

Inspection of St Paul's C of E Primary School

Cross Lane, Salford, Greater Manchester M5 4AL

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 May 2024

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

The principal of this school is Wendy Budsworth. This school is part of Vantage CE Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Jill Albertina, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Phillip Mason.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils' positive attitudes to school help to ensure that St Paul's is a friendly, welcoming place where individual differences are valued. Pupils maintain strong relationships with staff and with each other. They behave well and they are respectful to others. This makes the atmosphere in the school calm and harmonious.

Pupils access a range of visits and clubs that help to develop their interests. The school ensures that trips are designed to add to pupils' education or to develop pupils' personal qualities, such as their resilience. For example, older pupils fondly remember visiting a local theatre to perform on stage because this helped them to develop their confidence.

Pupils are responding well to the high expectations that the school sets for their achievement across the curriculum. In the main, most pupils remember their learning well. This means that they are ready for the next stage of their education and they are confident to accept new challenges.

Pupils have a strong understanding of what it means to be equal. For example, they have been involved in an art project that focuses on inspirational people with disabilities.

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

In 2022 and 2023, the attainment of pupils at the end of key stage 1 for reading, writing and mathematics was low compared with other schools nationally. The school has responded to these results successfully. Staff have been provided with comprehensive training so that they deliver the intended curriculums for these subjects consistently well. As a result, pupils in key stage 1 are knowing and remembering more of their learning than was the case in the past. This is beginning to raise pupils' achievement across key stage 2. However, there are a small number of pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who have not caught up quickly enough in reading and mathematics. The gaps that these pupils have in their prior learning mean that they are not able to build on new learning securely.

Children in the Nursery class learn about sounds in readiness for starting to learn phonics in the Reception Year. Pupils in key stage 1 use their phonics knowledge accurately to read unfamiliar words. Staff ensure that the books that pupils read match the sounds that they know. This helps to reinforce pupils' learning. Children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 benefit from suitable support to help them keep up with the phonics programme.

Across key stages 1 and 2, the school has ensured that the subject curriculums specify the most important knowledge that pupils should know. Staff check pupils' learning carefully to make sure that they have understood what has been taught. Pupils across Years 1 to 6 successfully recall their knowledge of different subjects.

The early years curriculum is equally well thought out. However, at times, staff do not choose the most appropriate strategies to help children learn what is intended during independent activities. This hampers children's progress through the curriculum.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with SEND at the earliest opportunity. In the early years, it uses information from the assessment checks to identify any needs, particularly those related to language and communication. Most pupils with SEND receive the support that they need to progress well through the curriculum.

The school places a strong emphasis on the need for pupils to attend school regularly, right from the time that children enter the early years. The school takes great care to understand the reasons why some pupils are absent. There are suitable strategies in place to help pupils to overcome any barriers to attendance. This is beginning to make small differences for some individual pupils. However, the rate of persistent absence remains high.

The arrangements in place to ensure that pupils behave well are effective. Pupils demonstrate the school values of compassion and respect in their everyday conduct. They focus well on their work and there is no disruption to learning.

The provision for pupils' personal development includes helping them to understand how they can make a difference in their community. This is evident in their charity work, such as donating exercise books to prisons or making Christmas cards for older people. Pupils also have a well-developed knowledge of other faiths. The school has put in place some opportunities for pupils to experience leadership roles, such as the welcome ambassadors who help pupils who are international new arrivals to settle into the school.

Trustees have an accurate understanding of the school's performance. They delegate responsibilities to the local advisory board, which is skilled at supporting and challenging leaders about the quality of education in the school. Trustees ensure that their quality assurance arrangements enable them to receive regular and accurate updates about the school's work.

The school has made best use of the development opportunities for staff that are available from the trust. Whether they are improving their teaching or leadership skills, staff feel well supported. They are appreciative of leaders' approach to protecting their work-life balance. School and trust policies are focused on ensuring that tasks are not overly onerous.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There remains a small number of pupils in key stage 2, including some with SEND, who have not been supported well enough to catch up on the learning that they lost during key stage 1. This means that they have gaps in their knowledge, especially in reading and mathematics. This makes it difficult for them to build on new learning successfully. The school should ensure that these pupils receive the support that they need to access the curriculum content designed for their age group.
- In the early years, some of the independent activities are not shaped well enough to make sure that children learn all that they should. This means that some children are not as ready for key stage 1 as they should be. The school should ensure that the design of activities enables children to progress through the early years curriculum.

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

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| Unique reference number | 147730 |
| Local authority | Salford |
| Inspection number | 10337715 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 237 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Phillip Mason |
| CEO of the trust | Jill Albertina |
| Principal | Wendy Budsworth |
| Website | stpaulscephprimaryschool.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- The school is part of Vantage CE Academies Trust.
- St Paul's CE Primary School converted to become an academy in April 2020. When its predecessor school, St Paul's CE Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- St Peter's is a Church of England school. The school's most recent section 48 inspection of a school with a religious character took place in September 2023. The next inspection is due before July 2027.

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 any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors also discussed the curriculum in other subjects, looked at a sample of work in these subjects and spoke with pupils about their work.
- Inspectors heard pupils read individually and as part of classroom activities.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View and to Ofsted's inspection surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, at breaktimes and around the school. They looked at records for behaviour and bullying and spoke with pupils and staff.
- Inspectors discussed the provision in place for pupils' personal development.
- 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' interests first.

Inspection team

Steve Bentham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Elaine Jackson

Ofsted Inspector

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