

# Inspection of an outstanding school: St Stephen's Church of England Junior School, Soundwell

Lansdown Road, Kingswood, Bristol BS15 1XD

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Inspection dates:

7 and 8 December 2021

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils describe St Stephen's Junior School as 'welcoming and comforting'. Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They want all pupils to aspire to be who they want to be. However, some curriculum plans do not focus well enough on developing pupils' knowledge over time. Teachers do not always know how well pupils are doing. Consequently, pupils do not learn as well as they should in some subjects.

Pupils behave well in class and around the school site. They are polite and considerate to each other. As a result, the school is a calm and purposeful place to learn. Staff use effective strategies to help pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour. Pupils say that bullying does not happen. However, if an issue should arise, pupils feel that it would be acted upon quickly.

Pupils appreciate the school's work to support them personally and socially. They enjoy the rich opportunities staff give them to develop as well-rounded individuals. Pupils undertake a range of responsibilities to enhance their well-being and self-esteem. These include being 'Voice of the Change Makers' and 'Eco Warriors'.

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

Leaders are ambitious for pupils. This ambition is shared across the whole school community. Leaders aim to provide pupils with the confidence to become lifelong learners. Staff value the teamwork approach in school.

Governors share the ambition of school leaders. Leaders provide governors with useful information regarding the development of the wider curriculum. However, governors do

not challenge leaders sufficiently about the effectiveness of the curriculum. As a result, they do not know enough about the quality of education pupils receive.

Leaders have implemented relatively new structure and content for the wider curriculum. This means that, in some subjects, the key knowledge pupils need to know is not explicit. For example, in computing, leaders have outlined the knowledge that they want pupils to remember. However, the steps to achieve this are not clear enough for pupils. Some pupils struggle to recall what they have learned. Staff are not using assessment effectively to know what pupils know and can do in some wider curriculum subjects.

Leaders prioritise reading. Pupils enjoy talking about their favourite books and authors. They understand the importance of being able to read. Leaders ensure pupils have access to a wide range of texts. They have implemented a structured approach to supporting pupils who are falling behind. Staff receive helpful support and training. As a result, pupils with significant gaps in their reading are catching up quickly.

Pupils receive a well-planned and structured mathematics curriculum. This leads to high levels of pupil engagement. Teachers use assessment effectively to inform pupils' next steps. Staff model and explain clearly what they want pupils to know. They reinforce prior learning before moving on to new learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported to access the curriculum well. Pupils enjoy mathematics. They talk confidently about their current learning.

Staff understand pupils' needs well. Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND and those with emotional needs are included fully in all aspects of school life. Careful identification enables staff to provide targeted support. Links with external agencies enhance this provision.

Pupils understand the importance of respect and tolerance. They know that adults value them as individuals. Pupils know everyone is different and that it is good to be different. They have a good understanding of different religions and beliefs. They appreciate the diversity of their community.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that actions leaders have taken to improve the wider curriculum and the effectiveness of governance may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including governors, monitor safeguarding closely. Leaders ensure that all staff are knowledgeable and that they receive frequent and up-to-date safeguarding training. Staff understand how to report and record concerns. They know that leaders will take their concerns seriously. Leaders carry out appropriate checks on the suitability of staff.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe in different situations. The curriculum supports their knowledge of how to stay safe online. Pupils know that they can go to any adult if they have a worry or a concern.

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

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

- In some subjects in the wider curriculum, the choice of key content and knowledge is not explicit enough. It is not clear what pupils should know and by when. Leaders need to ensure that teachers identify the component steps and prioritise essential knowledge so all pupils have the building blocks for future learning.
- Teacher's use of assessment within the wider curriculum does not consistently check what pupils know and can do. As a result, pupils are not clear about how well they are doing in some subjects. Leaders need to ensure that teacher assessment is used to inform pupils' learning over time so they know more and remember more of the intended curriculum.
- Governors do not have a cohesive understanding of the effectiveness of subjects within the wider curriculum. As a result, they are not clear about the quality of the curriculum pupils are learning. Governors need to ensure that they prioritise their challenge and monitoring of leaders to assure themselves about the quality of education across all subjects.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in September 2015.

## **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>	109167
<b>Local authority</b>	South Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199448
<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>	338
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Anita Randen-Green
<b>Headteacher</b>	Louisa Wilson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ststephensjun.org.uk">www.ststephensjun.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	23 and 25 September 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This is a Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) School. It is part of the Diocese of Bristol. Its last section 48 inspection took place in March 2015, when the school was judged to be good.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, groups of staff and representatives from the governing body. The inspector held a phone call with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and computing. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at

curriculum plans, visited samples of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector listened to pupils in Years 3, 4 and 6 read to an adult.
- The inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding policies and practices, including safeguarding checks on staff. The inspector considered how well the designated safeguarding leads act on concerns about pupils' welfare and safety.
- The inspector considered 55 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 24 free-text responses, 151 responses to the pupil online survey and 32 responses to the staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Heather Barraclough, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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