

Inspection of a good school: Alverstoke Church of England Aided Junior School

The Avenue, Alverstoke, Gosport, Hampshire PO12 2JS

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 September 2022

Outcome

Alverstoke Church of England Aided Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love attending this happy school where there is a positive attitude to learning. Leaders and teachers have high expectations for all pupils. Pupils work hard in lessons. They strive to not lose behaviour points by making sensible behaviour choices in lessons and the playground. They understand the school rules and low-level disruption is infrequent. When things do go wrong, such as the occasional 'football fallout', leaders help pupils mend relationships and respect different points of view well.

Pupils feel safe in school. Adults listen to them. Pupils appreciate the 'worry monsters' who live in classrooms, and where pupils post any concerns. Staff check these regularly and act swiftly to resolve any worries. Bullying is rare. Leaders have clear processes in place and investigate any claims thoroughly. Pupils trust them to do this.

The school's Christian values permeate through all aspects of school life. Pupils show respect and act with love to others. Relationships are strong. Parents and carers speak highly of the school. They especially value the thoughtful transition from the local infant school. This helps their children to settle quickly. As one parent wrote, summing up the views of many, 'My daughter feels safe, secure and is thriving.'

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

Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. Learning is well sequenced and precise. Leaders have made the development of staff a key priority. As a result, teachers' subject knowledge is strong.

Leaders have made sure that new curriculum content builds well on what pupils have already learned. For example, in design and technology, Year 5 pupils learn how to strengthen frames using triangle corners. They then use this knowledge, alongside cross bracing, to build structures designed to withstand earthquakes.

Teachers check pupils' understanding and gaps in knowledge well in English, mathematics and science. This has supported pupils effectively when closing gaps in their learning as a

result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, even though the curriculum is well sequenced, leaders have not considered carefully enough the most important learning they want pupils to remember in the foundation subjects. This means that teachers' checks in these subjects are not quite as effective as they could be.

Leaders make sure that pupils at the early stages of reading get the right support to help them learn to read. Staff are well trained and teach phonics very well. Once fluent, pupils study a wide range of high-quality literature to support their vocabulary and comprehension. However, pupils report that they rarely get to finish the stories they study before they move on to the next book. They are left wondering about the story and its characters. Pupils like teachers reading aloud in reading lessons. This helps them develop a love of stories and books. However, they say this does not happen often just for pleasure.

The curriculum for mathematics is well planned and well taught. Teachers present new ideas clearly. They make sure that pupils understand and use mathematical language correctly.

Teachers support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. Pupils with SEND follow the same curriculum as others. Teachers identify pupils' needs accurately and understand how best to help them learn. Leaders make good use of external expertise to ensure that pupils receive the support they need.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum supports pupils' personal development very well. The weekly pupil mission encourages pupils to reflect on their behaviour and actions. Staff encourage pupils to practise the school's 'EPIC' learning values, such as perseverance and independence. Pupils learn to appreciate difference and to care for their environment. For example, groups of pupils regularly contribute by litter picking in the local area.

Staff are proud to work at Alverstoke Junior. They feel part of a close-knit team. Staff appreciate the way that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being. For example, both the staff and the governors look forward to the weekly mental health and well-being newsletter which they say 'lifts our spirits'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture where staff and governors know their role in keeping children safe. 'Everybody, every day' is the mantra that adults understand and act by. Staff receive well-designed training that takes into consideration any local risks. They know exactly what to look out for. Leaders follow up referrals without delay. They work well with external agencies to ensure that pupils get the help they need quickly.

The curriculum helps pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils learn about the ups and downs of friendships and personal boundaries.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils do not always finish the books they study and this frustrates them. They are rarely given time to listen to books purely for pleasure. This means that they miss out on additional opportunities to understand vocabulary and enjoy stories to completion. Leaders should consider how best to further enrich the reading curriculum to nurture pupils' enjoyment of reading even more.
- Current processes to check learning in foundation subjects do not tell teachers exactly what they need to know about pupils' understanding. The aspects that leaders have identified to be checked are sometimes too wide, open to interpretation or not the most important knowledge for future learning. This hinders teachers when designing learning for pupils in these subjects. Leaders should refine their foundation subject assessment processes further to establish what is the most important knowledge they want pupils to remember and teachers to check across the curriculum.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2017.

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.

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	116392
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10227210
Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gareth Davis
Headteacher	Clare Slowther
Website	www.alverstoke-jun.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 and 10 March 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in April 2020.
- The school is voluntary aided and is part of the Diocese of Portsmouth. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in February 2016.
- The school does not currently 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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with senior leaders, staff and pupils.
- The inspector carried out deep dives into these subjects: reading, mathematics, and design and technology. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector heard some pupils read. The inspector also looked at work and considered the curriculum and assessment in some other subjects.
- The inspector met with five members of the local governing body, including the chair, and spoke to a representative from the local authority on the telephone.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with the designated leaders for safeguarding. They reviewed a wide range of documents and records, including the school's record of recruitment checks and records of concerns. The inspector also spoke to staff, governors and pupils about safeguarding.
- The inspector met with a range of leaders, teachers and support staff to discuss the wider development of pupils, behaviour, well-being and workload.
- The inspector considered parents' responses to Ofsted Parent View, and parents' free-text comments. The inspector also took into account the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Lea Hannam

Ofsted Inspector

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