a range of effective techniques to check that pupils understand their learning. Leaders have recognised that, in some subjects, pupils do not remember their prior learning as well as they should. They have recently developed systems and trained staff to better support pupils to remember their learning over time.

In the early years, staff are well trained to develop children's language and communication skills. For example, staff design opportunities for children to master new vocabulary and consolidate their understanding of number. Children are ready for the demands of Year 1.

Across the school, leaders have ensured that pupils encounter a broad and ambitious range of texts. Pupils practise reading using books which accurately match their reading knowledge. This helps pupils to develop into confident and fluent readers. That said, there are inconsistencies in the way that some staff teach early reading. From time to time, teachers choose approaches and resources which do not align with pupils' previous learning. Consequently, some pupils do not develop their reading knowledge as quickly and effectively as they should.

Leaders provide pupils with a solid foundation for life in a modern, multicultural society. For example, leaders have placed the universal rights of the child at the heart of all that they do. They explicitly teach pupils about their rights and about their responsibilities in upholding the rights of others. For instance, leaders ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to explore situations locally and globally where children's rights are not respected. Pupils said that they learn about diversity and about the right for all people to be free from discrimination and prejudice.

Leaders are effective in their work to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. Teachers receive appropriate training, information and guidance to meet the needs of these pupils well.

In the early years, staff help children to quickly adapt to the routines of school life. Throughout the school, teachers have established positive and supportive learning environments in their classrooms. Teachers help pupils to develop a positive attitude to learning. As a result, pupils' learning is rarely disrupted.

Governors have the necessary knowledge and skills to support and challenge the work of leaders. Leaders prioritise the well-being of staff and pupils. Staff are proud and happy to work at the school. They value the opportunities that leaders provide for their professional development.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that staff and governors have the knowledge that they need to keep pupils safe. They have established clear and robust reporting systems to help staff to easily report any concerns that they may have about a pupil's welfare.

Leaders are proactive in seeking advice and support from external agencies. This means that they quickly secure appropriate additional help for pupils and their families when necessary.

Pupils are taught about risks and safety in an age-appropriate way. Leaders teach pupils about the dangers of gaming, social media and cyber-bullying.

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

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

- In a few subjects, leaders have not defined the essential knowledge that pupils should learn. As a result, some teachers are not clear about what content to teach and when this should be taught. Leaders should ensure that they identify the knowledge that pupils should learn in these subjects. This is so that teachers can design learning that builds on what pupils already know.
- Leaders have recognised that there are inconsistencies in the approach to teaching early reading. This hinders the development of phonic knowledge for some children, preventing them from learning to read as quickly as they should. Leaders should ensure that they support staff to deliver the phonics programme consistently well.

## **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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2013.

## 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 105498   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Manchester   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10240900   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary controlled   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 344  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Aydin Djemal   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Abigail Lee  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.stpaulswithington.co.uk">www.stpaulswithington.co.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 18 July 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005                      |

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher and a new chair of the governing body have been appointed.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- This school is part of the Diocese of Manchester. The last section 48 inspection took place in October 2017.

## 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 her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with senior leaders, including the headteacher and a range of staff. She also spoke with members of the local governing body, as well as a representative of the local authority and a representative of the diocese.
- The inspector spoke to pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. She observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and social times.

- The inspector reviewed a wide range of evidence, including leaders' self-evaluation documents, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding. She met with leaders, staff and pupils to understand how pupils are kept safe.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, geography and mathematics. For each deep dive, she discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some teachers and pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector observed children reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Charlotte Oles, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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