

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Nelson St Paul's Church of England Primary School

Hibson Road, Nelson, Lancashire BB9 0PY

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 February 2025

Outcome

Nelson St Paul's Church of England Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has high aspirations for its pupils. They apply themselves diligently to their learning during lessons. Pupils enjoy being at school. They typically achieve well. Most Year 6 pupils are amply prepared for their secondary phase of education.

Pupils follow the school's rules willingly. They understand how these help everyone to feel valued and treated respectfully. Pupils express their views in a considerate manner. They strive to uphold the school's well-understood values.

The school is a calm and harmonious place. Pupils learn to appreciate the richness of diversity within their school and the wider world. They grow in confidence as they recognise how their own uniqueness contributes to this.

Pupils maintain high standards of behaviour as they move around the school and at social times. They are confident that adults will help them to resolve any minor squabbles that they may have.

Pupils are quick to help others. They welcome new pupils to the school, especially if any are at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. Older pupils relish opportunities to support children in the early years. They provide strong role models to help children to settle in and become familiar with the school's well-established routines.

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

The school has refined its curriculum since the previous inspection. The current curriculum provides clarity for teachers about what they need to focus on with their respective classes. It also supports teachers well in managing their workload.

Most pupils build up their knowledge well as they progress through the school. In most cases, Year 6 pupils develop the secure reading, writing and mathematics knowledge that they need to be ready for their learning in Year 7 and beyond.

Teachers introduce new information effectively. They regularly check that pupils have a firm grasp of previous learning before moving on to something new. Teachers typically identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge skilfully. They also provide frequent reminders for pupils to apply what they already know to their current learning. This helps pupils to deepen their understanding of what they have learned.

Pupils benefit from the school's strong focus on reading. The school ensures that all staff know how to support pupils to develop fluency and accuracy when they read. Children in the early years begin to develop secure phonics knowledge through the skilful delivery of the school's phonics programme. Children apply this knowledge well when working out what words say. They are thrilled when they can do this more independently.

Pupils who struggle with reading, and those who are still at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language, respond well to staff's effective support. Pupils practise the sounds that they know regularly with well-matched reading books until they become confident and fluent readers. They enjoy reading the high-quality books that the school provides in class or in its attractive and well-stocked library areas.

Some pupils have gaps in their knowledge due to being absent from school for prolonged periods of time. This limits their achievement. The school has recently adapted its procedures for ensuring that all pupils attend school regularly. Some pupils' attendance, which was previously causing concern, is showing signs of improvement. However, the school's revised systems are still being embedded. It is too early to see the impact on a small but significant group of pupils who do not attend school as often as they should.

The support that teachers provide for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is variable. At times, teachers do not understand the particular needs of some of these pupils as well as they might. This makes it more difficult for teachers to know what to focus on with pupils with SEND in their class or which strategies might be most effective. Some pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they could as a result.

The school provides a wide range of high-quality trips, clubs and other activities to support pupils to develop healthy lifestyles and to broaden their understanding of the wider world. For example, pupils are supported to complete their 'St Paul's passport' as they progress from the early years to Year 6. While working on this project, pupils try new activities, such as taking part in adventurous experiences or visiting the seaside.

Governors work closely with the school. They share a clear vision to ensure that pupils are receiving a high-quality education. Members of the governing body check diligently that staff have access to the support that they need to carry out their respective roles.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasions, the school does not identify and meet the differing needs of pupils with SEND as effectively as it could. As a result, some of these pupils do not build up their knowledge as well as they might. The school should ensure that there is greater consistency in how well teachers support pupils with SEND so that they achieve as well as they can.
- The school's strategies to improve attendance are not securely embedded. This means that some pupils miss considerable parts of their education due to prolonged absences from school. This hinders their achievement. The school should work closely with parents and carers to identify and overcome the barriers that lead to absence, so that that pupils attend school regularly and achieve as well as possible.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in November 2015.

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	119438
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10366735
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	407
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rod Marsden
Headteacher	Julie Wood
Website	www.stpaulsnelson.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	28 and 29 January 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new chair of governors has been appointed since the time of the last inspection.
- The school has a religious character. It is part of the Diocese of Blackburn. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in May 2022. The next section 48 inspection is due in the 2027 academic year.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club.
- The school does not currently make use of alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher and other leaders in the school.

- The inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector spoke with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. She also listened to pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- 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 spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school. She also considered the responses to Ofsted' Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils. However, the inspector spoke with pupils about their experiences at school. She also spoke with members of staff.

Inspection team

Claire Cropper, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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