

Inspection of a good school: St James Church of England Controlled Primary School

Bellevue Lane, Emsworth, Hampshire PO10 7PX

Inspection dates:

10 and 11 May 2023

Outcome

St James Church of England Controlled Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils arrive to school gleefully. They are very keen to start their school day. This is a harmonious place, where pupils are kind and considerate to one another. There are warm, respectful, and inclusive attitudes between everyone. Leaders and staff promote the values of the school consistently: 'Loving learning, loving life and loving God's word'.

Behaviour is exemplary. All staff consistently apply the school rules and follow the 'relentless routines'. This helps pupils feel safe. Pupils know that the adults care about them. They know who to talk to if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils know that adults will help them sort out any difficulties they may have. Incidents of bullying are very rare, and staff deal with them quickly.

Leaders and teachers have high expectations for all pupils. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers plan lessons that encourage pupils to contribute their own ideas, and to be independent. Pupils say that learning is fun. They work effortfully and are proud of their accomplishments.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. One parent, typical of many, said, 'this school is a gem.'

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

The curriculum is ambitious for all. Leaders ensure that learning in every subject starts in the early years and progresses logically to Year 6. Leaders and staff worked together to identify the most important concepts pupils, including those with SEND, should learn in each subject. This means that learning builds progressively from what pupils know and need to be able to do as they move through the school. In the early years, the caring environment ensures that children settle quickly. Staff confidently build knowledge

and skills across all the areas of learning and develop children's curiosity. Consequently, children in Reception are being well prepared for Year 1.

Teachers choose high quality and appropriate resources and provide pupils with a stimulating learning environment. Lessons are not disrupted, and pupils show great enthusiasm for learning. Staff model their high expectations and positively reinforce these to keep the focus on learning. Sometimes, in foundation subjects, the tasks that pupils complete are not considered well enough to help emphasise the most important knowledge. This makes it harder for pupils to learn. In phonics and mathematics, leaders have put checks in place to make sure that pupils are retaining important knowledge over time. There is not the same consistent approach to assessment in foundation subjects to know what pupils have learned. This means that some gaps in learning may go unnoticed.

Reading is a priority in the school. From the moment pupils join the school in the early years, they begin learning to read in a very structured way. Pupils use their knowledge of phonics to sound out unfamiliar words. Books are closely matched to the letters and sounds that pupils are learning. Staff have received extensive training and have high levels of expertise. Staff regularly check how successfully pupils learn new sounds. They are quick to provide support if pupils fall behind. Nothing is left to chance. Leaders are absolutely determined that all pupils will read well. Pupils say that they enjoy reading. Leaders have seized every opportunity to foster the love of reading. For example, the outside reading gazebo is a special space, where older pupils are proud to read to and listen to younger pupils read during social times.

Pupils with SEND learn and achieve well alongside their peers. Teachers adapt the curriculum effectively to meet these pupils' needs. Staff help them overcome challenges and access their learning. Leaders are zealous in providing extra opportunities to support pupils. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about how the reading summer school helped them feel very confident. Parents have strong faith in this work.

The programme for pupils' wider development is strong. Leaders have curated a wide range of educational visits, such as visiting a local farm as part of 'children's amazing animals' work. Pupils know how to be healthy and have a strong appreciation of the importance of mental well-being. They learn to celebrate the diversity and values of modern Britain and talk respectfully about different faiths, cultures and lifestyles.

Leaders, including governors, are considerate of staff well-being. Professional development of staff is a priority for leaders. Staff are very appreciative. They feel well supported and valued. Governors know what the school does well and know what needs further improvement. This is a school where all staff are happy and proud to work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that a strong culture of safeguarding underpins the work of the school. Staff know pupils and their families well. Staff receive regular training to ensure they are up to date with statutory guidance. They are swift to act on any concerns. They work with parents and external agencies to make sure that children are safe. Thorough checks are made on the suitability of adults who work with pupils.

Pupils are very aware of the risks they might face online and are confident in their strategies to manage these, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, staff give tasks that do not precisely focus on the most important knowledge that they want pupils to learn. This makes it harder for pupils to learn key knowledge over time. Leaders should ensure that staff know how to emphasise the essential knowledge and skills they intend pupils to learn and remember.
- Teachers do not use assessment as well in the foundation subjects as they do in core subjects. It does not help them to adjust activities to match what pupils know and what they need to know next. Leaders should ensure that assessment is used consistently well, across all subjects, to identify gaps in pupils' learning and to inform teaching.

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	116286
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10227791
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	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Catherine Warnock
Headteacher	Jill Pearce-Haydon
Website	www.stjems.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 and 22 March 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school after the previous inspection.
- This school is a voluntary controlled Church of England school. The most recent section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in November 2018.
- 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 school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other school leaders, governors, including the chair of governors, diocese, and local authority representatives.
- The inspector carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. 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 evaluated the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements in the school through document checks, including the checks that leaders make on staff's suitability to work with children. The inspector checked that staff implement safeguarding policies and procedures effectively across the school.
- The inspector considered the views of parents and carers from responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including free-text responses, and spoke to several parents before school on the first day of inspection.
- The inspector met with a range of staff to gather their views about the school and took account of staff's responses to Ofsted's confidential staff questionnaire.
- The inspector spoke to pupils formally and informally. They spoke to pupils about their learning and experiences at school. They observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school's self-evaluation, published information about pupils' performance and minutes of governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Ginny Rhodes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023