

# Inspection of St Paul's CofE (C) Primary School

Byatts Grove, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST3 2RH

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Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

St Paul's is an exceptionally welcoming school. It sensitively and actively supports families, pupils, and the community that they are in. Staff build strong relationships with pupils and their families. Pupils and parents and carers appreciate the school's support and the many opportunities it carefully plans for them. For example, the school has its own food and uniform bank, and there are many different after-school clubs that pupils enjoy. These after-school clubs help pupils to develop their interests and talents.

The school has high expectations that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), will do well in all aspects of the curriculum and their personal development. However, these expectations are not realised for all pupils. For example, pupils do not learn the early reading skills they need quickly enough.

Everyone knows and understands the school's values of 'friendship, compassion, and endurance'. These values help pupils to know how to behave and act towards each other. As a result, behaviour is good. Pupils are happy, feel safe, and treat each other with kindness. They are proud to be part of the school. Pupils are becoming increasingly aspirational, saying they 'come to school to learn more and be more'.

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

The school is led by a committed and passionate team of leaders and governors. The school works hard to make improvements to all aspects of the school. These improvements are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. The school has carefully considered new staff appointments to increase leadership capacity and expertise. Staff have access to high-quality professional development and training, which they value. They successfully use this training and the support to help them improve the curriculum in their subject areas. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the changes that the school is making. They feel empowered by the leaders and describe the school as a supportive workplace.

Staff care deeply about the pupils they teach and ensure all pupils have the same opportunities. The curriculum, including the curriculum for the early years classes, is well planned so that all pupils can build their knowledge, vocabulary, and skills. The curriculum includes helpful details for teachers about what pupils need to learn and how to assess the learning. The school quickly identifies pupils with SEND and ensures that they get the support they need. As a result, pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum as their peers. The impact of the curriculum on all pupils' achievements is more evident in those subjects where the curriculum has been in place longer.

Most teachers have secure subject knowledge and are delivering the intended curriculum. They explain concepts clearly to pupils and plan appropriate lessons. However, sometimes staff do not adapt lessons to suit the needs of their class. Pupils do not consistently remember the curriculum or develop a deeper understanding of the concepts taught. This impacts upon their ability to achieve the ambitious end points of the new curriculum.

Sometimes in the early years, children are presented with too much information in a short period of time.

Teaching pupils how to read is a priority for the school and starts in the early years classes. The school has invested in training and coaching for staff to develop their skills and confidence. They regularly check how well reading is taught and how well pupils remember the sounds they are learning. The school uses this information to provide further training. However, not all pupils receive high-quality phonics lessons. Many pupils read books that are not matched to the sounds that they know. As a result, too many pupils are not learning to read quickly enough.

The personal development curriculum is broad and well planned. The school celebrates the many different countries and cultures which the pupils originate from. Pupils have a strong understanding of equality, fairness, and a range of faiths.

The school often receives new pupils throughout the year, which impacts on attendance. Leaders know which pupils do not attend school regularly and why. They work with these families and help them improve their children's attendance.

Pupils know the school's 'golden rules'. Pupils follow these rules. Classrooms are productive places to learn in. Each lesson starts with a recap of the strategies pupils can use to be more independent in their work. Pupils know these strategies well and try hard to use them. Pupils are very attentive to their teachers and keen to learn. Children in the early years classes learn the routines well. They learn to be attentive to the teacher and listen to each other. Older pupils are very attentive and listen to adults and other pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Early reading strategies are not consistently taught well. Pupils at the early stages of reading are not consistently given books which match the sounds and words they know. As a result, a significant number of pupils are not learning and remembering the sounds that they should know and are making slow progress in learning to read. The school should ensure that phonics is taught consistently well so that pupils make better progress in early reading.
- Sometimes teachers do not have the confidence or expertise to implement and adapt the curriculum. In these lessons, pupils are not being helped as well as they could be to develop oracy skills, a deeper understanding of concepts taught or to remember more. The school should identify the further professional development and support that is needed to support teachers in delivering the curriculum, so that all pupils achieve as well as they could.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124227
<b>Local authority</b>	Stoke-on-Trent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10322778
<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>	242
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Sandra Hearson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachel Clews
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stpaulsprimaryschool.org.uk">www.stpaulsprimaryschool.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	22 and 23 March 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher, who was the previous deputy headteacher, took up their post in April 2024. The new deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2024.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has recently opened a nursery provision for pupils who are three years old.
- A Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) inspection to evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Paul's CofE Primary School as a Church of England school took place on 17 February 2023. The next SIAMS inspection is due February 2028.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management early years). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and members of the governing body and senior leadership team. Inspectors also met with teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, science and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including school policies, attendance information and governors minutes.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Amanda Green, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Nina Sangha

Ofsted Inspector

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