

St Giles CofE Primary School

Church Lane, Horsted Keynes, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH17 7AY

Inspection dates

24–25 April 2019

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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since joining the school shortly before the last inspection, the headteacher has worked tirelessly with her staff and governors to improve the quality of teaching and improve outcomes for all pupils.
- The headteacher has high expectations for staff and pupils. She is ambitious and has high aspirations for this small village school. She is outward looking and seeks to capitalise on partnerships with other local schools and those within the community.
- As a result of staff training, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers know their pupils well and plan work that helps all pupils to make good progress.
- Pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics have been improving year-on-year. The most recent information recorded by the school shows that a higher proportion of pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes and they feel safe and secure in school. They behave well and show respect towards each other and adults.
- Not all pupils use spelling, punctuation and grammar accurately. They do not all write neatly or present their work as well as they should.
- School values underpin all aspects of the school's work. Pupils, staff and governors know and articulate these values. Pupils understand how these values affect their behaviour and their learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively both through the curriculum and through the example set by adults.
- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They visit school frequently to check for themselves how well pupils are learning.
- Subject leaders have been well trained and carry out their roles effectively. They have introduced new programmes for teaching writing and mathematics. These are already raising standards, particularly in mathematics.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They are warmly welcomed into a stimulating environment where they learn well and make good progress.
- There is not always enough challenge for the most able pupils and too few reach the higher levels, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Although there is a broad and balanced curriculum, the coverage of some subjects, including history, geography and science, is superficial in some classes.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all pupils present their work to a good standard, that writing is neat and legible, and that pupils use spelling, punctuation and grammar accurately.
- Provide a high level of challenge for the most able pupils to increase the proportion reaching the higher levels in writing and mathematics.
- Ensure that pupils develop their knowledge and skills in all subjects, including history, geography and science, and that the curriculum is taught consistently well across the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since joining the school in January 2017, the headteacher has taken decisive action to improve the quality of education for all pupils. She is ambitious for the school and has high aspirations for staff and governors. She has worked in close cooperation with staff and governors to build a school based on shared values of 'nurture, inspire, respect and achieve'. These values underpin all aspects of the school's work and promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths. They know what is working well and where further improvements may be made. Their plans for improvement are tightly focused on those aspects of the school's work that are most in need of development. This means that they are well placed to continue to improve.
- Subject leaders have been provided with high-quality training and this has increased their effectiveness across the school. The leader for mathematics introduced a new scheme for teaching the subject and this is already leading to improvements in this subject. Leaders are very aware that pupils' writing is not as good as it should be. Following research into different approaches, the English leader has introduced a new programme to teach writing. This is still in the very early stage of implementation and so has not yet had time to bring about improvement.
- School leaders have capitalised on working partnerships with other local schools to increase expertise. They are aware that, as part of a small school, they do not have the capacity to do everything themselves. Consequently, they share expertise to develop policies and practices across a group of schools to the mutual benefit of schools within the partnership. They also encourage staff to visit each other's schools to share and develop good practice.
- The headteacher and subject leaders carry out a monitoring programme that involves formal visits to classrooms as well as making informal visits on a regular basis. Leaders provide constructive feedback that helps teachers to develop and improve their skills. This has led to improvements to the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good across the school. Staff have valued these opportunities and embraced the changes made. As a result, teamwork is strong and staff morale is high.
- One of the strengths of the school is that all staff are offered training, some of which is provided 'in-house' and some led by external specialists. As a result, all staff, including teaching assistants, understand and are able to support new developments, such as the new programmes for teaching writing and mathematics.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and enriched with experiences that add to pupils' enjoyment of school. It is largely taught through a topic or themes approach in which pupils study subjects together. Pupils seize the opportunity to use their literacy skills when learning other subjects, and develop them further to practise their skills across the curriculum. However, there is superficial coverage of some subjects, including history, geography and science, in some classes so pupils do not progress as strongly as they should as they move through the school.

- Pupils speak enthusiastically about the enrichment activities. They particularly enjoy the wide range of sports that the school offers. They enjoy visits to the local area to carry out field studies and finding out more about the history of the village. They particularly value the forest-school experiences that link closely to some of the topics and themes they study. School leaders have carefully considered the use of the sports funding following the replacement of the previous sports coach. They have employed a new coach who provides pupils with a variety of sporting activities.
- Leaders make good use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. Although few in number, school leaders apply funding based on the needs of these pupils to ensure that they receive appropriate support. For some pupils, this might entail support for providing items of school uniform or subsidising the cost of school trips. Other pupils may receive support from skilled teaching assistants to help them to understand their work. This helps disadvantaged pupils to grow in confidence and enjoy the same opportunities as other pupils.
- One of the strengths of the school is the lengths that staff go to to ensure that every child is included. There is a small number of pupils whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable. Staff go out of their way to ensure that special provision is made so that these pupils can be included in all of the activities they offer. Pupils speak highly of the care and support they receive. They say that everyone is treated equally and fairly and that discrimination on any grounds is not tolerated.
- Parents who responded to the survey are highly appreciative of the school. This is reflected in the comment made by one parent who wrote: 'Overall, it is a very friendly school and we feel fortunate to be able to send our children here. We are very grateful for the kindness shown to our children.'

Governance of the school

- Governors responded very positively to the review of governance that took place after the last inspection. They restructured their committee composition and ensured that they had the right balance of skills and expertise to provide a high level of professional challenge to school leaders. They have worked alongside school leaders to revisit the school's values and this has created a common sense of purpose with everyone working towards the same aims.
- Governors play a key role in evaluating the quality of education and improvement planning. They visit school regularly to check for themselves the accuracy of information provided by school leaders. They have an agreed plan for monitoring the work of the school that complements the school's own monitoring schedule. This ensures a coordinated system for school development planning.
- Minutes of governors' meetings show that governors are well organised and manage their business effectively and efficiently. They ask probing questions and ensure that agreed actions from previous meetings have been addressed.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Keeping pupils safe is embedded throughout the culture of the school. School leaders and governors have a thorough understanding of all statutory information regarding pupils' safety. Consequently, all

policies and practices are up to date and in line with current government requirements.

- All staff and governors have received recent training on what to do if they have a concern that a pupil may be at risk of harm. The designated lead for safeguarding has established good working relationships with external partners so that pupils and their families receive the right support in a timely way. Procedures for checking the credentials of adults who work in school are robust and all adults who visit school are carefully scrutinised.
- Through the curriculum, pupils are taught to stay safe. They learn about road safety, physical dangers in the home, such as electricity, and the need to stay safe when online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- There have been significant improvements to the quality of teaching since the last inspection. Teachers' planning is thorough and based on what pupils already know and can do. This ensures that pupils build their knowledge and skills consistently as they move through the school.
- One of the strengths of teaching is the quality of feedback that teachers provide to pupils. In classrooms, teachers carefully check on what pupils are doing and provide immediate feedback so that pupils are clear about what they have done well and where they need to make improvements. Work in pupils' books shows that pupils regularly respond to teachers' comments by correcting and improving their work, in line with the school's policies. In this way, pupils make good progress.
- Most teachers have good subject knowledge because they have received high-quality training, particularly in writing and mathematics. As a result, they ask pupils probing questions that make the pupils think hard. In mathematics lessons, teachers are skilled at picking up pupils' misconceptions and use these to improve pupils' learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress because they receive good-quality support from skilled teaching assistants. In class, teaching assistants break learning down into manageable steps so that pupils understand what they are doing. Sometimes, pupils who have a specific difficulty are provided with a separate programme of work to help them to overcome their weakness.
- School leaders have introduced a new approach to the way that they teach writing which is helping pupils to understand the purpose of particular aspects of grammar and improve their writing. For example, in a Year 5/6 lesson, pupils discussed looking for particular features in a text, successfully using the story 'Gorilla' by Anthony Browne to look for, and identify, relative clauses in preparation for their own writing.
- Adults have established good working relationships with pupils and this ensures that pupils are well behaved and attentive in class. Although adults have high expectations for pupils' behaviour, they do not all have high expectations for the way in which pupils present their work. In some books, work is untidy and this can lead to inaccuracies, both in spelling and in mathematical calculations.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils enjoy school and have very positive attitudes towards learning. They are very proud of their school and enjoy talking about the different activities available to them.
- Pupils are very polite, friendly and helpful. They show respect towards each other and towards adults. They have a good understanding of the school's values and know how these contribute towards their behaviour and attitudes to work. Just occasionally pupils do not take enough care with their work and do not always present their work as neatly as they should.
- Through the curriculum, pupils are taught how to stay safe from external dangers, including those relating to road safety, electricity and substance misuse. They know how to stay safe when online because teachers frequently remind them of potential dangers associated with the internet.
- Pupils feel safe in school because they trust adults and know that they will help to sort out any problem. They say that adults listen to them and take their concerns seriously. Pupils know about different forms of bullying but they are adamant that it is very rare in school. They believe that bullying would be very quickly dealt with if an incident occurred.
- One of the strengths of this small school is the opportunities school leaders provide for pupils to take on leadership roles. Older pupils act as 'buddies' to younger children and help them to settle into school quickly, knowing that someone will look out for them. Members of the school council have played a key role in selecting playground markings to increase the number of activities at breaktimes. Three of the older pupils have been elected as school 'bishops'. In these roles, pupils lead and take part in local village events as well as within the school. These leadership roles help pupils to develop a sense of responsibility, and engender a pride in their school and the wider community.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils understand the school's policy for behaviour management and behave accordingly. They behave well in lessons and show respect when listening to what each other has to say. Pupils show perseverance and determination, particularly when the work is challenging for them.
- School records relating to poor behaviour show very few recorded incidents. There have been no reported incidents of bullying and very few recent exclusions.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the national average and few pupils are persistently absent. The large majority of parents who responded to the online survey agreed that their children were happy and safe in school and well cared for. One parent wrote, 'The quality of pastoral care is exceptional.'

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics have increased year on year over the past three years. This reflects the improvements to the quality of teaching over a similar period. Pupils currently in school are on track to continue this improvement. However, the most able pupils do not always make as much progress as they should and do not always reach the higher standards in writing and mathematics that they are capable of. Overall, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Provision for pupils with SEND has improved, and as a result their specific needs are more accurately identified. This means that teachers can more effectively tailor the right support to help pupils to overcome their difficulties. There are too few disadvantaged pupils in school to make reliable statistical comparisons with other pupils nationally.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics and reach standards that are at least in line with those found nationally. Work in their books shows that they are expected to work hard. Their work builds on previous learning, so they develop their skills progressively and gain a secure understanding of mathematical concepts. They have frequent opportunities to apply their skills to real-life problems and to give reasons and explanations for their answers.
- Pupils' progress is slower in writing than in mathematics. Leaders recognise this and have recently implemented a new programme to help increase pupils' progress. However, it is too soon to see the success of this programme. Work in pupils' books shows that they do not all write as well as they should. Some older pupils are affected by a legacy of weak spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Pupils across the school thoroughly enjoy reading. By the end of Year 6, pupils have highly positive attitudes and talk about their books enthusiastically. They have a range of strategies to read unfamiliar words and they make inferences and predict what may happen next. Some younger pupils read fluently and confidently and with obvious enjoyment. However, there are times when the books they are reading are not always matched well enough to their abilities or interests.
- While pupils study other subjects, including history, geography, science and religious education, the amount of work and the activities they carry out are variable across the school. In some classes, pupils study these subjects in depth and so progress well in developing their skills and knowledge. However, this is not consistent across the school and this slows pupils' progress in these subjects.

Early years provision

Good

- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They are warmly welcomed into a bright, attractive learning environment where they feel safe and secure. Adults have formed good relationships with children and this inspires children to work hard and to behave well.
- Adults keep a careful check on children's learning and they use this information to plan activities that are well matched to children's needs. Staff provide activities indoors as

well as outside so children can develop their skills across all areas of the curriculum. Mostly, children are encouraged to choose for themselves where they learn and this helps to develop their independence and imagination.

- Teaching is good. Children are provided with experiences that help them to develop positive attitudes towards learning. They show resilience and perseverance when working and playing independently. Most adults are skilled at intervening and asking questions that develop children's learning. However, there are a few occasions when adults do not intervene as frequently as they could and this slows the pace of learning.
- Children make good progress in most aspects of their development and especially in reading and mathematics. They learn about the world around them through exploring their environment. They get on very well together, demonstrating good social and moral development. They are very well prepared for the demands of Year 1.
- The teaching of phonics is usually brisk and lively, with activities that are stimulating and engage children's attention. However, there are some missed opportunities to extend children's learning further by introducing more sentence-level work.
- A new leader of the early years joined the school in September 2018. She has a good overview of practice and has already brought about improvements to the learning environment. She provides good support and leadership to staff in the early years.

School details

Unique reference number	126057
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10088149

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	99
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-Chairs	Lynne Mulcare and Helen Jones
Headteacher	Hilary Douch
Telephone number	01825 790240
Website	http://www.st-giles.w-sussex.sch.uk
Email address	office@stgilesprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 January 2017

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than most primary schools, and pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. There is provision for children in the early years in the Reception class.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British with very few who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND has increased over the past three years and is now above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is lower than the national average for primary schools.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils working in eight lessons, all of which were jointly observed with the headteacher. The inspector looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 reading.
- Discussions were held with school leaders and four governors, including the two co-chairs of the governing body. The inspector met formally with a group of pupils as well as informally throughout the inspection. A telephone discussion took place with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documentation, including plans for improvement, minutes from governors' meetings, and the school's own self-evaluation. Documents, including the school's safeguarding policy, were also taken into account.
- The views of parents were taken into consideration by analysing the 44 responses to the online survey as well as considering their written responses on free text. The views of staff were taken into account by analysing the nine responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Joy Considine, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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