

# St James Church of England Primary School

Bellevue Lane, Emsworth, Hampshire PO10 7PX

## Inspection dates

21–22 March 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher, ably supported by other senior leaders, ensures that teaching is effective and pupils achieve well.
- Governors are supportive of leaders and hold them accountable for many aspects of their roles. They ask useful questions about pupils' attainment, but do not consistently challenge whether pupils are making enough progress.
- Middle leaders are effective in their roles. They know the strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility and are clear about what they need to do to drive further improvements.
- Teaching is at least good across the school. Teachers know what pupils need to learn and plan effective lessons to enable them to make good progress over time.
- The decline in outcomes in 2016 reflected the varied quality of teaching that pupils received during key stage 2. Leaders took rapid action to improve teaching and, as a result, pupils are doing better than last year, although there continue to be slight variations in progress of some pupils.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a particular strength of the school. It is supported strongly through assemblies and lessons which encourage pupils to think and reflect.
- Disadvantaged pupils, service children and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do well. They receive high-quality, individual support to make progress and, where necessary, catch up. There are, however, slight variations in the progress of some groups in some classes.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils treat each other with kindness and consideration. They have very good attitudes to learning. Across the school, pupils demonstrate confidence, resilience and independence.
- Parents are very positive about the school. All parents who responded to Parent View said that pupils are taught well and are happy. Many parents commented on the committed staff who work with them to achieve the best for pupils.
- Pupils are kept safe. Staff know all pupils extremely well and this helps them to be aware if there are any changes in pupils' well-being.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils enjoy lessons and this is reflected in high attendance rates. They like receiving visitors to school and enjoy their educational off-site experiences. However, work in geography and history is not quite of the same high standard as in English and mathematics.

## **Full report**

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

- Develop leadership, by:
  - implementing systematic processes so that leaders and teachers are held accountable for pupils' outcomes
  - embedding processes for checking progress over time
  - ensuring that governors provide effective and systematic challenge for all areas of leaders' work.
- Embed improvements in teaching and achievement so that:
  - pupils are sufficiently challenged so that all groups of pupils across the school make consistently good or better progress
  - pupils achieve as well in history and geography as they do in other subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher is passionate for the school to be the best it can. In the two years she has been headteacher at the school, her warmth, determination and committed leadership have ensured that pupils are supported to do well academically and personally. Pupils say of the headteacher, 'Mrs B is really kind and she listens to us.'
- The school has a track record of high attainment and strong progress. Recent changes in the curriculum, together with weaker teaching, resulted in a decline in standards in the last two years. However, the headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders, has taken swift action to tackle weaknesses. She has ensured that the school once again provides strong academic support while maintaining the strong sense of community and caring ethos that all staff, leaders and governors promote.
- Middle leaders are effective in their roles and support the senior leadership team well in driving improvements. Recently appointed leaders receive useful support and development so that they can drive improvements in their areas of responsibility. Strong leadership of the teaching of early reading and phonics has enabled the school to sustain the very high standards that pupils achieve in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- The headteacher checks teaching very regularly. She provides useful support and feedback for staff, recognising what they do well and how they can be even better. Staff are responsive to feedback and seek ways to improve their practice. Challenges of teaching two year groups together are managed very effectively so these pupils do well.
- Leaders have introduced tighter systems for checking how well pupils are doing. They track carefully how many pupils are at the expected standard or above. Very effective support is put in place to ensure that any pupils who are not where they should be catch up. However, the processes for checking progress over time are not as robust as they should be. This means that leaders cannot be confident that pupils have made at least expected progress across the year and key stage.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils enjoy learning a range of subjects and participate well in all areas. The curriculum is enriched by visits and extra-curricular activities, such as visits to Birdworld and the Winchester Science Museum. Pupils speak enthusiastically about special curriculum days, such as the recent science experiment day. Although pupils undertake interesting activities to support their learning in history and geography, such as local walks and reflections on Emsworth over the ages, the work in these subjects is not quite as well developed as in other subjects.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported very well and is a strength of the school. Assemblies promote pupils' spirituality strongly through thoughtful and relevant discussions about Christianity and other faiths. Pupils demonstrate the values they learn about through the respect they show to everyone they meet. They have a good understanding of what British values such as liberty and democracy mean for them. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is very effective. Funding is used well to ensure that these pupils' learning needs are met in class or, when appropriate, individually. As a result, very few pupils do not make expected progress, and approximately half make more than expected progress.
- Pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils and children from service families is used effectively to help these pupils achieve their potential. Leaders communicate well with parents to ensure that pupils receive exactly the right support. For example, children of service families receive timely emotional support, often in groups, so that they recognise they are not alone in their experiences. Leaders check that all pupils who are eligible for this funding make at least the same progress as other pupils, and many make more progress.
- Sport funding is used effectively to promote sport and physical education across the school, including for the youngest children, almost all of whom achieve the early learning goal for physical development. The introduction of more sports activities across the school has resulted in a high percentage of pupils participating in clubs before and after school, such as yoga and judo.
- Partnerships with parents are very strong. All parents who shared their views appreciate the strong sense of community and care which the school provides. They recognise and value the way in which staff take time to communicate with them at the end of the school day and they feel they can raise concerns. One teacher commented of parents, 'We are a team together.'
- Performance management processes are effective. Staff are held to account through useful targets, which link to how well pupils are doing.
- When the school did not meet the government's minimum standards for achievement in 2016, the local authority worked effectively with school leaders to identify issues and support the school's journey of improvement. Advisers provide useful feedback to help the leaders know what to do next.

## **Governance of the school**

- The governing body is very supportive of school leaders and is beginning to provide effective challenge. Through visits to school, governors gather useful evidence to help them to know how well the school meets pupils' needs. Occasionally, there is a lack of definition about the purpose of visits so governors become too involved in the operational aspects of school life, rather than taking the strategic overview.
- Governors are committed to being effective in their roles. They check how many pupils across the school are working at the expected standard and compare, from term to term, that outcomes are the same or better in English and mathematics. They recognise that there is more to do to ensure that groups of pupils are making at least expected progress. Through useful training and development they are becoming more skilled at holding leaders accountable for all aspects of leadership.

## Safeguarding

- Safeguarding is effective. Leaders ensure that any relevant information they receive is recorded and reported promptly to ensure that pupils are kept safe. The effective processes for escalating issues and involving outside agencies result in rapid and effective support.
- Staff training is appropriate and ensures that staff record concerns and take advice when required; they take sensible action to ensure that pupils are kept safe. School leaders follow safer recruitment procedures, and required police checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers at the school. Record-keeping meets requirements but could be more systematic.
- The school works effectively with parents to promote pupils' safety through relevant training and communication about being safe online.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teaching across the school meets pupils' needs well. Lessons are well planned, interesting and participative. Across the school, activities are carefully structured to encourage effective learning behaviours. From when pupils first join the school, they develop independence, positive attitudes, and confidence to have a go. They ask when they need help and enjoy challenging themselves to learn as much as they can. There are slight inconsistencies in some writing and mathematics lessons in meeting the needs of the most able pupils and some lower-ability pupils.
- Phonics teaching is very effective, as shown in the consistently high outcomes. Teachers deliver lessons which take account of pupils' understanding, so activities are at exactly the right level. Older pupils read with fluency and tone, changing their voices to show that different characters are speaking. Pupils across the school generally read texts at the right level for their abilities but this is not always the case.
- Writing has rightly been an area of focus. There is now a consistent approach to teaching across the school. Pupils know what they need to do next, and check that they have achieved it at the end of the lesson. Consequently, pupils are now making good progress.
- Teaching in mathematics is good. Useful planning and strong subject knowledge ensure that pupils understand concepts and practise their skills through solving different types of problems.
- The most able pupils are challenged to achieve more. Pupils are confident in finding ways to extend themselves. Just occasionally, the activities are not sufficiently open-ended to enable pupils to deepen their understanding.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium are taught well. The high-quality teaching provided for all pupils ensures that these pupils receive exactly the right support when they need it.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are taught very well. Carefully planned support programmes help these pupils to make progress. Careful tracking of pupils' learning ensures that these pupils achieve as much as they can.

- Teaching in some subjects is slightly variable. In history and geography, particularly, some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not quite as high as in reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching assistants provide effective support and meet groups of pupils' needs well. Teachers value highly the assistance they provide.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' personal, social, health and economic development is supported well through a range of learning opportunities. Pupils work together cooperatively, reflect on their and other people's emotions, raise funds for their own community and other charities and take responsibility for themselves and their actions. Consequently, pupils demonstrate awareness of, and respect and care for, other people.
- As soon as they join the school, children are encouraged and supported to be independent, resilient and confident. In the early years, pupils organise themselves and their activities with purpose and determination.
- High-quality and easily accessible personal support is available to help pupils who are worried or who need to talk to adults. Pupils know who to speak to and are confident that they will get the right help.
- Pupils learn to be healthy and safe but this is not quite so strongly woven through the curriculum. Pupils and parents learn a lot about being safe online but pupils were not immediately able to recall the other ways in which they learn to be safe.
- Pupils celebrate each other's successes and these are recognised by the whole school through assemblies and awards. Pupils say that all the staff are kind and caring. One pupil commented, 'Everyone is really nice and good at their job.'

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Around the school, pupils behave well and show good manners. In assembly, pupils sit calmly and quietly, waiting for everyone to arrive. They listen attentively and are keen to share their ideas.
- In lessons, pupils' behaviour is good or very good. On occasions, typically when pupils have been sitting and listening for a long time and are not involved in activities, they become a little distracted and inattentive.
- Attendance figures are consistently above those of other schools nationally. Anyone who does not attend regularly enough is contacted by the school. Similarly, most children arrive on time and action is taken when this does not happen consistently.
- On the rare occasions when bullying occurs, pupils say it is sorted very quickly. Behaviour records confirm that this is the case.

## Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Prior to 2015, pupils who left the school in Year 6 achieved well above other pupils across the country. In 2015, progress and attainment was in line with the national average. However, in 2016 progress declined because too few pupils made expected progress by the time they left the school at the end of Year 6, reflecting the quality of teaching for that class over time. This year, since teaching has improved across the school, and expectations of what pupils can achieve are higher, end-of-year results are likely to be at least in line with those of other schools nationally this year.
- In the early years, pupils make good progress. From generally typical starting points, pupils achieve well across almost all areas of learning and the percentage of pupils who reach a good level of development is above the national average.
- Pupils do consistently well in phonics. Last year the percentage of pupils that reached the expected level was well above that in other schools across the country. Current Year 1 pupils are set to achieve well again this year.
- At the end of key stage 1, pupils typically achieve above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Current pupils are likely to achieve similar results this year.
- In writing, where pupils have not made enough progress, there has been a focus on improving pupils' skills and helping them to catch up to where they should be. This has brought about better results. More pupils are working at age-related standards than was the case at the beginning of this year.
- Results in reading have remained constantly high from year to year. Ongoing effective teaching and support ensure that pupils continue to do well in reading, or very well.
- Weaker teaching in mathematics has been tackled so pupils are now making more progress. Pupils' books show that they are developing their skills effectively and developing their understanding of concepts over time. There has sensibly been a focus on filling learning gaps which have occurred earlier in the pupils' school lives.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do well. The focused teaching and effective support they receive ensures that they make expected progress and many make more than expected progress, so, over time, the differences between the progress of these pupils and that of others nationally are reducing.
- Generally, pupils of different abilities across the school do well, including the most able pupils, who achieve above other pupils nationally. However, there are slight variations in progress of some groups in some classes because the activities do not challenge them sufficiently. For example, in one class lower-ability pupils do not do quite as well as they should and in another class the same is true for the most able pupils.
- In other subjects, pupils develop a range of skills and knowledge. For example, in science pupils learn about how plants are pollinated, why caterpillars are important, and about Darwin's theory of evolution. However, the quality of work in other subjects, such as history and geography, is not as strong as it is in English and mathematics.

## Early years provision

Good

- Children in the early years receive good-quality care and a good education. They are taught well and make good progress from their different starting points. As a result, children are well prepared for their move to Year 1.
- Adults ensure that children are safe and well cared for. Children learn about hygiene and how to wash their hands. They are supported appropriately to take care of themselves and to be independent. For example, they have a go at putting on their own coats and boots when they go outside.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide useful support and ask helpful questions to develop children's thinking. They know when to take a step back and let children have a go. Children are confident to ask for help if they need it but like to have a go on their own and solve problems they encounter. Consequently, even at this early stage, they develop resilience and determination.
- Adults check children's learning and take account of what they can do to plan next steps. However, occasionally opportunities are missed to assess children's achievements and they are sometimes not moved on as quickly as they could be.
- The early years leader knows the priorities and what can be even better. She is rightly ambitious for the children to be even more successful in their learning and is clear about how she intends to make it happen.
- Children demonstrate the same confidence and independence as pupils in older classes. They enjoy challenging themselves and do not tend to choose the same activities each time.
- The early years classroom and outdoor learning area are attractive and well organised. Children select from a range of activities and enjoy playing cooperatively together, taking turns and sharing their ideas. For example, a group of boys worked well together to create a picture of a city with twigs, conkers and shells for 'houses' and 'bridges'.



## School details

Unique reference number	116286
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10025511

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joel McDonald
Headteacher	Erika Biddlecombe
Telephone number	01243 372715
Website	<a href="http://www.stjems.org.uk">www.stjems.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:adminoffice@st-james-emsforth.hants.sch.uk">adminoffice@st-james-emsforth.hants.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	23–24 May 2013

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- St James is an average-sized primary school.
- There are eight classes. There is one class with Reception pupils only and the other three classes in the early years and key stage 1 are mixed year groups. All pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 are taught in single-age classes.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to other schools across the country.
- Approximately a third of all pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which includes a high number of service family pupils.

- 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 did not meet the government's floor standards in 2016, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics and English.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher were both appointed to their current posts in 2015. There is also a new chair of governors since the last inspection.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection began as a section 8 'no formal designation' inspection, following a significant decline in results at the end of Year 6. Her Majesty's Inspector made the decision to convert the inspection to a full section 5 inspection. On day two, she was joined by two inspectors to gather further evidence.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and governors. They spoke to advisers from the Diocese of Portsmouth, and Hampshire local authority.
- Inspectors observed learning in 13 lessons and carried out three learning walks. Many of these visits to classes were carried out jointly with the headteacher. An assembly was also observed.
- Parents' views were gathered through informal discussions at the beginning of the school day and through 68 responses to Parent View. A letter and an email were also received.
- Pupils' views were collected through informal conversations in the playground and in lessons, as well as through meeting with school council representatives.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation document, the improvement plan, performance appraisals, governors' minutes and reports, safeguarding policies and records, progress and attainment information and reports about attendance and behaviour.

## Inspection team

Louise Adams, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Chris Corr	Ofsted Inspector
Christopher Crouch	Ofsted Inspector

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