

Inspection of St Paul's C of E Primary School NW7

The Ridgeway, Mill Hill, London NW7 1QU

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 December 2023

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

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 7 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempt by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspection under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

There is a real sense of community at St Paul's Church of England Primary School. Parents and carers are extremely positive about the school's work. One parent's comment echoed the views of many others when they said: 'It really feels like a family, where all faiths are welcome and my children thrive.' Staff know pupils well. Pupils are kept safe and feel happy in this caring school.

The school has high expectations of all pupils. The school has an ambitious and inclusive curriculum that meets pupils' needs, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils achieve well across many subjects.

Pupils enjoy coming to this school. Their behaviour is exemplary in lessons and at playtimes. They are polite and well mannered. Pupils are encouraged to learn from and live out the school's vision and values of 'excellence, understanding, joy and faith'.

There are many opportunities for pupils to be role models. This includes being a member of the school council, acting as a 'playground friend' or being a 'house captain'. Pupils benefit from the large number of visits and residentials on offer. The school community celebrates and takes pride in its local links, including to the abolitionist William Wilberforce, whose money built the school and the neighbouring church.

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

The school provides an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum that aims to build pupils' knowledge from Reception Year to Year 6. In most subjects, pupils demonstrate a robust understanding of what they have been taught. Pupils achieve well overall. However, there are some inconsistencies in how the curriculum is delivered in a few subjects, including how the school checks what pupils know and remember. This sometimes leads to gaps in pupils' learning. Where this is the case, pupils occasionally struggle to remember subject content. School leaders have credible plans in place to embed the changes that have been made.

Children in the early years make a very strong start to their schooling. They quickly settle in well and learn appropriate routines. The learning environments, both indoors and outdoors, promote children's learning and development well. This is particularly evident in mathematics. For example, children used their knowledge of numbers to add and subtract different amounts to twenty. They quickly identified the properties of a wide range of shapes. Children play and learn happily together. They are prepared exceptionally well for Year 1 and beyond.

Right from the start of Reception, pupils learn to read using phonics. Staff teach the new phonics programme with precision. Pupils, including those at the early stages of reading, develop the phonics knowledge and skills they need to read with fluency.

Staff make sure that pupils read books that closely match the sounds they know. The school swiftly identifies and supports pupils who struggle. This helps pupils to become confident readers. The school promotes a love of reading across all year groups. For example, staff select texts from a carefully chosen and diverse range of authors.

The school is ambitious for pupils with SEND. Staff make use of 'individual learning plans' to identify and meet these pupils' needs. They adapt teaching skilfully to support pupils' learning and development needs.

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are major strengths in the school. Attendance rates are high and rates of persistent absence are low. Pupils' excellent behaviour ensures that lessons are not disrupted. Pupils contribute readily to the calm and respectful atmosphere in all parts of the school.

Leaders have prioritised pupils' personal development. Pupils are taught about themes such as democracy and respect. They are encouraged to become good citizens and to understand their rights and responsibilities. Pupils take part in a range of outings and clubs outside of lessons. The school makes sure that all pupils can join in. These wider experiences, such as visits to museums, sporting events and music concerts, all link together coherently to enhance pupils' learning and all-round development.

All those responsible for governance fulfil their responsibilities in the best interests of the pupils and local community. School leaders are mindful of staff workload and well-being. Staff, including those new to the school, enjoy working at St Paul's.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has made changes to the curriculum in a few subjects. Some of these changes are in the early stages of being implemented. As a result, there are some inconsistencies in how well these subjects are delivered, including how the school checks what pupils know and remember. The school should ensure that the changes to the curriculum are firmly embedded, including the use of assessment to address gaps in pupils' knowledge.

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' is used to mean pupils with SEND; pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	101326
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10289813
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	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Keme Ndukwe
Headteacher	Anthony David (executive headteacher) Harriet Jones (head of school)
Website	www.stpaulsnw7.barnet.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 September 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The executive headteacher is currently executive headteacher of two other primary schools.
- The most recent section 48 inspection, which is an inspection of the school's religious character, took place in September 2016.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other school leaders. They held discussions with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. They spoke with a representative of the local authority and also spoke with a representative from the London Diocesan Board.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, science, geography and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, considered the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of school leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day and considered the views of parents, pupils and staff, including through responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Sean Flood, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Amanda Ruthven	Ofsted Inspector

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