

Inspection of St Peter's Church of England (Aided) Primary School

School Lane, Caverswall, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST11 9EN

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 March 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils do lots of interesting things at St Peter's Primary School. Staff work hard to provide clubs, visits and special days. Whether it is Vikings or pirates in school, a visit by a polar explorer or a trip to the theatre, pupils benefit from many varied and worthwhile experiences. These support their learning and broaden their outlook on life. In addition, the school promotes values that serve pupils well. This is a safe and cheerful place in which to work and learn.

Staff are kind to pupils. They take an interest in their lives and local matters. Behaviour around the school is calm, orderly and respectful. Bullying is rare, but pupils and staff know how to stop it should it occur. Pupils enjoy school and willingly take on jobs that help each day to run smoothly.

The school provides a broad curriculum. Many subjects, including geography, music, computing and art, are well organised, so pupils learn a lot.

The school teaches most pupils to read and be numerate. However, the school is less successful at supporting those who need extra help. Leaders need to do more to strengthen this important part of the school's work.

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

This school does many things well. Leaders and staff are caring and kind. They are interested in pupils' lives and achievements and regularly go the extra mile to provide exciting activities. Community links and pastoral support are both strong. Pupils behave well and usually get on well with one another. All in all, the school is a happy and safe place where pupils know that they are valued.

The curriculum is broad. Curriculum guidance in different subjects sets out what should be taught and when. In geography, computing, music, design and technology, and art, for example, subject leaders do much to make sure that pupils learn the right things.

Teamwork across the school is strong. Staff regularly share practice and assist one another. On top of this, adults run extra activities that support classroom learning, such as in the coding, eco and technology clubs. Everyone says that they enjoy their work and feel supported.

The school's approach to teaching letters and the sounds they represent in early years is largely successful. However, aspects of the school's later work to teach reading and mathematics do require improvement. In reading, the school uses a mix of resources, and some books are not ideal. Many pupils cope with this and move up into key stage 2 being able to read well. On the other hand, some do not. Support to help these pupils keep up or catch up is not as effective as it could be. Currently,

staff do not have sufficient resources or expertise to provide the necessary phonics support. This means that some pupils are not learning to read as well as they could.

In mathematics, the school does have a systematic whole-school approach, which is supported by staff training. Nevertheless, as with reading, help for pupils who fall behind could be better. That said, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities that are identified in their education, health and care plans do receive effective support, with input from specialists when required.

Assemblies help to reinforce the school's values and generate a sense of celebration and togetherness. Staff recognise and applaud pupils' efforts and achievements. They remind everyone about the importance of supporting others and being a good friend. Pupils sing loudly and joyfully. A music concert that took place during the inspection served to celebrate pupils' talents and highlighted the school's attention to the arts and performance. Indeed, attention to pupils' personal development is a strength.

Governors and senior leaders care deeply about the school. Many have a longstanding commitment to the school and local area. This shows in the way in which they value the school's involvement in community events. Since the previous inspection, they have strengthened subject leadership. However, they have not attended to some other matters that require improvement with sufficient urgency. While financial constraints and the disruption caused by COVID-19 have delayed some aspects of school improvement, these are not the only factors. For example, at the time of the inspection, two governors had still not produced the required paperwork. Governors and leaders need to bring a more attentive, evaluative and decisive focus to the things that need to improve.

During the inspection, parents and carers made many positive comments about the school. They particularly value the approachability of staff and how welcome their children were made to feel when they first started in early years.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school teaches pupils how to stay safe and act responsibly in different situations. Staff are informed about the risks that pupils might face and know what to look out for. When they have any concerns, they report them quickly and share information with the right people when necessary. The school site is secure. First-aid and medical arrangements work as they should.

All the correct checks on staff are carried out and recorded. However, the school is slow to carry out all the correct checks on governors. This does not mean that children are unsafe, but it does mean that governors are not doing what they should.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's approach to teaching early reading draws on a mix of different resources, some of which are not ideal. Many pupils cope with this, but a proportion do not, and they fall behind. Once pupils move into key stage 2, support relies heavily on extra sessions outside lessons. Often this does not tie in with what happens in class and is not working well enough. Leaders need to implement a more systematic, whole-school approach to teaching reading that carries on into key stage 2 for those pupils who need it.
- Leaders and governors have not attended to certain matters that require improvement with sufficient urgency. This means that some duties and planned changes to early reading have not been completed. Leaders should take a more evidence-based, focused and strategic approach to school improvement planning.

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	124331
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10227369
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	167
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sue Simcock
Headteacher	Sarah George
Website	www.st-peters-caverswall.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 July 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Peter's is a voluntary-aided Church of England primary school. The most recent diocesan inspection under section 48 took place in November 2015. That inspection judged its effectiveness as a church school to be good.
- The school provides before- and after-school childcare on site. It does not use any alternative provision.

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 leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and computing. In these subjects, 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 pupils' work. The inspectors also looked at the curriculum in other subjects, including art and design, science, history, music, and design and technology, in less detail, to check how these were organised and taught.

- The inspectors noted the 2019 performance data about the school and looked at school documents. These included information about behaviour, the curriculum, attendance and improvement planning. They also checked the school's website and looked at some external monitoring reports.
- The inspectors asked pupils, staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements and safety routines. The lead inspector examined the record of employment checks on school staff and looked at other school records.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in class, in assembly, at lunchtime, on the playground and at other times during the day. They also observed the pupils in a whole-school music concert.
- During the inspection, the inspectors had formal meetings with the headteacher, other leaders, governors, school staff and pupils. The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with a local authority representative.
- Inspectors talked informally with pupils and staff to gather general information about school life. In addition, they took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff, pupils and parents respectively. An inspector also spoke with parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Martin Pye, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sarahjane Cuncannon-Edwards

Ofsted Inspector

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