

Inspection of St Leonard's Church of England Primary Academy

Collinswood Drive, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN38 0NX

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 October 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like their school very much. They know that their teachers are there to help them learn as well as they possibly can. They appreciate how teachers strive to make their learning interesting and challenging. In turn, pupils try their best in their lessons. They have a strong desire to learn and achieve.

Pupils say that they feel happy and safe at school. When they talk about bullying, they report that it seldom happens. If it does occur, teachers sort it out very quickly.

Pupils' behaviour is of a high standard. They abide by the school's values: be safe, be respectful, be determined, be faithful. The Christian ethos is strong. It supports a culture of mutual respect and kindness in the school.

Teachers have raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve. They expect them to be able to learn more and to retain what they learn. Pupils have definitely risen to this challenge.

Parents and carers and pupils are very satisfied with the school and what it now has to offer. As one parent commented, 'St Leonard's has a wonderful learning environment in which staff work tirelessly for the good of the children academically, socially and emotionally.'

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

Leaders have focused on setting out the content of the curriculum. They have done this in each subject and across all years, including Reception. Teachers are now clearer about what they teach and why. Pupils consequently build their knowledge more securely than before. They can recall what they have learned and explain their understanding.

Leaders have developed how teachers deliver the curriculum. They have strengthened teachers' subject knowledge so that it is secure. Leaders have also overhauled the materials and resources they use. Teachers think very carefully about how to make the learning effective and memorable. They frequently check on what pupils have learned. They use this information to fill any gaps that appear. However, leaders have not yet fully reviewed how well teachers have delivered the new curriculum. They have not given feedback to teachers so that they can adapt their teaching further.

Leaders have acted to widen and deepen reading in the school. Reception children learn letters and their sounds from the start. Indeed, expectations are high in early years. Teachers spot which children are ready to do more. They also pick up quickly on those who need extra help. This approach continues into key stage 1. Most pupils become capable readers by the end of Year 2. Those who still struggle receive intensive help to ensure that they catch up.

Throughout key stage 2, pupils are reading avidly. Leaders have introduced a new reading programme. This has increased the range of books that pupils can choose from. It has also inspired them to read more. Pupils talk about what they read with real enjoyment. Year 6 pupils have loved the novel they have read in class about a child's experience of the Second World War. Many of them have gone on to read the entire series. When asked why reading is important, they say that it is fundamental to how they learn.

Teachers check on pupils' progress throughout the year. They consider carefully whether pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) require specialist support. Leaders ensure that all pupils have full access to the curriculum. However, how well teachers adapt the learning to suit pupils with SEND is variable. Teachers do not always receive guidance to help them meet the needs of these pupils within the classroom.

Pupils behave to a high standard in the school. During lessons, they concentrate hard and cooperate well with each other. At breaktimes, pupils play well with their friends. They engage enthusiastically with the activities that adults offer them at lunchtime and after school.

The development of the whole child is a vital part of what the school does. Pupils take a pride in representing the school in a range of sporting activities. Many pupils join in the varied clubs that the school offers. They thoroughly enjoy taking part in forest school, even in the pouring rain. Pupils are confident, polite and keen to get involved.

The executive headteacher and his team have led staff through a period of rapid improvement at the school. Governors have supported them well through challenge and support. The trust too has made a positive contribution to improvements. Staff appreciate that leaders have paid attention to their workload and well-being. Parents, pupils and staff are all very happy with the school's direction and development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take safeguarding very seriously. They are determined that there is a culture of vigilance in the school. They achieve this through regular and thorough training of staff, as well as clear and well-understood systems for reporting. Staff know their pupils very well and look out for any change in their well-being. Leaders work well with families and other agencies to provide the necessary support.

Governors also play their part. They make sure that all relevant checks to do with recruitment are carried out. They also keep up to date with their own safeguarding training. They question leaders about safeguarding matters regularly and report back to the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not made sure that the curriculum is sufficiently well designed to meet the needs of all pupils with SEND. This means that not all of these pupils learn as well as they might. However, it is clear that leaders have already taken action to address this area. They are looking at what adaptations to access the curriculum need to be made for each of the pupils with SEND. Leaders are also considering what further training is required to help teachers become more expert at meeting these pupils' needs. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.
- Subject leaders are not yet all fully expert in checking that learning is delivered to a consistently high standard and that the needs of all pupils, particularly pupils with SEND, are fully met. They too will require training and development to help them become adept in these areas.

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

Unique reference number	141868
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10200867
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	407
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Archdeacon Luke Irvine-Capel
Headteacher	Richard White
Website	www.stlens.org
Date of previous inspection	16 and 17 January 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The early years provision consists of two Reception classes.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The school now has a leadership structure of an executive headteacher and a head of school. These leaders joined the school in the last academic year.
- The school is in the Diocese of Chichester. Its last section 48 inspection took place in March 2017.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.

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 had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact with school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors reviewed the school’s safeguarding arrangements. They looked at relevant documentation, staff recruitment checks and training. They also considered how well adults in the school act on emerging concerns about pupil welfare.
- The team spoke with staff and pupils to gather their views. They considered 107 responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, including 23 free-text comments. Inspectors also took account of 36 responses to the staff survey. There were 70 replies to the pupils survey which were also considered by inspectors.
- Meetings were held with leaders, trustees and governors, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also spoke with the chief executive officer of the trust and his deputy.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, geography and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke with leaders about some other subjects.

Inspection team

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