

# Inspection of St James Church of England Junior School

Upton Street, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL1 4JU

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Inspection dates: 15 and 16 September 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The school is proud of its diversity. A comment typical of staff was 'together, we are a family'. Pupils are warmly welcomed into the school with a hearty free breakfast. Pupils see the school as a safe place. It is calm across the day and pupils are well-mannered. Pupils try hard and concentrate on their work. Pupils feel proud when they earn 'golden tickets' for working hard.

However, leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is implemented well enough. Teachers want pupils to do well, but pupils do not gain the essential knowledge they need to be well prepared for the next stage of their education. Many pupils need to catch up in reading.

Pupils know that kindness is an important value. They show kindness to each other in lessons and in the playground. Pupils from different communities the school serves are friendly with each other. They say bullying doesn't happen. Most pupils attend well and enjoy it here.

Teachers arrange visitors and activities to spark pupils' interest and extend the curriculum. During the inspection, all pupils visited the 'Life Bus' to help them know more about staying safe.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Senior leaders have not made checks on how well the curriculum is delivered, and so they are unaware that pupils are not learning as well as they could. There are curriculum plans in place for every subject area. However, some subject plans are more effective than others. New leaders do not have clear plans in place about how to improve the quality of education pupils receive. The quality of education pupils receive is not good.

The reading curriculum is built around high-quality books. Teachers encourage pupils to read deeply and gain an understanding of what they read. However, the school's approach to teaching pupils who are at an early stage of reading is not effective. Staff are not well trained in the teaching of phonics. Staff do not have the correct subject knowledge to provide pupils with the right support. A relatively high number of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), English as an additional language, or those who are disadvantaged are not catching up quickly enough. The books that these pupils read do not help them practise the sounds that they already know. This hinders pupils' ability to read words and sentences accurately and holds them back in other subjects.

Some teaching plans are overloaded. It is not clear what essential knowledge pupils need to be taught or by when they should know it. Pupils recall the interesting activities they do. However, they do not gain or remember all the necessary knowledge they should.

In subjects such as computing and mathematics, the curriculum plans are ambitious and well organised. Teachers usually deliver the content clearly. Pupils, including those with SEND, remember and make links between knowledge increasingly well, particularly in computing. However, leaders' recent actions to prioritise pupils' oral language and vocabulary development are at a very early stage. As a result, pupils struggle to explain their thinking clearly when they are required to use technical mathematical vocabulary. So, pupils' gaps in vocabulary remain.

Pupils behave well in lessons. Leaders' actions to ensure that pupils attend well are paying off. There are strong systems in place to support pupils' good attendance.

Leaders are keen to foster pupils' ambition. Pastoral support is strong. Older pupils take their responsibilities as prefects and librarians seriously. Widespread clubs and activities, when able to operate, are well attended. Leaders help pupils to live in their diverse community with understanding and tolerance. They plan visits to both the church and the mosque.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have up-to-date training and understand the range of risks to pupils' safety. They are vigilant and raise concerns with leaders promptly. An improved system is now in place to ensure that leaders' actions to seek help for families are clearly recorded. Appropriate checks are made on staff prior to employment at the school.

Parents value the support they had from the school during lockdown. There is high mobility in the community. Leaders promptly check on the safety of pupils not in school.

Pupils have a good knowledge of risk when working or playing online. Teachers refresh this knowledge regularly.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Senior leaders do not have a full and accurate picture of the quality of education pupils receive. Teaching is not providing pupils with all the knowledge they need to be well prepared for their next stage of education. Senior leaders need to develop their knowledge of the implementation and impact of the curriculum so that they can improve the quality of education pupils experience.
- Staff are not sufficiently trained in the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics to know how to teach consistently the ability to read accurately and fluently. A relatively high proportion of pupils, some of whom are disadvantaged, have SEND, or are pupils who speak English as an additional language, need to catch up in reading. Their inability to read well is holding them back when accessing

some subject content. Leaders need to ensure that staff receive the appropriate training in the teaching of phonics so that pupils catch up.

- Pupils do not always understand the mathematical vocabulary that teachers use. Leaders should ensure that the development mathematical vocabulary is prioritised and there is a systematic approach to teaching and assessing pupils' knowledge of this aspect of the mathematics curriculum.
- Not all curriculum plans specifically identify essential knowledge. Plans are overloaded and teachers cannot recognise or prioritise the most important content and vocabulary that pupils must learn. This leads to pupils not being able to retain or recall knowledge accurately. Leaders should sharpen curricular plans so that teaching becomes better matched to essential knowledge and pupils remember more.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	115606
<b>Local authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200973
<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	141
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Robin Bown
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Simon Millington
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-james-jun.gloucs.sch.uk">www.st-james-jun.gloucs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 May 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Over the past year, there have been several changes in the senior leadership of the school. The headteacher took up his new role of executive headteacher this term. The executive role involves leadership of St. James Church of England Junior School and Hatherley Infant School.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team, including the special education needs coordinator and subject leaders. The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: reading, history, computing and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at

curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons and spoke to teachers. Inspectors spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also looked at the school's curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about other subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed the safeguarding arrangements for the school. They looked at records and held discussions with leaders, teachers and support staff. They sought the views of pupils on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors viewed arrangements for pupils' safety and behaviour in breakfast club and at lunchtime.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the views of staff and pupils in Ofsted's online surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Wendy Marriott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Linda Rowley

Ofsted Inspector

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