



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR ST PAUL'S C E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Name of School:	St Paul's C E Primary School
Principal:	Anna Lister
Hub:	Aspire Hub
School phase:	Primary
MAT (if applicable):	Forward as One CE Academy Trust

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	09/03/2022
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	N/A (Virtual consultancy)
Date of last QA Review	30/06/2021
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Outstanding
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	12/07/2013

1. Context and character of the school

St. Paul's C E Primary School is a smaller than average sized, one-form entry school located in Astley Bridge, Bolton, an area of high social deprivation. A significantly higher than average proportion of pupils have English as an additional language (EAL). The school is proud of its diverse nature and 25 different languages are spoken across the school. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average, while those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is broadly in line. St. Paul's became an academy in 2012, and forms part of the Forward as One CE Academy Trust.

Provision begins from aged two upwards. (Little Saints) and all pre-school provision is an integral part of the whole school.

The school is very popular and is over-subscribed. It welcomes pupils of all faiths in the area and is proud of its vision of 'One Team, One Mission, One Family.' Achieving the best possible learning experiences is at the heart of the school's work. The school is a national support school, and many leaders actively facilitate national leadership programmes to delegates from across Greater Manchester. The principal leads a number of the Trust's Learning Communities and the deputy principal leads the Teach Bolton School Direct programme. The school is an active member of the national organisation Whole Education.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- 'The headteacher is an inspirational role model – her passion drives infectious ambition that transcends throughout the whole school community.' This was spoken by the deputy principal who, together with the assistant principal, has equally aspirational expectations of staff and pupils alike. Hearing a deputy principal speak like this is testament not only to the principal, but to the deputy principal himself. It speaks volumes about the distinctive culture within the school.
- The support from the Trust plays a significant part in school improvement. Learning Communities and Trust Tuesdays enable subject leaders to work collaboratively. Leaders are proud of the school's unique identity whilst being part of the Trust.
- Leaders affectionately use the term 'relentlessly bothered' - about everything! When asked how the long-standing senior leaders sustain their momentum and zest, the principal stated, 'We nourish ourselves with continuing professional development (CPD) and learning from external partners. We are excited about professional reading and research.'

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- Leaders' decisions and actions are insightful and reflective of the school's key priorities. Innovative ideas are trialled and evaluated before being rolled out to the wider school. Leaders pride themselves on the consistent approach used 'to make it easy for our teachers to teach.' Well-being is a top priority, and everyone is accountable for their own well-being. Leaders model being kind to themselves and learning new skills such as open water swimming in order to form healthy habits for life.
- The curriculum is built upon the four pillars which are: wisdom, knowledge and skills; hope and aspiration; dignity and respect; and community and living well together. Parents' feedback about the four pillars is acted upon to ensure that all cultures and heritages have equal value. Pupils spoke eloquently about the four pillars and one pupil said, 'I understand how the links between the four pillars in my work will help me in the future.' Sharing books at staff meetings ensures that the four pillars are being truly lived in books.
- Through high quality CPD, the passionate middle leaders have become autonomous leaders of learning. They actively monitor and evaluate their areas of responsibility, ensuring that pupils are receiving an equitable curriculum offer. This is as a result of personalised coaching from senior leaders.
- The teaching of early reading is well led and a core priority. There is determined ambition that every pupil will become a fluent reader, as seen in the purposeful, print-rich learning environment across the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS.)
- Leaders' CPD on retrieval practice results in high levels of pupil knowledge, as evidenced in pupils' books where work is linked closely to the four pillars. The history and science leaders are very proud of the detailed subject handbooks that provide an invaluable resource to staff. Thus, teaching of the curriculum is consistent throughout the school. The history lead spoke of how 'the curriculum has transformed over the last two years.' Meticulous curricular planning ensures that there is no repetition and a clear progression over time across the key stages.
- Preparing pupils for the future is exemplary. They have a wealth of opportunities to develop their cultural capital through visits and visitors. The sophisticated reflections in the 'Dare to Dream' books following Year 6 pupils' visit to Bolton University showed how much the experience had raised their aspirations. One pupil wrote, 'I discovered that I am only at the beginning of my education and there is a long way to go!' Pupils spoke eloquently and fervently about their career hopes. Ambitions included lawyer, restaurant owner, artist - and 'a creative world leader in the electrical and mechanical industry!' One Year 1 boy confidently said, 'What I learned in our First aid lesson last week will help me to become a surgeon!'

2.2 Leadership at all levels - Even better if...

...the good practice in gathering and acting upon the views of stakeholders relating to the four pillars were extended to governors.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- The outcomes for pupils at all levels have been consistently above national averages for several years. This is as a result of exceptional leadership, consistently high-quality teaching, a bespoke curriculum, astute use of technology and trusting relationships that are the cornerstone of the community.
- The curriculum rationale is carefully matched and sequenced to what St Paul's pupils need. For example, children enter the school with limited communication skills and poor physical ability. To address this, oracy is a whole-school priority and woven through all strands of the curriculum. For example, the use of 'talking chips' resulted in Year 5 pupils revisiting prior learning about the use of parenthesis and fronted adverbials. Year 1 pupils used terms including 'legacy' and 'palaeologist' when learning about significant historical people.
- The EYFS outdoor area is exceptionally well resourced, and children learn to ride a bicycle by the end of Reception. Pupils across the school enjoy activities to develop physically such as the 'cardio corner', 'basketball box' and 'football fever' at breaktimes. The Wild Wood is both popular and exciting!
- Strong relationships at all levels foster a calm yet exciting culture for learning. Pupils are hungry to learn, and this is demonstrated by their eagerness to engage and progress. Attendance is extremely high because pupils want to be here, and parents value the true partnership with the school.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and they and the teaching assistants (TAs) use a variety of questioning techniques to challenge pupils to think more deeply about their learning. Routines such as 'magnet eyes' and silent signals are well embedded to ensure that all learning time is maximised.
- Appropriate challenge and the right lesson design enable pupils to 'grapple' with problems, seek solutions and achieve high standards. This expedites qualities of resilience and determination. All pupils from Year 1 upwards have a progression document for English, mathematics and science showing the journey of their past, present and future learning, as far as Key Stage 3. This enables them to understand the reasons they are learning certain facts and concepts because they can see how they fit into the big picture. For example, studying The Great Fire of London in Year 2 paves the way for students in Year 8 to learn about the changes that had to be made after the fire.
- Pupils independently use graphic organisers to reinforce and deepen their learning. In a Year 6 English lesson, pupils articulated how editing helped them to include more formal language in their persuasive letters.
- Creative use of resources, including working walls and technology, adds value to pupils' learning. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, iPads supported pupils' exploration and understanding of area.

- Pupils' science and history books demonstrate pride, thoughtful presentation and strong progress. Pupils articulated with maturity and confidence how they use the graphic organisers to 'have an overview of the whole topic.' A Year 4 pupil said, 'I use my knowledge notes when I need more specific information.'
- Teachers use interactive strategies to include all pupils. These include Kagan strategies, talk partners, 'my turn, your turn', group discussions and teachers' timely interventions to address misconceptions and celebrate pupils' achievements.
- Pupils appreciate that there are over 25 clubs. These include Key Stage 1 reading club and sign language club, so that all pupils can understand the difficulties pupils who are hearing-impaired face and can actively support them.

3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes - Even better if...

...the progression documents in the foundation subjects included Key Stage 3.

4.1 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well

- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND are thriving. This is because of the inclusive culture in the school and the reasonable adjustments that are made to enable equal access to the curriculum for all. For example, all pupils enjoy learning in the Wild Wood. Targeted strategies are in place to close pupils' gaps in learning.
- The provision for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND is confidently led by two SENDcos, one of whom is the EYFS SENDco. This close partnership maximises each leader's strengths, enables professional challenge and the sharing of ideas, resources and best practice.
- TAs are highly trained to provide bespoke support for groups and individuals through relevant CPD. In all lessons, it was almost impossible to identify vulnerable pupils because the support is subtle yet effective, enabling pupils to enjoy their learning and progress well. TAs know the pupils well. They use provision maps to teach small steps according to need. They have opportunities to observe each other teach and share best practice, resulting in high quality provision. TAs also have leadership roles, including Forest School, well-being, and nurture.
- Providing enrichment opportunities deepens pupils' learning and offers all pupils equity within the classroom. Quality first teaching is expected and delivered. The stimulating learning environment allows TAs to reorganise pupils and resources so that they receive valuable additional support.

- The Nook provides nurturing, personalised provision for a small number of children with complex needs from the Reception class. This not only gives these children what they need but enables the rest of children in Reception to receive more individualised teaching. Branch maps are shared with parents along with other visual information such as Tapestry.
- During lockdowns, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND received provision that was over and above the call of duty. Staff took resource packs and even taught phonics sessions on the doorstep! With the unwavering support from the school, families rose to the challenge and community unity was strengthened even further.

4.2 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if...

No EBI identified.

5. Area of Excellence

The Early Reading Journey – Removing Barriers

Accredited

5.1 Why has this area been identified as a strength? What actions has the school taken to establish expertise in this area?

St. Paul's mission is to teach every pupil to read and keep them reading. 'Reading changes everything.' St. Paul's achieve outstanding results by making sure that the teaching of reading is at the heart of the school's work. Staff teach Read,Write Inc. phonics for an hour a day, every day and run weekly practice sessions for staff. Leaders believe in 'keep up, not catch up' and leave no stone unturned to narrow the attainment gap, knowing that the ability to read is the biggest driver of social mobility. Crucially, leaders make pupils making the slowest progress their top priority. Each pupil benefits from ten minutes of daily tutoring until they can keep up with their peers.

Rigorous assessment and tracking ensure that pupils are working at their 'Goldilocks' level, and that no pupil is left behind. This ensures there is consistency between the phonics teaching, reading at school and reading at home. The sequence of home reading books shows a cumulative progression in phonics knowledge. Pupils can apply their new phonics knowledge when reading books, giving them a purpose, boosting confidence and sense of achievement.

Opportunities to upskill staff are embedded in the culture of phonics teaching at St. Paul's. Regular training and coaching foster the ethos of 'getting better together' and support in developing expert teachers of phonics. Regular Development Days are tailored to the context of the school and keep staff up to date on recent developments and techniques.

At St. Paul's, staff maximise the use of technology to engage pupils in reading. The use of Seesaw provides verbal recorded feedback to pupils about their reading, alongside pupils being able to record themselves reading aloud. This has really helped pupils to find their 'reader's voice,' especially reluctant readers. The journey of pupils' reading is also tracked using Go Read, an App to record books the pupil has read.

The partnership with parents is crucial in continuing to develop the love of reading at home. From a very early age in Little Saints, staff provide parents with the resources to support children with reading at home. The EYFS curriculum is planned to ensure that children develop a love of reading, and that parents/carers feel supported in how to achieve this. All parents are provided with a 'Learning Sack' which includes resources to support further practice of the phonics children are learning in school. 'Find out Friday' sessions encourage parents to come into school and learn alongside their child, immersing themselves in current learning.

Outcomes in phonics have outperformed national averages consistently for the last five years, with a current prediction for 2022 at 93%.

The learning walk through EYFS and Key Stage 1 provided a wealth of evidence to support the accreditation, including:

- Exceptional use of technology from the very earliest age
- The consistent implementation of a well led systematic phonics programme
- Bespoke teaching and support to overcome any barriers
- Beginning the early reading journeys, along with writing books, with the two-year olds in Little Saints
- A clear progression from Little Saints to Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1
- Tales toolkits help young children in Little Saints, Nursery and Reception to understand the structure of a story
- Learning is brought to life: for example, Year 1 pupils gleefully wearing different hats to independently write about 'The Dressing Up Box' story
- Innovative strategies such as using 'Voice Choice' to read 'Icarus and the Sun' with fluency and expression in Year 2



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR ST PAUL'S C E PRIMARY SCHOOL

- Effective deployment of additional adults gives intensive teaching to smaller groups in quiet spaces
- Text-rich learning environments inspire pupils to read.

5.2 What evidence is there of the impact on pupils' outcomes?

Phonics Screening Check data

	St. Paul's	National
2021	93%	
2020	97%	
2019	90%	82%
2018	97%	81%
2017	96 %	81%

The data for the last five years demonstrates the sustained and substantial impact on pupil outcomes. This is due to the high-quality teaching of phonics, the early identification of pupils who are underperforming, the removal of any barriers, however small, so they 'keep up, not catch up.'

5.3 What is the name, job title and email address of the staff lead in this area?

Name: Emma Hargreaves

Title: Assistant Principal

Email: hargreaves@spa.fa1.uk

6. What additional support would the school like from the Challenge Partners network, either locally or nationally?

Leaders and reviewers had an interesting discussion about how to gather evidence of the impact of the school's support to other schools. Just as the QAR is known as a 50/50 model, suggestions were made that this could be applied to the Sharing Leading Practice days as a result of accreditation of an Area of Excellence. So, building in some sort of evaluation of impact after a Sharing Leading Practice Day so that visitors 'take away 50%' but promise to 'give back 50%' by sharing what difference the day has made in their own school in an official document that is shared with the school. One reviewer suggested the term 'capacity given, and capacity taken.'

Reviewers and leaders had already begun sharing and swapping resources by email during the review and one reviewer intends to return with some of his staff to attend a Sharing Leading Practice Day.

Following the QA Review

The review report is primarily for the school's internal use to support the school's continuing improvement. However, the main findings will be shared within the school's hub in order that it can inform future activities and CP will collate and analyse report content to create an aggregate picture of what is going on across the sector each year

Schools can access the School Support Directory; the Challenge Partners online tool that enables schools to connect with other schools in your hub and across the national network of schools.

Schools can also attend Sharing Leading Practice events where schools showcase excellent and/or innovative practice. Sharing Leading Practice events allow school leaders with specific improvement needs to visit a school or attend an online webinar hosted by a school, with outstanding provision in that area.

Both the School Support Directory and the Shared Leading Practice events can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website.