

Inspection of St Paul's CofE Primary School, Stalybridge

Huddersfield Road, Stalybridge, Cheshire SK15 2PT

Inspection dates: 28–29 January 2020

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's Christian values are the heart of the school's work. Pupils behave well, feel valued and are happy at the school. They want to learn and work well together to help and support each other. Leaders and teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers help pupils to keep going if they find work hard or make a mistake. Pupils attempt tasks confidently and ask for help if they need it.

Pupils that we spoke to told us that they feel well looked after and safe. They know who to talk to if they have any concerns. Pupils are confident that staff would sort out any problems they have. Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying. If bullying does occur, staff deal with it swiftly.

Leaders have designed a curriculum that helps pupils learn in a fun way. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' personal skills. Pupils study a wide range of topics across the curriculum. They enjoy trips that support their learning. Pupils take part in a varied range of clubs at the end of the school day.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that the pupils are enjoying. The school's plans for reading, writing, mathematics and some subjects in the wider curriculum are especially well thought out. Skilled subject leaders help teachers to break down knowledge and skills into manageable chunks. They consider what pupils need to learn next based on what they already know. This is helping pupils to know and remember more. However, in art and design, design and technology and French curriculum plans are not as well embedded. It is not as clear how pupils' learning of specific knowledge and skills in these subjects are developed over time.

Leaders have made reading a key priority. In the early years, children have many opportunities to develop and extend their vocabulary. There are effective plans in place for the teaching of phonics. Teachers make sure that any pupil at risk of falling behind is given extra help to catch up. Phonics is taught every day. These lessons help the youngest pupils gain the knowledge they need to develop early reading skills. Teachers support parents and carers to help their children to read. This includes ideas for making up stories together. The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the phonics screening check is increasing over time.

Pupils have positive attitudes to reading. In key stage 2, teachers use good-quality texts in daily reading lessons. Pupils listen intently to stories and poems that adults read to them across a range of subjects. As a result, pupils attain well in reading by the end of key stage 2.

Leaders adapt the mathematics curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils. Leaders identified that some pupils were struggling with aspects of reasoning, particularly at key stage 1. Teachers now include reasoning activities more regularly. This is helping pupils in key stage 1 to fill the gaps in their knowledge and skills. Pupils in key stage 2 achieve well in mathematics.

The curriculum plans for writing enable pupils to develop their knowledge of spelling, grammar and punctuation. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in writing across a wide range of subjects.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. This is because staff have high expectations and understand pupils' individual needs. Staff provide work that meets pupils' needs and interests.

The curriculum is further enriched with visits and visitors. Pupils appreciated their recent visit to Stalybridge Memorial to view the names of the fallen of the world wars.

Pupils enjoy taking part in a range of interesting after-school clubs, such as choir, dance and multi-sports. Pupils are keen to learn, and their behaviour supports learning.

Pupils learn about different faith and cultures. They take on a number of roles, such as being prefects. This helps them to have a positive understanding of the world and life in modern Britain.

Teachers and early years practitioners are knowledgeable about what they teach. They make sure that lessons help children to build their knowledge and understanding. Staff give children lots of opportunities to play, explore and explain their learning. A small group were developing some useful language and improving their letter formation in writing about the Chinese New Year. However, the outdoor play area is not of the same standard as the learning environment indoors.

The school works effectively with the Chester Diocesan Academies Trust. Staff are appreciative of the support provided to help them develop their expertise as subject leaders. Staff told us they work as a team and feel valued by the leadership team.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made sure a strong culture of safeguarding exists to keep pupils safe from harm. Staff are knowledgeable about the risks faced by pupils. Leaders work with families and external agencies to support vulnerable pupils. Staff are well trained and know what signs to look for and how to share concerns.

Pupils learn about keeping themselves safe. They have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe when online. The school provides parents and carers with helpful information about the dangers of their children using social media.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have planned a curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils. Curriculum plans for most subjects are being implemented effectively. In some of the foundation subjects the curriculum planning has not had sufficient time to become embedded in practice across the school. This is the case in art and design, design and technology, and French. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum plans are successfully implemented in these subjects. Leaders should also ensure that there are clear procedures in place to assess the knowledge and skills that pupils are acquiring in these subjects as they move through the school.
- In the early years, the curriculum is broad and provides children with activities that they enjoy. However, the outdoor area is still being developed and is not of the same standard as the learning environment indoors. Leaders and staff should ensure that the provision in the outdoor area supports children to develop their knowledge and skills across all areas of learning.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	143551
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10121923
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	276
Appropriate authority	Board of Trustees
Chair of trust	Neil Dixon
Headteacher	Simon Wright
Website	www.st-paulsstalybridge.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to an academy in March 2017 as part of the Chester Diocesan Academies Trust.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- During this inspection, we met with the headteacher and the senior leaders.
- We held meetings with teachers, support staff and subject leaders. We met with five members of the governing body.
- We met with the chief executive officer of the Chester Diocesan Academies Trust.
- We visited lessons in each key stage. We spoke to pupils about behaviour and observed behaviour around the school and in lessons.
- We reviewed the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and information on the school's website. We examined records in relation to safeguarding.

- We considered the 78 responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire, and the 76 free-text responses. Inspectors met several parents at the start of the day to gain their views of the school. We took account of the 31 responses to Ofsted’s staff survey and the 72 responses to the Ofsted pupil survey.
- As part of this inspection, we looked carefully at phonics and reading. We also focused closely on mathematics, writing, computing and science. During these activities, we met with subject leaders and visited lessons. We also spoke with teachers and pupils. We also looked at examples of pupils’ work in these subjects. We also observed pupils reading with staff.

Inspection team

Andrew Morley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Rigby	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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