

Inspection of Paulton Junior School

Plumptre Close, Paulton, Bristol BS39 7QY

Inspection dates:	4 and 5 March 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

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 January 2015. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Paulton Junior School is a happy school, where the motto of 'learning together, learning for life' exemplifies the school's approach to pupils' personal development. Pupils understand the importance of following the school's '6 R' values in the way that they behave. For example, pupils show respectful behaviour towards each other and adults. Pupils trust adults with any worries that they have. This means that any incidents of bullying are quickly reported and not tolerated.

The school has set out the intention for an ambitious curriculum. When this is delivered effectively, pupils can recall knowledge and make links to previous learning. However, this is not the experience of pupils across all areas of the curriculum. At times pupils are not sufficiently challenged to learn as well as they should and then the quality of work they produce is not high enough.

The school provides pupils with a range of opportunities to explore their talents and interests. For example, pupils perform in choirs and bands. Pupils develop their understanding of what it means to be an active citizen by carrying out fundraising and community activities such as gardening and litter picking. Pupils proudly take on leadership responsibilities, being members of the student council and house captains. They enjoy a wide range of clubs offered by the school, including sport, crafts and computing. These help pupils develop their confidence.

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

The school has a broad curriculum that leaders intend will prepare pupils for moving to secondary school. However, some subjects do not set out exactly what pupils will learn and when. In these subjects, pupils repeat or miss important topics because the work they are given does not build on their prior learning.

The school is at the early stages of defining the most effective way of describing and explaining concepts to pupils. However, the activities that pupils complete are not always effective to help them understand or remember their learning. Consequently, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge or understanding which hinders them learning the subsequent topics.

The checks that adults make on what pupils know and can do are not precise enough to identify when pupils have misunderstood. As a result, adults are not able to intervene and help pupils to correct their understanding and improve their work swiftly.

Pupils at this school enjoy reading. They talk enthusiastically about what they are currently reading and enjoy trying new authors. The pupil reading ambassadors encourage pupils to read together. The school quickly identifies pupils who find reading difficult. It puts in place extra support to improve their fluency and confidence. Pupils are proud of the reading certificates they receive in recognition of their effort.

The school identifies and supports pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff know their pupils well and are alert to any potential disadvantage pupils may have. The school is aspirational for all pupils to be fully involved in the life of the school, as shown by the high uptake of extra-curricular activities. For example, visiting museums, theatre performances and concerts.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe and well in an age-appropriate way. For example, pupils have an impressive understanding of online safety. The school celebrates difference and pupils learn about different cultures and religions. Staff explain the importance of fundamental British values to pupils so they develop an understanding of respect and tolerance. Pupils behave well because they understand their responsibility to not disrupt the learning of others.

The school has recently experienced a significant period of leadership change. Leaders and governors now have a shared vision for the school. Parents value the changes being made and recognise its strengths. However, at this point-in-time, the school does not have clear oversight of how effectively the curriculum is being implemented in each of the subject areas. This is limiting leaders' ability to evaluate and plan for further improvements.

Leaders have recognised that periods of change place additional demands on staff. They have been considerate of workload and well-being when prioritising actions. The school is increasing the professional development opportunities available to staff to help develop their expertise. Staff are positive about working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

At the time of the inspection, administrative errors were identified within the school's records of pre-employment checks on staff. The school took rapid action to address these during the inspection. Leaders have identified the additional training needed to ensure that all future checks are completed and recorded accurately.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subject areas, the key knowledge that pupils should learn and when they are to learn it has not been identified. As a result, the curriculum in those subjects is not enabling pupils to gain knowledge and understanding effectively. The school should ensure a well-thought-out curriculum is in place, which maps out important knowledge and enables pupils to know and remember more over time
- The curriculum is not always implemented as leaders intend. This means that activity choices do not always effectively enable pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and

understanding. The school should ensure that the curriculum is implemented effectively in all subjects.

- Assessment within the classroom does not help staff to accurately identify pupils' starting points or the gaps in their knowledge and understanding. This hampers teachers in helping pupils to build on or recall prior learning. The school should make sure that routine checks for understanding inform adaptations to the curriculum to help pupils achieve more highly.
- The school currently does not have sufficient systems in place to accurately monitor and review the quality of education it provides. This means that the school is unclear what is working well and where further improvements may be needed. The school should ensure that leaders at all levels, including governance, can accurately evaluate the quality of education provided so that appropriate support and challenge can be given.

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	109089
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Inspection number	10374095
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	257
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Simon Memory
Headteacher	Sally Rawlings
Website	www.paultonjuniorschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	29 and 30 January 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has had significant changes in leadership in the last two years. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2024 after undertaking a period of interim headship at the school.
- The school does not use any 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with school leaders at all levels. Inspectors also spoke with teaching staff, support staff and governors. An inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in writing, including meeting pupils with their work.
- Inspectors also visited additional lessons to consider the effectiveness of the wider curriculum.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at lunchtime and breaktimes.
- Inspectors viewed a range of school documentation, including the minutes of governance meetings, the school's self-evaluation documents and improvement plans.
- 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.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, as well as responses to the staff survey and pupil survey. Inspectors also spoke with parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

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His Majesty's Inspector

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