

Inspection of Paulet High School

Violet Way, Stapenhill, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire DE15 9RT

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 April 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Ian McArthur. The school is part of The John Taylor Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mike Donoghue, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Colin Hopkins.

What is it like to attend this school?

Paulet High School is an inclusive and harmonious school. Staff know pupils well and always have their best interests at heart.

The 'Paulet Values' (Paulet Character and Everyone Included) are shared and lived by all. These values exemplify the high standards the school expects. Pupils are courteous and respectful to others. They behave well in lessons and around the school site. When a few pupils do not, the school provides effective support to help pupils correct their behaviour.

Pupils know how to report well-being concerns and are confident that staff will deal with these promptly. Staff take appropriate action to address any reports of bullying.

Pupils study a broad and ambitious curriculum. There are a range of academic and vocational subjects for pupils to study at key stages 4 and 5. Leaders are determined for pupils to become good citizens. One pupil's view exemplifies the views of many others: 'The school has equipped me to enter the real world as a strong and powerful woman.'

Pupils benefit from many extra-curricular clubs as well as trips and visits. Pupils talk positively about the range of opportunities that are available to them, such as residential visits, peer mentoring and chess club. They also appreciate the extensive careers information and guidance on offer.

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

Leaders have thought carefully about the key knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn. They have carefully sequenced this knowledge so that pupils can understand and complete more complex tasks over time. This means that, across most subjects, pupils' learning builds successfully on what they already know.

Teachers are passionate about their subjects. In many subjects, teachers use this enthusiasm to help deliver the curriculum effectively. Teachers allow appropriate time for structured discussions in lessons. This is supporting pupils to develop their vocabulary and understanding of new concepts. Teachers use a range of strategies to check pupils' understanding in lessons. However, on some occasions, these strategies do not identify the precise gaps in pupils' knowledge. In addition, pupils' errors and misconceptions sometimes go unaddressed. This can slow pupils' progress.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are accurately identified and in most cases their needs are met. However, the school does not consistently provide teachers with information about pupils' needs. As a result, some teachers do not appropriately adapt lesson activities to support pupils with SEND as well as they could. This means that some pupils with SEND struggle to access their

learning.

Pupils have developed a love for reading. The school promotes this through a carefully selected range of books and texts. Those who struggle to read benefit from a well-delivered support programme which is helping pupils to become more confident readers.

The school is calm and orderly, both in lessons and at social times. Staff carefully analyse behaviour incidents and put in place appropriate support where needed. The school works well with a wide range of external agencies and there is a strong focus on attendance and punctuality.

The school's character curriculum and 'Paulet charter of values' builds pupils' confidence and equips them well to contribute positively to society. Pupils learn about the importance of diversity. They raise money for charity and are offered a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and experiences that build their confidence, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Pupils learn about the features of healthy relationships and how to keep themselves safe.

Students in the sixth form build on the knowledge and skills they acquire at key stage 4. Students feel safe and valued. Published outcomes for 2023 show that pupils in A-level subjects did not achieve as well as they should. The school has reflected on this and put appropriate support plans in place. Current students are now making better progress.

Students benefit from an extensive careers provision. They are given a range of information, including visits from employers and apprenticeship and education providers. Older pupils, and students in the sixth form, take part in work experience. This helps pupils to make informed choices about their next steps.

Staff are extremely proud to work at Paulet High School. Leaders are highly considerate of their well-being and workload. Generally, leaders work well and have an accurate view of the school. However, in some areas, leaders do not consistently measure the impact of their work, which results in a lack of strategic oversight. This is slowing the pace of school improvement.

Trustees and local governors are highly knowledgeable about the school. They offer strong support and challenge to leaders. The school is benefiting from the support offered by the trust, which has already conducted reviews of several areas and is working closely with school leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff do not consistently receive the information they need about pupils with SEND. As a result, some teachers do not adapt tasks to take account of pupils' needs. This can hinder their progress. The school should ensure that all staff are fully equipped to meet the needs of pupils with SEND and adapt tasks accordingly.
- Teachers do not use assessment strategies well enough to check pupils' understanding on some occasions. This means that some teachers move on too quickly with the learning and gaps in pupils' knowledge go undetected. The school should ensure that all teachers systematically check understanding to help pupils make better progress.
- Leaders do not have clear oversight of all aspects of their work. This means they are not always clear about the impact of their work and, in some cases, are not acting quickly enough to address areas of underperformance. The school should ensure that careful monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of its work help the school to move forward.

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 special educational needs and/or disabilities (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	147574
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10322915
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	903
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	130
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Colin Hopkins
Headteacher	Ian McArthur
Website	www.paulet.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the John Taylor Multi-Academy Trust in February 2020.
- The school uses nine registered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the chief executive officer, the headteacher, other school leaders, members of the local governing body and a member of the trust.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, languages, history, and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to groups of pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site during break and lunchtime.
- The inspectors spoke with groups of pupils and staff. An inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents and carers, as well as the staff and pupil survey.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interest first.

Inspection team

Ed Leighton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ant Edkins	Ofsted Inspector
Jacqueline Newsome	Ofsted Inspector
Gareth Morgan	His Majesty's Inspector

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