

Inspection of St Paul's Church of England VC Junior School

Paul Street, Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA4 5LA

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 October 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

St Paul's Church of England Junior School is a welcoming and caring school. The school's 'REFLECT' values set high expectations for pupils' behaviour and learning. Pupils understand these well. The school has designed a curriculum that interests and motivates pupils.

Pupils like coming to school. They feel safe and well looked after. Pupils are polite and courteous. They behave well in lessons and around the school site. Pupils build strong relationships with staff. Parents and carers speak highly about the care and attention that staff show to pupils. They appreciate the regular and supportive communication they receive.

The school places pupils' personal development as a priority in its curriculum offer. Pupils receive a wealth of experiences to enhance learning. They appreciate the range of after-school activities and say, 'There is something for everyone.' They visit the local area, participate in sporting competitions and welcome visitors into school. Pupils are proud about taking on roles of responsibility, such as being school council representatives, house captains and eco-warriors.

Pupils recognise the importance of valuing and respecting others. They understand difference. Pupils are reflective. The curriculum supports their development of resilience, confidence and self-esteem.

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

The school has high expectations for all pupils. It has acted decisively to address previous lower outcomes at key stage 2. The school has revised the curriculum in English, mathematics and science, as well as in the foundation subjects. The design now carefully considers what pupils need to know from Year 3 to Year 6. As a result, pupils talk about and recall their learning across the curriculum with confidence.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge of the subjects they teach. They share important knowledge and instructions clearly with pupils. However, in some subjects, teachers do not check well enough pupils' understanding before moving learning on. As a result, some pupils develop gaps in their learning and do not build their knowledge as well.

The school places high importance on ensuring that all pupils can read well. For pupils who are not yet confident readers, support is designed to individual need so that these pupils catch up quickly. Pupils benefit from a well-considered reading programme. Staff make sure that pupils practise reading with books that match the letters and sounds they are learning. As a result, pupils become eager and confident readers.

The school has successfully developed pupils' love of reading. Initiatives such as the 'Millionaires club' inspire even the most reluctant readers. Pupils talk confidently and with interest about a diverse range of authors and the books they have read. One pupil explained how reading 'provokes his imagination'.

The mathematics curriculum has been carefully redesigned. New learning content is introduced step by step. Teachers use resources effectively to develop pupils' mathematical understanding. As a result, pupils confidently grasp more complex concepts. The same approach is taken to ensure that pupils' learning in other subjects, such as history and music, builds on what they know and can do over time.

The school is ambitious for all pupils. Pupils receive effective and caring support. Teachers adapt learning to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same curriculum as their peers. Additional interventions are well targeted and considered in order to meet individual needs. As a result, pupils with SEND experience success and build their knowledge well across the curriculum.

Pupils' personal development is a strength. The school provides pupils with a wide range of opportunities to develop their interests and talents. This includes '100 things to do before I leave'. Pupils have a good understanding of fundamental British values, such as the rule of law and democracy. They confidently explain how these are lived out in their day-to-day life. Pupils know the importance of good physical and mental health. They readily engage in the sporting clubs on offer and enjoy participating in the 'golden mile'. Pupils develop their character by raising money for local and national charities and supporting a school in Kenya.

Governors know the school and their community well. They have an accurate view of the school's work in relation to the development of the curriculum with the best interests of pupils at heart. Staff appreciate how leaders support their ongoing professional development.

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 subjects, teachers do not use assessment precisely enough to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. As a result, some pupils do not build successfully on what they already know. The school needs to ensure that teachers use assessment effectively across all subjects, so pupils can securely build their knowledge and understanding over time.

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	123783
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10288159
Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	324
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Albert Owen
Headteacher	Chris Partridge
Website	www.stpaulsjuniorsomerset.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Bath and Wells. The last section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in May 2017, where the school was judged to be outstanding.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- There is a breakfast club and after-school club, managed by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the head of school, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, staff, pupils, representatives from the governing body and parents. The lead inspector also held a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, history and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited samples of lessons, spoke to teachers, looked at samples of work and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors listened to pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 read to an adult.
- 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 observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Additionally, inspectors spoke to pupils to discuss their views about the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also took into consideration the responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Lizzy Meadows, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Neil Swait	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Mirams	Ofsted Inspector

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