

Inspection of St Paul's CofE Primary School

Hampton Dene Road, Tupsley, Hereford, Herefordshire HR1 1UX

Inspection dates:	7 and 8 May 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Elizabeth Vautier-Thomas. The school is a single-academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Lee Hurcomb.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since March 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Paul's CofE Primary School is a welcoming school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend well. They talk eagerly about their learning. There is a shared understanding of the school's vision. The school is ambitious for its pupils. Pupils work hard in lessons to meet these high expectations.

Pupils are polite and well-mannered. They demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and behave well. Pupils are proud to attend the school. They show high levels of tolerance and respect. Pupils benefit from trusting relationships with adults at the school. They learn how to stay safe online and in the wider community. Pupils are confident that staff will listen to any worries they may have. As a result, pupils feel happy and valued.

Support for pupils' personal development is exceptional. The school goes beyond the expected so that pupils have access to a wide, rich set of experiences. One example is the school's innovative volunteer programme. Many pupils enrol in the programme, completing tasks at home, at school and in the wider community. These experiences teach pupils responsibility and independence. One pupil captured the impact of this programme stating, 'I've done things at this school that I never thought I'd be able to do!'

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

The school has designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. Learning is well ordered, so that pupils build their knowledge securely over time. The school has created a very nurturing environment where every pupil is welcome. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well. The school carefully identifies pupils' individual needs. Learning is adapted effectively to enable pupils with SEND to learn the same curriculum as their peers. Explanations are clear and well-modelled so that expectations for pupils are clear. Teachers check pupils' understanding and help them to resolve any misconceptions.

In many lessons, pupils are supported to secure their understanding of subjects well. For example, in mathematics, pupils have regular opportunities to practise and improve their fluency. Pupils then apply this knowledge in reasoning and problem-solving activities. Staff support pupils to consolidate their understanding of their recent learning. The use of 'progress pauses' and 'revisit and revise' activities help pupils to retain knowledge over time. For example, pupils discussed their recent learning about binary code in computing. Some aspects of the curriculum are still relatively new. At times pupils are not supported to make connections between their current and previous learning. This means that some pupils do not build their knowledge of some aspects of the curriculum as well as they could.

The school uses a phonics programme to teach pupils to read from the moment they start school. Pupils' phonics knowledge is checked regularly to identify those who need additional support. These pupils receive the help that they need. As pupils move beyond phonics, the school has effective systems in place to further develop pupils' reading fluency and comprehension. This enables pupils to read high-quality and challenging texts

as they get older. However, there are some inconsistencies in how effective the phonics programme is implemented. As a result, the rate in which some pupils develop their phonics knowledge varies.

Reading is a high priority in the school. Pupils develop a love for reading from an early age. Adults read to pupils regularly and enthusiastically. Books that pupils read are well-matched to the sounds that they know. There is a sharp focus on developing children's communication and language skills in the early years. This helps them to gain the vocabulary they need for future learning. Older pupils are keen to talk about the books they read.

Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. They talk confidently about what fundamental British values mean and how they relate to their own lives. For example, during 'democracy week' pupils learn about the role of MPs. This inspires pupils to put themselves forward to take on key council roles in the school. Pupils present their ideas to their peers and a democratic vote takes place to allocate roles. These leadership roles are meaningful and have an impact on the school. For example, the worship council designed a prayer and spiritual area in the school. Pupils value this and many use the area for quiet reflection.

Staff appreciate the steps that the school takes to support their well-being and workload. They are proud to work at the school. Governors know the school's strengths and priorities well. They provide appropriate support and challenge to the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are some inconsistencies in how effectively the phonics programme is implemented. As a result, some pupils do not develop their phonics knowledge and understanding as quickly as possible. The school should ensure that all staff have the confidence and skills to implement the phonics programme consistently well, so that all pupils are well-supported to become confident and fluent readers.
- Some pupils are not always supported to make connections between their current and previous learning. As a result, some pupils do not confidently make connections between important knowledge and ideas. The school should ensure that all pupils are supported to make connections between their prior and current learning in all subjects so that they can deepen their knowledge of the curriculum.

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	138037
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10343968
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	417
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lee Hurcomb
Headteacher	Elizabeth Vautier-Thomas
Website	www.stpaulsprimary.com
Dates of previous inspection	19 and 20 March 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is the only school in a single-academy trust.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Hereford. The last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in 2019. Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They restarted in September 2021. The next inspection will be within eight years of the last section 48 inspection.
- The school uses one registered 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 and/or sixth form 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 has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with a range of leaders, including those responsible for the curriculum, teaching and learning, behaviour, attendance, personal development and safeguarding.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the board of trustees and held a conversation with a representative from the Diocese of Hereford.
- 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 inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and computing. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, 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 discussed the curriculum in a range of other subjects.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1 and 2 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspectors gathered parents' views by considering the responses to Ofsted Parent View, and by talking to some parents before and after school. The inspectors also evaluated responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Matt Fletcher, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Steer

Ofsted Inspector

Stuart Evans

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025