

Inspection of a good school: Rowlands Castle St John's Church of England Controlled Primary School

Whichers Gate Road, Rowland's Castle, Hampshire PO9 6BB

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 February 2022

Outcome

Rowlands Castle St John's Church of England Controlled Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

At this school, pupils are enthusiastic about their learning in a wide range of subjects. They benefit from opportunities to express their creativity and individual views. Pupils of all abilities are encouraged to develop into confident, independent learners. They enjoy that they are recognised and rewarded when they work hard.

Pupils describe their school as a friendly place. It is somewhere they can make friends easily. Pupils say that bullying is rare at this school. If it does happen, leaders treat it seriously and take effective action. In lessons, pupils are highly focused. They are curious and motivated to learn, which makes low-level disruption extremely uncommon.

The majority of parents would recommend the school and are pleased with the education it provides. One parent's response reflects the views of many in describing the school as '[...] a nurturing place which provides a varied and supportive learning environment.'

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

Pupils achieve well at this school due to a thoughtfully designed curriculum. Leaders work with a common purpose to focus ambitiously on the needs of each pupil. They have ensured that teachers adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers routinely check that pupils have understood what they are being taught. They do this so that they can adapt their teaching the following lesson. This results in effective support being added for some pupils or additional challenge for others.

Leaders have thought about what they want pupils to learn and how this builds from the early years to Year 6. Where plans in a few subjects have been developed more recently, the impact of this approach is not yet as clear in pupils' work. In the majority of subjects,

however, there is very clear development of pupils' thinking from year to year. Pupils are also encouraged to think about the connections between the subjects they are learning. Teachers plan these links deliberately to make sure they are meaningful. For example, pupils are taught about pitch in music in one year and this concept is returned to when they look at sound in science the following year.

The teaching of early reading is a priority in the school. Leaders have ensured that staff have the expertise they need to deliver high-quality lessons and support. They have carefully matched reading books to the sounds that pupils learn in class. If pupils are struggling, then they receive support which includes regular reading with a trained adult. This support helps all pupils to learn to read quickly, including those with SEND. The teaching of early reading is particularly effective in Reception where pupils get off to a quick start. Although strong overall, there is sometimes a less consistent approach in key stage 1. This is because sometimes teachers do not choose resources that help pupils practise what they've learned. The vast majority of pupils at the school become keen readers. They talk enthusiastically about their favourite writers and look forward to visiting the school's library to swap their books.

Leaders are in the process of restoring the full range of clubs on offer at the school. Pupils look forward to an even wider range of opportunities to develop their individual skills and talents. Current options include sports clubs such as netball and hockey, as well as academic options like history and science. There is also a 'calm club', which is one of many ways pupils are encouraged to take time for quiet reflection. Pupil 'worship counsellors' have been involved in creating a calm space in school where pupils can seek peace and quiet if they need it. The school has also developed a 'peace garden' in the centre of the playground where pupils go to sit quietly or talk among their friends.

Leaders have developed a highly supportive culture in school. Staff are unanimous in recognising the support they are offered. Their appreciation extends to the governing body, who take an active role in the school. They visit regularly to meet with staff and pupils. New governors are getting to know the school's strengths and development areas quickly. They ask leaders challenging questions which help to bring new perspectives and move the school forward.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that all staff receive effective and up-to-date training in relation to safeguarding. This has contributed to a vigilant culture where concerns are reported readily. Leaders take timely and effective action in response to any concerns that are raised. They work closely to support families and make referrals to external agencies when necessary.

Pupils are confident in coming forward with things that are worrying them. They know they can talk to adults in school, especially their teachers or the school's emotional literacy support assistants. They understand how to keep themselves safe and are particularly knowledgeable about e-safety.

In terms of safeguarding, governors carry out their roles effectively. They ensure that the proper procedures are carried out with regard to recruitment. Leaders carry out and record the necessary pre-employment checks on new staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects where the curriculum has been developed more recently, it is not yet evident how learning develops from one year to the next. Leaders are mindful of this and should continue with their plans to embed the curriculum in all subjects. This will result in clearer progression as children move from the early years to year 6.
- Leaders' approach to teaching early reading is not yet delivered consistently by all adults, particularly in key stage 1. Leaders should ensure that phonics teaching consistently follows a systematic, synthetic approach so that all pupils learn to read quickly. Governors should make sure that they are knowledgeable about developments in early reading so that they can hold leaders accountable in this area of their work.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 good in November 2016.

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	116310
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10200410
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	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sam Bradshaw
Headteacher	Jayne Pavitt
Website	www.rowlandscastle.hants.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	24 and 25 November 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a voluntary controlled Church of England primary school.
- The school's last section 48 inspection took place on 29 September 2016.
- The school shares a site with a nursery, but this is a separate provision.
- 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 leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at the curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector looked at curriculum plans in a range of other subjects and discussed these with leaders.
- The inspector met with school leaders, parents, pupils, governors and representatives of the diocese and local authority.
- The inspector checked the school's single central record, scrutinised the school's safeguarding records and talked to teachers, pupils, leaders and governors about their role in keeping children safe.
- The inspector considered the views of parents, pupils and staff that were shared in response to our surveys.

Inspection team

Chris Ellison, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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