

Inspection of Park Street Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Branch Road, Park Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL2 2LX

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 November 2021

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 **Good**

What is it like to attend this school?

Park Street Primary is a school where pupils feel valued. They feel happy and safe because of the support and care they receive from staff. Pupils are taught to celebrate kindness. Because of this, they are polite and respectful.

Behaviour is calm, both in lessons and around the school site. Bullying is rare, but pupils say that if it happens, leaders deal with it quickly.

Pupils are successful and become responsible young people as a result of leaders' high aspirations for them. Pupils display the school's values of 'joy, truth, love and courage' throughout the school day.

Pupils enjoy school. They like the curriculum 'launch days' and respond well to the 'big questions'. Pupils talk about their learning with enthusiasm, such as the different food technology projects in which they have taken part. They say that their teachers take account of their individual needs. As a result, pupils flourish.

Pupils and parents and carers appreciate the improvements made by the new headteacher. A typical comment from parents was, 'Children are encouraged to thrive.'

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

Leaders ensure that pupils study a well-considered curriculum. They have set out the knowledge that pupils should learn in a clear order in the majority of subjects. This builds up pupils' knowledge step by step. Because of this careful planning and the connections between knowledge in different subjects, pupils develop a depth of understanding in most areas of the curriculum. For example, in history, pupils' knowledge of the Great Fire of London is enhanced because they learn about London beforehand in geography.

However, curriculum plans in a small number of subjects, for example design and technology, are not as precise as in others. In these subjects, pupils do not achieve as well as they could because the curriculum does not build on what they already know. Consequently, in these subjects pupils achieve less well. Leaders are, however, in the process of refining these subjects.

Teachers deliver the curriculum effectively. Staff are well trained. As a result, they assess pupils' achievement carefully. This helps staff to know pupils' needs and introduce new knowledge at the right time.

Leaders have placed reading at the centre of the school's work. Children in early years make a good start in learning to read. Leaders ensure that phonics is taught in a systematic way. Staff are well trained in teaching phonics. They carefully match books to the sounds that pupils know. Effective support enables pupils to mature

into fluent and confident readers. This love of reading continues throughout the school.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective support. Leaders have put effective measures in place to identify pupils who have additional needs. These pupils get the help they need in order to develop their reading and communicate with increasing confidence and fluency. This means that pupils with SEND can learn the same curriculum as their peers.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development. Many interesting activities and opportunities enrich pupils' experience. Pupils take part in a wide range of clubs, including for sports, model-building and choir. For example, during the inspection the netball team was excited to play a fixture against a local school. Pupils develop a deep respect for all forms of equality and this begins in early years. Leaders link this work through assemblies, lessons and the books that pupils read. Pupils recently studied inspirational black role models and met a local black footballer.

Children benefit from a strong curriculum in early years. Adults have a clear plan for what they want children to learn. They have developed a purposeful environment where children want to learn and play. From the earliest days in Nursery, children are encouraged to talk and share their thoughts. Adults ask meaningful questions and respond intelligently to what children say and do. Children develop a curiosity about the world around them. This results in children being well prepared for Year 1.

Governors are passionate about the school and school improvement. However, they do not ask leaders sufficiently probing questions. Consequently, governors do not consistently hold leaders to account for their decisions regarding the quality of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff understand the importance of safeguarding. They are vigilant and are well trained to spot any signs of abuse.

Leaders have put in place clear procedures for staff to follow if they have any concerns about a pupil's welfare. Records are detailed and build up a picture of concerns over time, to help identify any pupils or families who need support.

Leaders ensure that any concerns about pupils are followed up rapidly. Where appropriate, leaders involve other agencies to work with families in need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some areas of the curriculum, leaders have not made clear what content should be taught and when. As a result, pupils achieve less well in these areas of the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that well-designed curriculum planning is in place for all subjects.
- Governors do not ask probing enough questions regarding the quality of education provided at the school. As a consequence, they do not have a thorough understanding of the impact of leaders' actions. Governors need to ensure that they provide the robust challenge required to hold leaders to account for the decisions that they make about the quality of education.

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.

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	117452
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10200217
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Barbara Graham
Headteacher	Monique Gregory
Website	www.parkstreetprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Park Street Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School and Nursery is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Numbers of pupil on roll have fallen since the previous inspection.
- There have been significant changes in leadership since the previous inspection. A new headteacher formally took up post in September 2021. There have also been new senior leaders, including an interim assistant headteacher. Three new teachers joined the school in September 2021.
- A new chair of the local governing body took up post in January 2019.
- The school was last inspected under section 48 of the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) in September 2016.

Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, interim assistant headteacher and four governors. Meetings were also held with a local authority officer, governors and members of staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, design technology and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered information held in a range of documents provided by leaders, as well as information published on the school's website.
- Inspectors scrutinised records and safeguarding documentation, including the single central record.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of staff, including new staff, teachers and learning support assistants, to understand pupils' behaviour at different times of the day and to consider workload.
- Inspectors spoke with and observed pupils at break- and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors took account of the 32 responses to Parent View, including 33 free-text comments. There were no comments on the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Joseph Figg, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Katherine Douglas

Her Majesty's Inspector

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