

Inspection of a good school: St Paul's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Chipperfield

The Common, Chipperfield, Kings Langley, Hertfordshire WD4 9BS

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 June 2024

Outcome

St Paul's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Chipperfield continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Strong relationships are at the heart of this happy and welcoming school. Pupils flourish here. They embody the school's ethos of 'Loving to learn; learning to love'.

Staff know pupils very well. Pupils show high levels of respect and kindness towards adults and each other. Pupils are well looked after and feel safe here. They, and their parents, value the close-knit family atmosphere where everyone supports each other.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. They are friendly, kind and supportive and get on very well together. Bullying is very rare. Pupils are confident that the school would deal with it effectively. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils are enthusiastic, engaged and work hard.

The school supports pupils' personal development extremely well. The varied range of clubs, visits and wider opportunities gives them a well-rounded and rich school experience. Pupils benefit from close links with the local church and enjoy taking part in community projects. Year 6 pupils are proud to take on leadership responsibilities that make a real difference to the school community. Pupils become confident and independent. They know that staff will listen to them and take their views and opinions seriously.

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

The school has given renewed focus and direction to the established curriculum. Subject leaders have worked together to confirm what pupils should learn, from early years to Year 6, and to put this knowledge into a more logical order. As a result, teaching

approaches are more consistent across different subjects. For example, in some subjects, the key skills are clearly mapped out. However, in some areas, these refinements are not yet as well developed or embedded as they might be.

Teachers use their subject expertise to deliver the curriculum well. They quickly and skilfully address pupils' misconceptions. Teachers use quizzes and other methods to check that pupils remember 'sticky learning'. This helps teachers know when to revisit content and when to introduce new learning. Consequently, in most subjects, pupils learn the intended curriculum well. They enjoy lessons and produce work of a high standard.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified accurately. Teachers skilfully adapt their teaching to help pupils with SEND access the full curriculum. Well-trained staff provide effective additional support. Therefore, pupils with SEND achieve well.

There is a strong culture of reading. Staff have been well trained to teach phonics. They know effectively how to help pupils learn to read. Children in early years get off to a flying start. They learn to read and blend new sounds with increasing confidence. They take home books that match the sounds they have been learning. Pupils are carefully grouped to enable them to keep pace with the phonics programme. Those needing extra help to improve their reading are quickly identified and given effective additional support. Pupils become capable and enthusiastic readers.

The school has introduced an effective approach to guided reading. Structured daily activities help pupils develop specific reading skills. Pupils read a range of interesting texts. These are chosen to teach them about life beyond school and explore how people live in other parts of the world.

Staff care deeply about the pupils and know them very well. Strong relationships underpin the calm and purposeful atmosphere. Right from early years, pupils rise to the clear expectations of staff. Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons. They show very positive attitudes towards their work. Attendance is high. The ostrich mascot, Otis, encourages pupils to be 'On Time In School'. There is clear communication with parents about the impact of absence.

Pupils' personal development is especially strong. Pupils learn about different cultures and religions, and fundamental British values such as democracy. The school's work prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain beyond the school and its immediate community.

There is a rich variety of enrichment activities and opportunities. Pupils attend a broad range of clubs. They are proud to represent their school in sporting fixtures. They develop responsibility as pupil parliament members, play leaders or 'buddies' with younger pupils. Year 6 pupils take on significant roles, working alongside teachers to lead clubs and other activities. Pupils have an important voice in how the school is run.

The school has the overwhelming support of parents. Staff are very proud of the school and enjoy working here. Training, guidance and advice are readily available, and leaders

are considerate of staff's workload. The dedicated governing body understands the school well. It provides effective support and challenge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Improvements to the curriculum and assessment are less established in some subjects than in others. This means that pupils do not benefit equally from these improvements across all subject areas. The school should support subject leaders to continue refining the planning, delivery and assessment of the curriculum so that these positive changes are fully embedded in all subjects.

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 February 2019.

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	117441
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10323647
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	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Stephen Morrill
Headteacher	Luke Varney
Website	www.stpauls909.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 February 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a Christian religious character. It is part of the Anglican Diocese of St Albans. The most recent statutory inspection of its religious character, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, took place in June 2019. It will receive its next inspection within eight years of that date.
- The school does not use any alternative provisions.
- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2023.

Information about this inspection

- 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 inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, school leaders and members of the governing body, including the chair, and held a telephone conversation with the local authority school effectiveness adviser.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also observed a sample of pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector discussed the curriculum and visited lessons in some other subjects, and reviewed school policies, leaders' evaluations and development plans.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at social times, spoke with a range of pupils to understand what it is like to be a pupil in this school and reviewed responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- The inspector met with members of staff to discuss the school's work and considered responses to the confidential Ofsted staff survey. To consider the views of parents, the inspector reviewed the responses and free-text comments submitted to Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

John Constable, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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