

Inspection of St Paul's CofE Primary School

Heathside Grove, Walkden, Worsley, Manchester M28 3NZ

Inspection dates:	4 and 5 February 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy, vibrant school, where pupils thrive and feel safe. Relationships among pupils, and between staff and pupils, reflect a highly positive and respectful culture in which everyone is valued. Pupils are unfailingly polite and show kind attitudes towards each other. The school takes steps to ensure that everyone in the school community is celebrated. This teaches pupils to be inclusive and to welcome differences. They show a strong understanding of people whose beliefs and ways of living are different from their own.

The school sets high expectations for pupils' achievement. Typically, pupils respond positively to their work and most pupils achieve well across a range of subjects. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their learning.

Pupils enjoy taking part in the wealth of enrichment activities, including a wide range of clubs as well as residential and adventurous trips. The school plans these opportunities carefully to provide experiences that pupils might not otherwise have. This helps pupils to develop their talents and interests.

Older pupils relish opportunities to take on responsibilities, for example by being pupil governors, anti-bullying ambassadors or eco-warriors. They take their responsibilities seriously and are proud that staff put so much trust in them.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum. It is carefully sequenced and progressive with clearly defined 'golden nuggets' of knowledge. The school ensures that teachers have clear guidance about what they should teach and in which order as pupils move up the school.

Children in the early years benefit from the carefully planned curriculum. Learning activities support children to develop their communication and language skills. They enjoy the wide range of opportunities that they have to develop their physical and social skills. Staff care for the children well and help them to become independent. Children benefit from the positive interactions that they have with staff. They quickly learn to share, take turns and consider the feelings of others. Children are well prepared for Year 1.

The school provides high-quality training for staff so that they have the knowledge and skills that they need to deliver the curriculum successfully. Teachers design appropriate and engaging activities that enable pupils to learn the curriculum well. Typically, staff use their strong subject knowledge to make checks on what pupils know and remember. They use this information to address any gaps that pupils have in their learning. However, in a small number of subjects, staff do not address pupils' gaps or misconceptions effectively. When this happens, pupils move on to new learning before they are ready. This makes it difficult for pupils to build on what they know.

The school is alert to any pupils who may have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There are effective systems in place to identify the needs of these pupils early. Pupils with SEND are supported well to access learning alongside their peers.

Staff teach the school's phonics programme well. As a result, most pupils learn to become competent and fluent readers. The school develops a love of reading in pupils from the start. For example, children in the early years listen to stories and join in enthusiastically with songs and rhymes. Pupils who struggle with reading are given the help that they need to catch up with their peers. Older pupils talk enthusiastically about their favourite books, authors and characters.

The school's approach to supporting pupils' personal development is exceptional. Pupils make a highly positive contribution to the school community. Moreover, they are keen to support the local and wider community. For instance, pupils organise fundraising events for their chosen charities with great energy and enthusiasm. Older pupils demonstrate a mature understanding of the fundamental British values. They appreciate the significance of these values and their importance in modern British society.

The school has exceptional high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Children in the early years quickly learn the rules and routines. They are keen to lend a hand at tidy-up time and listen carefully to their teachers. Pupils are mindful of others around school and ensure that they do not distract their classmates in lessons. The behaviour of older pupils is exemplary. They consistently reflect the school's high expectations and are excellent role models for younger pupils. The attendance of pupils is high. The school's robust actions have led to an increase in the rate of attendance for many pupils.

Those responsible for governance carry out their roles effectively. The school and the governing body strive to ensure that all pupils benefit from the education the school provides. The positive impact of the curriculum can be seen in the achievement of pupils. Staff appreciate the consideration that the school has for their well-being. For example, they are given the time and resources that they need to carry out their duties.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the school's checks on what pupils remember over time are not effective enough. When this happens, gaps in pupils' learning persist. This makes it difficult for pupils to build new knowledge when they encounter new learning. The school should identify and address any gaps in pupils' learning. This will enable pupils to learn the curriculum in these subjects with greater success.

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	105937
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	10347994
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	371
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mark Gaunt
Headteacher	Joanne Rowley
Website	stpaulsco.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 January 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This Church of England primary school is part of the Diocese of Manchester. The last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in June 2024. The next section 48 inspection will take place by the end of 2029.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

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) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years provision). 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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. The inspectors met with leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND, safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, the early years and pupils' wider development.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, history and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector observed pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum and reviewed pupils' work in some other subjects.
- 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.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She spoke to a representative of the local authority and to a representative of the diocese.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They considered responses from staff to Ofsted's online surveys.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences of school and their views of behaviour and bullying. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Cleo Cunningham, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kevan Naughton	Ofsted Inspector
Stephanie Swift	Ofsted Inspector

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