

# St James Church of England VC Primary School

Bellevue Lane, Emsworth, PO10 7PX

**Inspection dates** 23–24 May 2013

|                                |                      |                    |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Good               | 2        |
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Outstanding</b> | <b>1</b> |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Outstanding        | 1        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Outstanding        | 1        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Outstanding        | 1        |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Outstanding        | 1        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- The school entirely upholds and actively promotes its stated values of 'Respect, Friendship and Excellence'. These underpin pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development leading to an excellent climate for learning in which pupils' achievement is outstanding.
- Outstanding teaching meets the needs of all groups of pupils. Those with special educational needs and those whose circumstances might cause them to be vulnerable make the same progress as all other pupils. Pupils' progress is tracked very thoroughly so that no-one falls behind.
- Attainment in reading and mathematics remains consistently high and it is above average in writing. Pupils also demonstrate particular strengths in their learning in information and communication technology (ICT), art and religious studies.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They are always polite and respectful to each other and to adults and describe the school as 'like our second family'. They feel very safe and could not remember any bullying incidents. Parents and carers fully support this view.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and all the responsibilities they undertake. They are brimming over with enthusiasm, look after each other extremely well and really enjoy school life. As a result their attendance is high.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are an extremely strong team, relentlessly pursuing excellence, which has ensured significant progress since the last inspection. Their close checks have resulted in teaching moving up from good to outstanding and the curriculum now being exciting and innovative.
- The governing body has undertaken considerable training to improve their skills. They are very knowledgeable about the strengths and areas for development, especially the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. This enables them to ask challenging questions as well as being very supportive. They continually challenge the school to improve on its previous best.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 15 lessons, observing 10 teachers. They also talked to pupils about their work and heard pupils read from Years 2, 4 and 6.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including pupils' work, systems for checking progress, records relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures, the school's self-evaluation and planning for improvement, records of monitoring the quality of teaching, and the minutes of the governing body meetings.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, school staff and groups of pupils. Individual pupils were spoken to in lessons and around the school. A telephone conversation took place with a school adviser from the local authority.
- Thirty-five questionnaires from members of staff were analysed. The inspectors took account of the views expressed in 52 online responses from Parent View and during informal meetings with parents before school. Inspectors also took into consideration a letter from a parent.

## Inspection team

Anna Sketchley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Cutler

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St James is an average-sized primary school and most pupils in Reception and Years 1 and 2 are taught in mixed-age classes. There is one class composed entirely of Reception-aged children. All pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 are taught in single-age classes. Pupils attend from the local area.
- There are no disabled pupils in the school at the present time.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus is below average. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent in the armed services) is below average.
- Most pupils are White British. There are a very small number of pupils from ethnic minority groups, none of whom is in the early stages of learning to speak English.
- The school exceeds the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics and English.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve progress in writing, so that pupils achieve the same high standard in writing as they do in reading and mathematics, by:
  - planning even more opportunities for them to use their writing skills in the different subjects they study
  - providing more speaking and listening opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas before beginning to write
  - ensuring a clear structure informs the teaching of grammar throughout the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children usually join the Reception class with the levels of knowledge and skills expected for their age. Occasionally some aspects of communication and language, calculation skills and social development are below the levels expected.
- Reception children learn quickly and make very good progress. In a challenging mathematics lesson they demonstrated the ability to speedily and accurately add together tens and units using a number square. Many exceed the early learning goals by the time they join Year 1.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn their letters and sounds very quickly because of daily practise in groups according to the stage of their development rather than their age. They successfully use all the strategies they have been taught to help them tackle unfamiliar words, enabling them to learn to read rapidly with fluency and expression.
- There is a particularly strong reading culture in the school and Year 6 standards in reading are high. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their favourite books and have a good knowledge of different authors and types of books. They enjoy poetry and confidently discuss some of Shakespeare's plays linked with artwork they have created.
- The school values its partnership with parents very highly and has provided a significant amount of help and information for them about the strategies used in all years to enable them to support their children's work in mathematics. The dip in standards seen last year at the end of Key Stage 2 has been reversed as a result of highly successful teaching strategies. Pupils' progress has accelerated and they are well on track to achieve high standards.
- Although writing standards are above average they are not quite as high as those in reading and mathematics. The school has already identified this as a priority and plans are in place to improve writing. A similar approach to that taken to ensure that mathematical skills are taught well is being applied to the teaching of grammar, enabling pupils to build their writing skills successfully from year to year.
- Pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable, and those with special educational needs, are extremely well supported and, as a result, make similar progress to all other pupils. During a lesson about adverbs, very good questioning by the teaching assistant allowed a pupil to explain the skills they were learning, ensuring that they were achieving well from their starting point. Regular assessment and pupil progress meetings alongside weekly meetings with teachers and teaching assistants (and, where appropriate, help from outside agencies) ensure that the specific needs of these pupils are consistently well met.
- The school is in receipt of a small amount of pupil premium funding and this is currently being used effectively to enhance provision for boys' writing and to support small groups of pupils in Years 3 and 4 who might otherwise underachieve. Information shows that their progress is greater than that expected nationally by the end of Year 6 and there are no significant gaps in achievement.

### The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teachers ensure that lessons are meaningful and exciting, engaging pupils so that they are exceptionally willing learners. Pupils have a real voice in deciding what to learn but teachers use their professional expertise well and plan carefully to ensure that pupils practise the skills they need whilst enjoying lessons.
- Pupils say that 'lessons are great fun'. Combined with excellent relationships, this creates a very positive climate for learning. Pupils work hard and remain totally focused on what they are doing, even when working independently.
- Teachers use the interactive whiteboards particularly well to introduce lessons, always sharing the learning objective very clearly with pupils so that they know exactly what it is they are

expected to achieve. In most lessons pupils are encouraged to challenge themselves to try to reach the next level in their work.

- This was clearly evident in a Year 4 mathematics lesson when pupils were able to try a quicker method for multiplication if they felt secure when using a longer method involving separating numbers into hundreds, tens and units. Pupils made rapid progress because their knowledge of tables and place value of numbers was already secure.
- Introductions to lessons are kept to a minimum, leaving plenty of time for pupils to work independently. Teachers' expert use of use questioning enables them to check pupils' understanding regularly throughout the lesson as well as probe their reasoning. Pupils are reminded on a daily basis of their individual targets. They say that teachers' marking 'shows you exactly what you have to do to improve'.
- Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all lessons and receive outstanding support from highly skilled teaching assistants so that they are successful learners.
- Opportunities for pupils to work together, discussing their ideas and supporting each other in their learning, make a substantial contribution to the development of their social skills. Plans are in place for more speaking and listening activities to help pupils rehearse their ideas before writing, as well as enhancing opportunities for extending writing in subjects such as history and geography.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- Mutual respect, friendliness and extremely caring attitudes are major characteristics of pupils' excellent behaviour. These features are typical and fully supported by the views of parents and carers, pupils and adults in the school. Records over time show that there have been no exclusions since the last inspection and incidents of bad behaviour or bullying are extremely rare.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and are eager to talk about their learning. They work very well together and support each other throughout activities. They clearly take pride in what they do, as seen in the very high quality of presentation in their books.
- Pupils feel very safe in school, saying that 'we are one big family, everyone can fit in', and they are very confident about how to deal with any problems should they arise.
- Pupils demonstrate a very good understanding of the different types of bullying, and a large display about how to use the internet safely is an excellent reminder. Because pupils get on extremely well together, this makes a significant contribution to their outstanding progress.
- The many responsibilities pupils are given, for example being members of the school council and generally helping around the building as monitors, provide many opportunities for them to develop their personal and social skills.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- The headteacher, senior members of staff and governors are an exceptionally strong partnership and communicate the school vision with huge enthusiasm, energy and drive. They have welded together a very committed whole-school community who follow this uncompromising and aspirational leadership in the pursuit of excellence for adults as well as for pupils.
- The school vision and its 'Statement of Values' is meaningful to everyone so the leadership and management of the school is very much a shared responsibility and teachers fulfil their various leadership roles exceptionally well.
- All staff feel valued and supported and are willing to voice their opinions, developing a trust in each other that allows them to invite others into their classrooms as they seek to improve. Much of the school's success in improving the quality of teaching since the last inspection is as a direct

result of correctly identified professional development for teachers to help them understand what makes an outstanding lesson. The quality of teaching is monitored consistently and the national teaching standards are used rigorously to manage teachers' performance.

- Pupils' progress is assiduously tracked and regularly discussed so that if an individual pupil's progress has stalled and they are not doing as well as they should, appropriate programmes are immediately put into place to help them.
- Improvements in teaching and progress in mathematics and writing since the last inspection have been highly successful because of sharp school self-evaluation in identifying priorities and implementing incisive action plans. These strategies demonstrate that the school has an excellent capacity for further development.
- The inspirational approach to the teaching of different subjects brings learning alive for pupils and is enhanced by a wide range of exciting visits, visitors and clubs. The visiting Zulu performers, observed during the inspection, were a very powerful experience in helping pupils to understand about a different culture through music and dance.
- Learning and skills are linked exceptionally well across different subjects. ICT is used especially well in this way. The school realises the need for more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in order to raise writing standards even further.
- Excellent partnerships with other schools, external agencies and the local community present both staff and pupils with opportunities to share their experiences and expertise. Examples of wider and global community links with, for example, an Islamic school in South London and the Promise Centre in Mozambique, demonstrate the school's determination to be a truly cohesive community beyond their own environment.
- Equal opportunities for different groups of pupils are promoted very well and the school does not tolerate any form of discrimination. The governing body and the school staff ensure that safeguarding procedures are followed rigorously and all requirements are met.
- The Local Authority offers very light-touch support.

#### ■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors bring considerable experience from the world of work. They appreciate the open culture that allows them to know the school very well through observing teaching and talking to staff and pupils as well as examining a range of information. Recent training to understand school data has enabled them to ask challenging questions about pupils' progress in relation to national standards. As a result, governors are very knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas for development, especially in writing. They carry out their statutory duties diligently, for example reviewing policies regularly and conducting safeguarding walks monthly. The headteacher's performance is rigorously assessed through annual objectives, and governors have detailed information about teachers' performance and salary progression. Governors are very well informed about the use of the pupil premium and its impact on the progress of more vulnerable pupils. They collect views regularly from staff, parents and pupils, analyse it extremely carefully and are very proactive in their response to findings.

## What inspection judgements mean

| School  |                      |  |
|---------|----------------------|--|
| Grade   | Judgement            | Description  |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding          | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.   |
| Grade 2 | Good                 | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.   |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.   |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate           | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

## School details

|                                |           |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 116286    |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Hampshire |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 403293    |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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|--|--|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | All-through                                |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary controlled                       |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4–11                                       |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                      |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 236  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                         |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Murray Boaz                                |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Bruce Waelend                              |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 11 October 2007                            |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01243 372715                               |
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