

Inspection of a good school: St Philip (Westbrook) CofE Aided Primary School

Westbrook Centre, Westbrook, Warrington, Cheshire WA5 8UE

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 April 2023

Outcome

St Philip (Westbrook) CofE Aided Primary School continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school is a vibrant and aspirational place, where pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), thrive. Pupils are happy. They get on well together and are considerate of each other's feelings. Pupils who have recently joined the school settle in quickly. Everybody is welcome.

Pupils know that they are important. They feel comfortable to talk to staff about any worries and are confident that they will do their best to help them. Leaders deal with bullying thoroughly. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Pupils are keen to reach the high expectations that leaders have of them. Pupils' behaviour across the school is excellent. They display highly positive attitudes in their lessons and take great pride in their work. Pupils are motivated to learn because leaders have designed an interesting and carefully considered curriculum, which is taught consistently well. As a result, right from the start, pupils achieve well.

Pupils value the opportunities they have to develop their interests and talents, such as choir practise and gymnastics clubs. By taking on responsible roles such as ethos leaders and school councillors, pupils learn how to play an active role in improving their school. Pupils spoke with pride about planting trees to improve the local environment.

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

Leaders work with commitment to ensure that all pupils benefit from the ambitious and stimulating curriculum they have designed.

In all subjects, leaders have identified the important knowledge that they want pupils to learn and remember. Leaders have ordered this knowledge with meticulous care so that it builds on pupils' previous learning. Leaders have also focused their attention on connecting ideas across subjects and over time. This helps pupils to make links and to strengthen their understanding of important concepts.

Subject leaders have strong expertise. They provide teachers with detailed and clear guidance, enabling them to deliver the components of the curriculum as intended. For example, leaders ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to recall and revisit their earlier learning. Assessment strategies are used well. Teachers routinely check pupils' understanding during lessons and respond immediately to address any misconceptions. They encourage pupils to talk about their ideas using precise language and vocabulary. From the early years, pupils speak confidently and articulately about their learning.

Leaders have placed reading at the heart of the curriculum. Children start to learn about sounds and letters as soon as they start at the school, in Reception. Staff benefit from regular training. They skilfully adjust and refine support to ensure that pupils gain a secure understanding of phonics. Pupils who fall behind are identified swiftly. They are given prompt help by highly trained staff and catch up quickly. As a result, almost all pupils become confident and fluent readers before the end of Year 2. Older pupils who are not yet confident readers, including some pupils who are at the early stages of learning English, also benefit from this precise and tailored approach to reading support.

Leaders work creatively to promote pupils' love of reading. High-quality texts feature heavily in the carefully constructed reading curriculum for older pupils, through which they learn to hone their comprehension skills and vocabulary. Pupils were very eager to point out the prominently positioned 'Poet-tree' and the attractive array of books in their enticing library. Pupils' confidence in reading contributes to their strong achievement across all subjects.

Leaders ensure that pupils' additional needs are identified accurately and quickly. Staff are well trained in tailoring their teaching approaches to ensure that pupils with SEND access the same ambitious curriculum as their classmates. Pupils with SEND achieve well.

In Reception, staff encourage children to listen attentively. Children learn to share, and they play happily with their friends. They develop independence and concentrate well on activities. These firm foundations for learning behaviour are built on throughout the school. Pupils are polite and respectful. They behave exceptionally well, which means everyone can learn free from distractions.

Leaders ensure that pupils benefit from the many opportunities to learn about the diversity of the wider world. They understand that people have different families, backgrounds, cultures and beliefs and the importance of everyone being treated equally. Pupils are encouraged to express their ideas and opinions in regular debates. They were keen to discuss their 'courageous advocacy' project when they communicated with the wider community to promote environmental protection. Pupils are well prepared for taking their place in society.

Staff are proud to work at the school and of the contribution they make to pupils' success. Staff, including early career teachers, appreciate the support and opportunities for development they receive. They value leaders' consideration of their workload and well-being. The large majority of parents and carers are highly positive about the school.

Despite the many strengths of the school, school leaders are not complacent. Leaders and governors are committed to continuing to improve the school and build on its already notable success.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training so that they remain alert to signs which might indicate that pupils are at risk or suffering from harm.

Staff follow clear procedures to report concerns. Leaders respond to these concerns swiftly and maintain a close oversight of vulnerable children. The recently expanded safeguarding team makes use of its strong local knowledge to signpost families to effective support, when required.

Pupils have many opportunities to learn about how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils learn about some of the features of healthy relationships, such as consent, and have regular online safety lessons.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 2013.

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](#)' 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	111385
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10283655
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	616
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lee Herridge
Headteacher	Paul Stanley
Website	www.stphilipwestbrook.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 October 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there have been several changes to the leadership team. A new headteacher and an assistant headteacher have been appointed.
- There have also been several changes to the governing body, including a new chair of governors.
- St Philip (Westbrook) CofE Aided Primary School is part of the Diocese of Liverpool.
- The school's last section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in February 2019.
- The school provides a breakfast club and after-school childcare.
- Leaders do not currently make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher and other leaders. She spoke with subject leaders and other members of staff.
- The inspector spoke with two members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She spoke with a representative of the local authority, a representative of the diocese and the school improvement partner.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, in corridors and at lunchtime. She spoke with different groups of pupils to discuss their views of the school, their learning, their behaviour and safety.
- The inspector checked the arrangements for keeping children safe. She reviewed documentation, including information about attendance and bullying, and spoke to leaders, governors, staff and pupils.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, she discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and reviewed samples of pupils' work. The inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult. She also reviewed pupils' work and curriculum documents for several other curriculum subjects.
- The inspector met with leaders responsible for the provision for pupils with SEND and reviewed samples of documentation relating to SEND, including pupils' support plans.
- The inspector considered parents' views, which were shared through Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text comments received from parents. The inspector also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's survey for staff and for pupils.
- The inspector considered a range of documents shared by school leaders, including the school development plan, the minutes taken at governing body meetings and leaders' self-evaluation documents.

Inspection team

Janette Walker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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