

St James' Church of England Aided Primary School

Thursley Road, Elstead, GU8 6DH

Inspection dates

8–9 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Standards in English and mathematics have risen rapidly in the last year so that by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above national averages and achievement is good.
- Leaders have successfully addressed the areas for improvement from the previous inspection.
- The strong partnership with South Farnham Teaching School has strengthened the leadership team and has led to significant improvements in the quality of teaching which is now good and some is outstanding.
- The governing body know the school extremely well and robustly hold the school to account for its performance and its finances.
- The exciting range of themes and activities provided by the school ensures that children develop skills in a wide range of subjects, including the arts and sports. Pupils are encouraged to explore different faiths as well as their own and this supports their strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- A strong sense of "community" is promoted by the headteacher, who is held in high regard by pupils, parents and staff.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for and their behaviour is good.
- Provision and achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not high enough.
- Sometimes work that teachers set does not build sufficiently on pupils' knowledge and skills.
- Sometimes there are missed opportunities for pupils to respond to teachers' marking and guidance to make the necessary improvements.
- Pupils are not always encouraged to be independent learners or to lead their own learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons, six of which were jointly observed lessons carried out with the headteacher. Inspectors also carried out a series of short visits to other lessons across the school, observed two assemblies and listened to children read.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors and on behalf of the local authority, the director and headteacher of South Farnham Teaching School.
- Inspectors took account of the 111 responses to the online Parent View survey, as well as the views of the parents they met. Inspectors also considered the 18 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, pupil performance data, safeguarding policies, and records and documents relating to staff performance.

Inspection team

Lesley Leak, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Bryan Meyer

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school with one form of entry.
- The proportion of children who are eligible for the pupil premium is well below average. Pupil Premium is additional funding for certain groups including the children in care of the local authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language is very small.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are below the national average. The proportion supported through school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school is involved in a school improvement partnership with South Farnham Teaching School.
- The school meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching to ensure that the rise in pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics is sustained by:
 - ensuring that pupils are provided with “real life” problem solving opportunities which encourage them to apply new knowledge and skills in a practical and meaningful way
 - making sure that pupils are regularly given opportunities to respond to teachers' comments in marking
 - encouraging pupils to lead their own learning and develop their independent learning skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enter Reception with the expected level of skills for their age and make good progress. The proportion reaching and exceeding the expected level of skills development by the end of the Reception Year is above average as a result of the good teaching they receive. Pupils continue to achieve well throughout Key Stage 1 and demonstrate above average attainment by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics in Year 6 dipped in 2012. However evidence of current performance shows that progress and attainment in writing and mathematics throughout the school has improved significantly in the last year as a result of tighter management of the subjects and rigorous checks on every child's progress. Almost all pupils are reaching expected levels and a high proportion of pupils are exceeding them.
- The phonics check for six year olds in 2012 and 2013 demonstrate above average reading skills and this is having a strong impact on pupils' reading which is secure. Pupils also benefit from regular access to a well-equipped and stimulating library, ensuring they are supported to read widely and often.
- The gap between boys' and girls' achievement in mathematics has narrowed considerably, following a successful combination of appropriately tailored home and school support programmes for identified girls, many of whom lacked confidence in the subject.
- There is currently no gap in attainment between the very few pupils supported by the pupil premium funding and other pupils in mathematics, reading and writing as a result of the school's carefully targeted programme of support.
- The school makes good use of the government additional funding for sport by employing a sports coach who has broadened the range of sports available, while training the school's staff to ensure this provision will remain on-going.
- The school actively promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination by ensuring pupils who are not making sufficient progress are given extra help to achieve well. Careful checks on pupils' progress mean that anyone who needs extra help is quickly identified and provided with specific support. Consequently, most pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs make at least expected progress.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection as a result of a highly effective staff training programme provided by the school with support from South Farnham Teaching School.
- Teachers now have high expectations of what children can achieve at Key Stage 2 and this is seen in the recent acceleration of pupils' achievement in mathematics and writing.
- Rapid gains in pupils' writing result from teachers' increased emphasis on teaching important writing skills before asking pupils to write at length. For example, in a Year 4 writing lesson, pupils were asked to imagine what would happen if they pulled a colourful rope they found dangling from the ceiling of their classroom. Discussing first, if it would be right or wrong to ignore a sign which read, 'Don't pull,' the children were inspired to describe the rope and what might happen if they pulled it, using the sophisticated vocabulary they had rehearsed earlier.
- In the best mathematics lessons pupils are supported to apply their knowledge and skills in 'real life problem-solving situations'. In a highly effective Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils were outdoors measuring the lengths of grasses and seeing how far cucumbers had grown overnight. One pupil was excited to find that her finger was 5cms long.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff provide a stimulating and caring learning environment both indoors and outdoors where children quickly become confident and independent learners and make good progress. Children in Reception benefit from a wide range of opportunities to

help them to write, count and read, and are well prepared for Year 1.

- Adults who support pupils in need of extra help, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are making a strong contribution to improving standards because their work is skilfully planned and they are well trained.
- Teachers' marking and assessment of pupils' work are regular. Teachers frequently provide useful guidance about how pupils can improve their work but sometimes this is not responded to by pupils. Some pupils are not sufficiently experienced at finding out things for themselves and working independently.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Staff, parents and pupils agree that behaviour in lessons and around the school are good. Pupils have a real pride in their school and enjoy all that it has to offer.
- Pupils are polite and courteous to each other. Their attitudes to learning are consistently good in lessons and play a significant part in their good achievement.
- All pupils feel safe and well cared for. The playground is well organised with an exciting range of equipment and a stage to play on, where the pupils act responsibly and manage their own risk well. Older pupils are considerate to the needs of younger pupils.
- Pupils enjoy taking part in daily assemblies where their individual and collective achievements are valued and celebrated. They respond well to assembly themes which encourage reflection on moral, cultural, and spiritual issues. As a result, pupils need little prompting to behave well.
- No concerns were expressed about behaviour and safety, by parents, staff and pupils. Pupils have a good awareness about different forms of bullying and say that on rare occasions when it happens, it is dealt with swiftly by the school.
- Any opportunities to take responsibility, from looking after the classroom's fish to being a member of the school council, are relished by all pupils.
- Pupils enjoy school and consequently their attendance is broadly average and improving.

The leadership and management

are good

- All parents and staff agree that the school is well led and managed. The staff questionnaires show that all staff are proud to work at the school.
- Leaders at all levels, including the governing body, have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for development, which they have tackled with relentless determination to secure good teaching and pupil achievement.
- The school's systems for managing staff performance are effective in their impact of teaching on pupil progress.
- There are many opportunities for pupils across the school to participate in activities that promote their social, moral, cultural and spiritual development. For example pupils are part of an eco-friendly school where they learn at first-hand about their part in securing a sustainable future.
- The curriculum provides an exciting range of opportunities to meet the needs, abilities and interests of the pupils. It is broadened by a variety of enrichment activities including music, art, sports, drama, gardening, cooking, residential trips and other external visits.
- There is good engagement with parents who are very happy with what the school provides. All of the parents who responded to the Parent View survey said they would recommend the school. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The local authority has delegated its support for the school to South Farnham Teaching School to support the leadership of the school, in particular with developing whole-school tracking and assessment systems which are used in every classroom, the quality of subject leadership and the quality of teaching. As a result the school is keen to maintain its partnership with the Teaching School and this will ensure that the capacity to embed improvement is sustained in future.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body is robust in its ability to challenge and support the school. Its members receive regular and accurate evaluations of the school's performance and know precisely where it is doing well and its shortcomings because they are fully involved in the school's self-evaluation activities and have a comprehensive understanding of the school's performance data. The governing body monitors the effectiveness of the school's use of the additional funding through the Pupil Premium to narrow the gap in attainment and is proud of the positive impact made. Governors pay close attention to the school's evaluation of teaching and its management of staff performance, recruitment and retention and ensure that the quality of teaching is aligned tightly to pay progression. They encourage parents and carers to engage with the school and ensure safeguarding arrangements meet statutory guidance and that equality of opportunities is promoted well. Members of the governing body are well trained to fulfil their duties. The governing body holds the school to account for the management of its finances.

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

Unique reference number	125176
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	426513

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	188
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Burbidge
Headteacher	Ann Tann
Date of previous school inspection	21–22 November 2011
Telephone number	01252 703248
Fax number	01252 702945
Email address	info@st-james-elstead.surrey.sch.uk

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