

Rowlands Castle St John's Church of England Controlled Primary School

Whichers Gate Road, Rowland's Castle, Hampshire PO9 6BB

Inspection dates

24–25 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders actively drive forward improvement. They know well about current strengths, tackle weaknesses effectively and promote further developments innovatively.
- Leaders, governors and staff share a clear vision for the school, so that the school is on a journey of continual improvement.
- Senior leaders work well with teachers to improve the quality of teaching so that it is typically good. However, learning support assistants do not make a consistently effective contribution to pupils' learning across the school.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Pupils tackle unfamiliar words confidently and use their phonics skills effectively.
- Subject leaders' opportunities to improve the quality of teaching in the subjects for which they are responsible are sometimes limited.
- School leaders do not provide governors with sufficient detailed information to enable them to challenge them about the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make.
- Pupils in key stages 1 and 2, including those supported through the pupil premium, make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards have risen to above national averages. Still, more can be done to improve the proportion of pupils reaching the highest standards of achievement.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and are supported well by teachers to identify ways to improve their own learning and take greater ownership of the progress that they make.
- Pupils' behaviour is good at all times. Pupils feel safe and enjoy school. Attendance is consistently above the national average.
- The school's ethos and values permeate through the school, ensuring a positive atmosphere and strong relationships between adults and pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong because it is promoted well by the school's broad and rich curriculum.
- Children make an excellent start to their education in early years. Consequently, they are prepared well for the challenges of Year 1.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership by:
 - ensuring that governors have the detailed information they need to systematically challenge and support school leaders and hold them to account for securing improvements to teaching and pupil outcomes
 - developing the role of subject leaders to identify priorities and lead improvements to teaching and learning in the subjects they lead.
- Improve teaching and learning by:
 - making certain that work provided for pupils is closely matched to their ability and provides sufficient challenge, particularly for the most able pupils
 - ensuring that teachers are focused on increasing the proportion of pupils reaching the highest levels of attainment
 - ensuring that learning support assistants have a consistently positive impact on pupils' learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher provides strong and proactive leadership. Other leaders and staff share her forward-thinking vision. Morale is high and there is a clear sense of teamwork. This has enabled the school to make significant improvements since the last inspection.
- The headteacher knows the school's strengths very well and is honest about areas that need to develop further. She takes prompt, robust and sometimes innovative steps to improve teaching and outcomes for all pupils, based on information from teachers' checks on pupils' progress.
- There is a clear, well-structured school improvement plan in place. However, leaders' aspirations for raising pupils' achievements are not addressed sufficiently well because targets for pupils' outcomes are not specific enough.
- The school invests in relevant training for leaders. Middle leaders are developing their skills well and they are enthusiastic and committed. They talk positively about the culture of peer support. They have been involved in organising the school's curriculum planning. Teachers, too, value the support and guidance they receive from their colleagues, who give readily of their time to help one another.
- There is a well-organised schedule of monitoring, which enables leaders to develop their roles and to contribute to improving teaching and learning. In spite of this, subject leaders would benefit from even greater opportunity to impact positively on raising the quality of teaching and, therefore, the progress that pupils make in the subjects for which they are responsible.
- The government's funding for pupil premium is used well to provide an additional teacher who facilitates a 'rapid response' approach by splitting classes so that class teachers can provide specific teaching to smaller groups. Sports funding is used effectively to provide expert teaching and, again, to split classes for the 'rapid response' approach. The impact of expert teaching is evident in helping to raise standards.
- The school uses a local tracking system that links well with the new national curriculum. Termly progress meetings focus sharply on accelerating progress for pupils who are close to the expected standards for their age. Leaders recognise that teachers' greater understanding of data has raised their expectations. Opportunities for teachers to work alongside practitioners from other schools allow them to develop a consistent approach to assessment and validate their judgements about how well pupils are doing.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. It helps pupils to develop as good citizens, for example through linking older pupils with younger ones. Pupils of all ages are very positive about this buddy system. Each class has adopted a pupil in Tanzania and raises funds to enable that child to go to school. Pupils have a clear understanding of what is right and wrong. They talk about the need to be respectful of others.

- The school curriculum is suitably broad and balanced. A new approach links appropriate subjects into topics through the use of high-quality texts. A range of visits, visitors and other rich experiences bring pupils' learning to life. There is strong provision for physical education and sport. The government's sports funding is used to enable the use of specialist coaches, both for outdoor sports and also for judo. There is a good range of after-school sports clubs and pupils compete successfully with other local schools at netball, hockey, football, cricket and rounders.
- The school promotes British values effectively and these link well with the school's own 'Church Values'. The school council is democratic and its actions are sometimes based on ideas put forward by one of the classes in the school. Currently, they are tackling difficulties with parking. Pupils also organise the 'Children in Need' fundraising event each year.
- Local authority support is good. It is timely, appropriate and has supported school leaders and teachers to move school improvement forward effectively.

Governance of the school

- Governors are committed and know the school well, some as a result of regular visits.
- They have improved their ability to hold leaders to account through a greater focus on examining the impact of leaders' actions. Governors have developed their skills at probing more incisively, for example by using a variety of data analyses. However, governors do not have access to precise information on the progress of some pupil groups. They also do not know enough about the use and impact of learning support assistants, the pupil premium and sports funding or the full extent of the quality of teaching.
- Governors are eager to improve their own effectiveness and have used helpful advice from the local authority to ensure that all meetings have a clear focus. They understand how the headteacher acts to bring about prompt improvements through her monitoring of teaching.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective, including checks on staff.
- Leaders are careful to make sure that all staff receive regular training, which ensures a consistent understanding and use of the school's systems to keep children safe.
- Procedures are followed promptly should staff have a concern. This includes keeping clear records of concerns, actions and outcomes.
- Appropriate measures are in place to keep pupils safe during the school day. The school works effectively with parents, carers and other stakeholders to create a culture of safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Consistently clear and effective teaching ensures that pupils make good progress.
- Teachers' planning builds on pupils' previous learning and teachers helpfully vary the level of challenge and expectations for different pupils in mathematics and English.
- School leaders have recognised the need to ensure that all teachers provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils and have introduced a new challenge strategy, the 'Chilli Challenge', this year.
- Pupils understand and enjoy this new approach, which is enabling them to be involved in selecting an appropriate level of task. They say, 'If you want to work harder you choose a hotter chilli and the teacher checks that we are on the right one.' For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils who completed the initial practical activity could choose from several extension tasks at different 'Chilli' levels. This ensured that some of the most able pupils who finished the first task rapidly could use the time well to extend their learning.
- Teachers use probing questioning to encourage pupils to think more deeply. They promote discussions linked to learning and pupils take part animatedly, listening to each other attentively. This makes a positive contribution to their learning. Pupils respond readily to adults' requests and time is not lost at transition between activities.
- Provision for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is being enhanced this year, so that there is a greater focus on class teachers teaching pupils who need to catch up.
- Learning support assistants provide additional support in class for individuals and small groups of pupils. In addition, they lead specific, focused teaching to help individuals or small groups of pupils to catch up. They keep clear records of these interventions, but evaluation of the progress pupils make is hindered because the targets are not sufficiently precise and the next steps for the pupils are not always clear. Not all learning support assistants have received sufficient training to enable them to be highly effective.
- The teaching of reading is good. The majority of younger pupils use what they learn in phonics sessions well in their reading. The well-stocked library ensures that books can be successfully matched to pupils' interests and abilities. Pupils clearly enjoy reading and have regular opportunities to do so in school. Reading at home is encouraged and contributes to their progress.
- Work in all classes provides evidence of the good progress pupils make in English and mathematics. This includes opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge and skills through investigations in mathematics, particularly in key stage 2. The quality of the presentation of their written work shows improvement over time, but this is not yet consistent.
- Teachers provide pupils with clear guidance about how to improve their work. Sometimes, they adapt pupils' learning to ensure that the most able pupils are challenged to try even more demanding tasks; however, this is not fully established across the school. Pupils are learning how to identify ways to make their work even

better and sometimes have the opportunity to share their work with their classmates, so they are able to 'magpie' ideas to perfect their own work.

- Pupils enjoy the broad curriculum the school provides. Teachers plan curriculum links thoughtfully, to enable pupils to link learning and to apply English skills. For example, in Year 2, a high-quality text, 'Katie Morag', links a comparative study of the island of Coll and Tanzania, which in turn provides a stimulating context for art work and writing.
- The school provides a range of valuable opportunities to enrich the curriculum, including visits and visitors. Pupils can choose to join the choir which is led by an external specialist. The expertise of this specialist means that pupils sing with evident enjoyment and success. Teachers give pupils rich opportunities to apply skills outdoors and to learn within a team.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident and take pride in their work, their school and their appearance. They like the buddy system and it is evident that this supports pupils' welfare. It is cohesive and pupils care about each other. Pupils are punctual and ready to learn at the start of lessons.
- There is a clear culture of ensuring that pupils are safe. Pupils feel safe and say they want to come to school and parents agree. Parents comment that pupils are happy, well settled and look forward to coming to school.
- Attendance has improved and the school has robust procedures in place so that any pupil absences are followed up promptly. The school works closely with parents and carers to support all pupils to attend school regularly.
- Pupils say bullying does not happen but they feel it would be dealt with promptly if it did. The school provides regular education on bullying, for example through a recent anti-bullying week.
- The school's culture is distinctively warm and positive. Relationships are very strong, underpinned by the school's Christian values, which are evident everywhere.
- All pupils are involved in agreeing their own class charter of rules at the beginning of each year. They also have a voice through the class representatives who are elected to the school council.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Mutual respect pervades school life, both between pupils and adults and between pupils themselves. Pupils show respect and care for each other. Adults provide good role models. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about behaviour in school.

- Pupils' attitudes are positive. Pupils are happy and want to learn, so that behaviour for learning is consistently good. The school is orderly and low-level disruption is rare, although pupils do sometimes become rather noisy.
- There is a very positive atmosphere at playtime and lunchtime. Older pupils sit with younger ones and guide them in table manners and social skills. On the playground, pupils play a variety of games and cooperate well.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Over the last two years, stronger teaching has led to improved achievement for all pupils.
- In 2016 assessments, pupils in key stage 2 made progress in reading and writing that was broadly the same as pupils with similar starting points nationally. In mathematics, pupils overall made progress that was significantly higher than that seen nationally.
- In 2016, more pupils than in most schools nationally reached the expected standard in all subjects in key stage 1. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils that reached at least the expected standard and the highest levels of attainment, known as greater depth, in all subjects was above national figures.
- The proportion of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, that met the expected standard in phonics in 2016 was above the national figure in Year 1. This maintained the good improvement made in 2015.
- Currently, across all year groups, the majority of pupils make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the proportion of the most able pupils on track to exceed expectations and work at greater depth remains low. The school recognises this and is focusing this year on ensuring that pupils with high prior attainment are provided with work and activities that challenge them.
- There is little or no difference in the progress made by the very small group of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally, relative to their starting points.
- Following the introduction of the new school curriculum, there is evidence that pupils have interesting learning opportunities in all subjects. There is not yet sufficient evidence, for example as written work in books or folders, to evaluate how good progress is in each subject.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children make rapid progress in the Reception Year. From starting points that are somewhat lower than are typical for their age, they make strong gains across all areas of learning so that, by the end of the year in 2016, the proportion reaching a good level of development is above the national average. A small number of children were judged to have reached the 'exceeding' standard, in agreement with the local authority's moderation, halfway through the summer term.
- The early years leader has led an uncompromising and successful drive to improve or maintain the highest levels of outcomes. She is reflective and proactive. She has an

accurate picture of the strengths in early years and acts very promptly to deal with any issues. For example, she identified learning support assistants' overuse of tablets to record learning and refocused their support onto interactions with children to develop their learning.

- Adults' effective planning, based on careful observations, ensures that a wide range of well-focused and well-organised activities meet children's identified learning needs and interests and enable them to practise their key skills.
- Established routines contribute to the warm and purposeful atmosphere, in which children evidently enjoy their learning and make excellent progress. For example, they all join in singing a 'good morning' song with enthusiasm, which reinforces their knowledge of the days of the week.
- There are high expectations for children's independence and involvement. For example, children contribute very well to their own learning profile by selecting pieces of work and justifying why they have chosen them.
- There is a highly effective focus on developing children's fluency in handwriting, for example through writing stations and a motivating range of writing materials, supported by adult guidance on letter formation. As a result, pupils are eager to write independently.
- Behaviour is exemplary. Children listen very attentively and stay on task. They are motivated and curious. Established classroom routines support good behaviour for learning. Children help one another and also help with tasks such as tidying. They move smoothly and independently from one activity to another with no fuss.

School details

Unique reference number	116310
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10019875

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Trevor Filtness
Headteacher	Kay Pennicotte-Henrie
Telephone number	02392 412 095
Website	www.rowlandscastle-st-johns.hants.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@rowlandscastle-st-johns.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 October 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average overall, but broadly average for SEN support. There are no pupils with an education, health and care plan or statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is well below average.

- The school meets the current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The school offers extended school provision. This includes both care for pupils who arrive at school early and for those who need to stay late. A range of chargeable clubs and activities can be accessed as part of this provision.
- There is a private pre-school on site. This is not managed by the school and is inspected separately.
- There have been two monitoring inspection visits since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes to gather evidence about what teaching and learning are like typically. They spent time observing lessons and watched an assembly. They looked at a range of pupils' work and displays throughout the school; they heard a sample of pupils read; they talked to pupils; and they discussed with leaders what they had seen. Some of the observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders from the school.
- Inspectors observed behaviour around the school at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspection team met with pupils, staff, leaders and members of the governing body to discuss the school's work. Inspectors also spoke informally to a range of staff to gather their views.
- Inspectors analysed 57 responses to the Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and took account of 27 questionnaires returned by staff.
- Inspectors sampled other aspects of the school's work, including leaders' own records of the school's effectiveness, and scrutinised safeguarding arrangements.

Inspection team

Stephanie Fane, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Kate Redman

Ofsted Inspector

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