

Inspection of a good school: St Paul's Church of England Academy

Horntye Road, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN37 6RT

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 June 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The co-headteachers of this school are Maria Kiniari and Tom Glenn. This school is part of the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mark Talbot, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Archdeacon Luke Irving-Capel.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils really enjoy coming to school. They know they are part of a welcoming community, where they are safe and cared for. Pupils embody the values of this inclusive school, treating each other with respect and kindness. They also demonstrate great perseverance and support others to show resilience too. Pupils are polite and the relationships they develop are extremely positive. Parents recognise that this is a school where their children are both supported and challenged.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. The vast majority attend school regularly. Those who need help to meet the school's high expectations of behaviour and attendance, receive this and they improve quickly. Children in Nursery and Reception get off to a really strong start and are very well prepared for their next steps.

There are a huge range of clubs and activities that pupils participate in. These are carefully woven throughout the school day, both as part of the academic curriculum, at lunchtime and after school. These include such things as sporting activities, learning to play different instruments and art clubs. All pupils are taught to ride a bicycle and many take part in performances at the local theatre. The individual talents and interests of pupils are valued and nurtured very well.

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

The curriculum the school has designed is extremely ambitious. The school has thoughtfully mapped the knowledge and skills pupils need. In English, pupils learn about a wide range of challenging texts, as well as producing high-quality texts of their own. In Nursery and Reception, pupils quickly learn the foundations of mathematics. Older pupils are well equipped to tackle increasingly complex mathematical problems over time. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those from disadvantaged backgrounds, make rapid progress. The school has invested in extensive professional development. Subject knowledge of staff is very strong. They make effective use of this to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and to address them swiftly. Lessons are carefully adapted to meet the needs of pupils and to ensure they are learning well.

Pupils are taught to read at the first opportunity. In Nursery, they are introduced to the sounds needed to prepare them for phonics and they get off to a quick start. Children also share a wide range of stories, rhymes and poems, providing the foundations they need to become adept readers. Pupils who need additional support to learn to read receive specialist teaching immediately. Those who need more practise also receive this regularly, including pupils with SEND. Older pupils read with accuracy, confidence and fluency. They talk enthusiastically about the books they read, both as part of story time and as independent readers. The school's '5 a day' approach to reading supports a strong culture of reading across the curriculum.

The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. The youngest children demonstrate that expectations are high from the start and routines swiftly become embedded. The school ensures pupils are explicitly taught the language they should use with each other and how to play together. Older pupils have high expectations of themselves and of each other. Where pupils find it challenging to meet these expectations, they receive a suite of bespoke support to enable them to do so.

The values of the school and the trust underpin the wider offer pupils receive. The array of opportunities and experiences the school provides are tailored to develop the social, moral and spiritual characteristics pupils need to be effective members of their community. Pupils are taught about their physical and mental health. They know how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils also learn about different cultures and religions, which further promotes their understanding of diversity, respect and tolerance.

The after-school and lunchtime clubs are valued highly by pupils, and many attend these regularly. This again includes pupils with SEND or those experiencing disadvantage. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their roles as reading or computing 'ambassadors' or as sports leaders and librarians. They really enjoy playing an active part in school-wide decisions through the school council. Pupils take part in competitions frequently, both locally and in those run by the trust.

Staff know they are really well supported. There has been careful consideration of workload and staff appreciate how flexible leaders are about this. The trust offers frequent opportunities for collaboration, to both ease pressure on staff in school and to ensure that the best practice is shared. Staff are proud to be part of this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 9 and 10 January 2019.

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	143034
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10322017
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	669
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Luke Irvine-Capel
CEO of the trust	Mark Talbot
Headteacher	Maria Kiniari and Tom Glenn (co-headteachers)
Website	www.stpaulsceaacademy.org
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Saint Paul's Church of English Primary Academy is part of the Diocese of Chichester Trust. The school is led by two co-headteachers.
- The school is a church of England school and part of the diocese of Chichester. Its last section 48 inspection took place in May 2017.
- The school does not currently use any alternative providers.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club on the school site.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with leaders including the headteachers, special educational needs coordinator and other leaders. The lead inspector also met with local governors, trustees, the CEO and deputy CEO and the Senior Education Leader. They also met with a representative from the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, English and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed 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 inspectors also met with a range of other subject leaders and looked at samples of pupils work in 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.
- Inspectors met with a range of staff and considered their views through the confidential online staff survey.
- Inspectors met with pupils formally and informally around the school, in lessons and at playtime. Inspectors took account the views of parents through the responses to the Ofsted Parent View and a letter that was sent to the inspection team.

Inspection team

Zoe Enser, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Catherine Hylands

Ofsted Inspector

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