

Inspection of a good school: St Paul's Catholic Primary School

Bourne Road, Paulsgrove, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO6 4JD

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 November 2023

Outcome

St Paul's Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and proud to be members of this vibrant school. They welcome newly arrived pupils and support them to quickly form strong friendships. Pupils actively involve others in their play and seek to support anyone who needs help. They value the diverse school community, being curious to learn more about each other's different backgrounds. Pupils talk about the school being 'a family' where everyone is accepted.

Pupils respond positively to the school's high ambitions. They work hard in lessons and respond with determination when they find learning tricky. They develop confidence by working together to solve problems. At playtime, pupils from across year groups share equipment and play well together. They demonstrate respectful behaviour across the school which reflects the 'St Paul's Principles'.

The staff know pupils well. Pupils thrive in the school's open culture, where they find staff are always approachable. If pupils experience challenging circumstances, they promptly receive strong pastoral support. They are confident about reporting any worries, either to staff or through the 'worry monsters'. Support is quickly put in place, which means pupils feel safe and trust staff to provide effective help.

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

The curriculum is carefully planned so it is broad and ambitious for all pupils. Subject leaders use their strong subject knowledge to review and improve the curriculum. They continuously develop the curriculum so that it meets the needs of pupils. This includes additional knowledge which is broader than the national curriculum in subjects such as music. Curriculum plans identify and arrange important knowledge carefully to support pupils in building their understanding from Nursery to Year 6.

Teachers have strong subject expertise and teach new knowledge across subjects confidently. In early years, shared understanding of key learning points is secure across the staff, which means children learn well. Teachers consistently model new knowledge

and, while sometimes this can be made clearer, overall it supports pupils to understand new ideas well. There is variation in the effectiveness of assessment. In core subjects, assessment sharply monitors pupils' progress. Teachers reteach the knowledge pupils less clearly remember or understand. However, in some foundation subjects, assessment does not revisit pupils' earlier learning or accurately identify when they have knowledge gaps. This hinders how well pupils know and remember more over time in these subjects. The school is introducing a new approach to strengthen assessment in these subjects.

Learning activities are thoughtfully planned and well resourced. For example, in mathematics, pupils can readily use objects to help them complete calculations. Teachers recognise indications that pupils may have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers and teaching assistants make appropriate adaptations to teaching so that pupils with SEND learn effectively.

There is a strong approach to reading. This starts promptly, with children learning phonics in the Nursery. Phonics is skilfully taught, with pupils' progress being tracked closely. This means any pupils who are struggling receive well-considered support and so catch up quickly. Opportunities for regular reading across a broad range of texts are woven through the curriculum. These develop pupils' comprehension and enjoyment of reading. This rigorous approach is reflected in the improved reading outcomes.

Pupils behave well across the school. In lessons, behaviour is calm and purposeful, with pupils being keen to focus on their learning. Pupils follow the instructions of teachers and are keen to meet their high expectations. If a pupil's attention drifts, teachers quickly refocus them on the learning. At playtime, pupils share equipment and are kind towards each other. If a pupil struggles to meet the school's expectations for behaviour, they are supported effectively.

The school's approach to developing pupils' character is highly successful. A range of carefully planned opportunities deepen pupils' understanding of the wider world. Pupils learn about different cultures through the school's 'Catholic Social Teaching' and themed events such as forces celebrations. These deliberately educate pupils about the different cultures in the school community. Carefully developed leadership opportunities, such as being prefects, mean pupils learn to work in teams and learn about the skills of leading others. Through school council elections and discussions, pupils learn about how to voice their views, decide how to vote and contribute to change using democracy.

Leaders work passionately and diligently to further improve the school. They take into consideration staff's workload and well-being when making changes. Governors fully meet their statutory responsibilities. They provide effective support and challenge for leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, assessment does not identify knowledge gaps or routinely revisit earlier learning. This means some pupils do not develop secure understanding or remember important knowledge in these subjects over time. The school needs to embed the new approach to assessment in foundation subjects, so this supports pupils to develop accurate understanding and to retain knowledge over time.

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 July 2018.

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	116487
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	10296242
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	285
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jonathan Hallatt
Headteacher	Zoe Killick
Website	www.st-pauls.portsmouth.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 July 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has nursery provision for children aged two years and above.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- This is a Roman Catholic school in the Diocese of Portsmouth. Its last section 48 inspection took place in July 2019.
- The governing body manages before-school childcare provision.

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, the deputy headteacher and other staff. The inspector also met with three governors, including the acting chair of the governing body, the local authority school improvement adviser and a representative of the diocese.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, the inspector 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.
- The inspector further explored the foundation curriculum, undertaking work scrutiny and talking to pupils about geography and history.
- The inspector observed playtime activities.
- 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 considered the responses to the staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school. They looked at the school's self-evaluation documents and school improvement plan.
- The inspector took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the additional free-text responses. This included speaking to parents at the gate.

Inspection team

Phillip Blagg, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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