

Inspection of a good school: St George's Beneficial Church of England Primary School

Hanover Street, Portsea, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO1 3BN

Inspection dates:

23 and 24 January 2024

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Beaming pupils have smiles on their faces at St George's Beneficial. They know that when they come to school, staff provide thoughtful and kind support. Pupils play happily together. They enjoy asking questions and sharing their school with visitors. The school provides a safe haven for pupils and gives them opportunities to explore how they can play a positive role in society. Pupils are proud to represent their school. They welcome all, no matter where somebody is from.

Beyond the strengths in pastoral care, the academic ambition of what pupils can achieve needs improving. High expectations across all year groups are not consistent. Pupils are not learning how to read or gaining key mathematical knowledge quickly enough. Although pupils demonstrate good learning habits, they are not yet excelling in the core skills they need to be ready for the next stage of their education.

The school works impressively to give pupils experiences and opportunities that they may not have had before. Pupils learn valuable life skills, and they build knowledge through visiting museums, the seaside and engaging with the arts. This starts from early years, where staff lay the foundations for children's communication and personal, social and emotional development.

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

New leadership has firmly put the school on a pathway to lift aspiration and standards for pupils. In a matter of weeks, the new headteacher has quickly identified where the school needs to improve so that pupils can receive the education they deserve. Governors acknowledge the challenges the school has faced in the past, particularly around an ever-

changing pupil population. New governors have come on board with knowledge to support the improvements that are needed. Governors know they need to dig deeper into how well pupils are really learning the curriculum to ensure pupils develop the knowledge and skills they need.

The curriculum requires further development in its design and content. It is not as ambitious as it should be in some subjects. This has led to low academic outcomes in English and mathematics for many pupils. Fast-moving changes are happening that are providing pupils with a better educational experience. However, it is still early days to see the impact for pupils. There is now a clearer understanding of seeing the curriculum as one journey from early years through to Year 6. Nevertheless, the curriculum does not identify all the knowledge that pupils need to know and the best sequence to realise this. In addition, activities in lessons do not always help pupils learn and retain what they have been taught.

There has been a recent focus on teaching strategies that will help pupils to learn well. Teachers' explanations and how they introduce and model new content are beginning to help pupils make knowledge 'stick'. However, over time, pupils complete work that they should already know and be able to do. Consequently, everyone is playing catch up to get pupils academically ready for secondary school.

Reading is a high priority for the school, but the understanding of how best pupils learn to read needs to be revisited. The school's approach to teaching pupils to read in early years and key stage 1 is overly complex. Some younger pupils engage in a number of reading activities that do not come from one coherently planned and ambitious phonics programme. Although pupils are learning to read words, they are not developing greater fluency. This is because pupils on the phonics programme are not always reading books that match the sounds they know so far. The school can see it needs to review its English curriculum so that pupils master the basics of reading and writing as early as possible.

Teachers routinely check what pupils know and remember. However, the school's assessment practices are not picking up exactly the curriculum gaps pupils may have. There is a wealth of assessment information that the school collects and shares with governors, but some of these checks are not focused enough on what pupils do not know from the content they have learned so far.

Effective communication between staff enables pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to be identified quickly. Teachers think about what additional provision pupils might need so they can learn alongside their peers.

The school makes clear to parents why pupils must attend school regularly. There are highly effective systems in place to support pupils coming to school.

Consistently applied routines ensure pupils can learn without distraction. Children in Nursery and Reception move around the setting independently and share and play cooperatively. Across the school, pupils are respectful and celebrate others for who they are.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum in English and mathematics is not helping pupils learn as consistently well as they should. Many pupils are not acquiring the literacy and numeracy skills early enough in order to succeed. This is reflected in published outcomes, indicating that some pupils are not ready for the next stage of their education. The school needs to revisit its curriculum and agreed teaching approaches so that pupils benefit from an ambitious and well-considered English and mathematics curriculum.
- Expectations for pupils are not high enough. Often, pupils can undertake activities that are not well matched to the planned curriculum. This leads to some pupils not securely learning what they need. The school needs to ensure that staff have high expectations for every child when setting work.
- In some subjects, there is not a clear sequence of identified knowledge that builds from early years through to the end of key stage 2. This is preventing pupils from having a deeper knowledge of concepts and ideas over time. The school needs to continue its work in ensuring that knowledge is precisely identified and logically sequenced.
- The school's approach to assessment is not helping leaders pinpoint what pupils can remember of the taught curriculum. The current approaches can mean key knowledge gaps are not picked up quickly enough. The school needs to ensure that assessment practices closely align to the school's planned 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2014.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	116346
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	10296229
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	362
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lorraine Drinkwater
Headteacher	Izzy Lewis (interim headteacher)
Website	www.stgbs.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The interim headteacher joined the school in January 2024.
- St George's Beneficial is part of the Diocese of Portsmouth. It last had a section 48 inspection in March 2016. It is due an inspection this academic year.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with senior leaders and staff. He met with three governors, including the chair and vice-chair. He met with a school improvement adviser from the local authority and held a telephone call with a representative from the diocese.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. To do this, he met with subject teachers, looked at curriculum plans, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and children; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.
- The views of staff and parents were gathered through discussions and Ofsted's online surveys.
- The inspector talked to pupils from different year groups about their learning and experiences at school.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school's self-evaluation and school improvement priorities, policies, curriculum documents, behaviour and attendance records, minutes of governors' meetings and published outcomes.

Inspection team

James Broadbridge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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