

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

The Causeway, East Hanney, Wantage, Oxfordshire OX12 0JN

Inspection dates:

27 and 28 February 2024

Outcome

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

The headteacher of this school is Lucy Ottaway. This school is part of Vale Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Richard Evans, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Beth Taylor.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this friendly and welcoming school. It is a nurturing and inclusive place in which to learn. The school has high expectations of pupils' achievements, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, pupils achieve well.

Staff develop caring relationship with pupils. Consequently, pupils feel safe, happy and supported. Pupils can talk to trusted adults if they have any worries or concerns. They behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils are polite and considerate of others.

Pupils take on leadership roles with enthusiasm, such as school councillors, librarians and sports leaders. Through these opportunities, and others, pupils learn what it means to be thoughtful, responsible members of their community. Older pupils are 'buddies' to younger ones to guide them and act as good role models. Pupils raise money for charity and think about others' needs.

Pupils learn how to stay safe, including online, and how to keep themselves healthy. They appreciate the range of clubs and extra opportunities the school offers. Trips to public speaking events and theatres, and residential visits, help bring learning to life. Outside, pupils play well together, sharing equipment and chatting to their friends.

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

The school has an ambitious curriculum, starting from the early years. Teachers know the key knowledge and vocabulary that pupils need to understand in each subject. They have sequenced the curriculum thoughtfully so that pupils' knowledge builds on their earlier learning. For example, in history, pupils develop an understanding of time and learn a chronology of major events through the curriculum. This helps pupils to remember historical people, events and periods.

In English and mathematics, teachers identify precisely the knowledge and skills that pupils are learning and remembering over time. This enables the school to make the changes required to future learning and to ensure the curriculum is meeting pupils' needs fully. The school is refining this process in other subjects. Therefore, while pupils are achieving well in English and mathematics, they are not yet achieving as effectively as they could or securing deep levels of knowledge across all subjects.

Teachers present new learning clearly. They use subject-specific language that develops pupils' vocabulary and builds their understanding. This starts in the early years, where staff model mathematical language correctly, for example. In lessons, teachers check pupils' learning for any misconceptions. This is most effective in English and mathematics, allowing staff to adjust activities quickly in lessons so that they can support learning and meet pupils' needs even better. Well-embedded practices mean that pupils approach their learning with confidence and learn well.

Pupils with SEND receive targeted and precise support. There are effective systems to identify any additional help these pupils need. Staff use the support plans to design appropriate activities and ensure all pupils are included. The school consults with external agencies successfully to provide extra support and training for staff. This also helps staff to recognise and support pupils with more complex needs.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. The school has prioritised the teaching of reading. From the early years, children follow a systematic approach to learning phonics. Staff are quick to see if a pupil does not pronounce a sound correctly. They address misconceptions as they happen. Staff use regular checks to ensure that the books pupils read match their phonics stage. If any pupils need to catch up, staff ensure they receive additional help quickly. Pupils learn to read with accuracy, confidence and fluency. Pupils enjoy reading, especially in the vibrant library and reading areas.

The school promotes pupils' wider development effectively. Staff support pupils well to develop their understanding of the world beyond their academic learning. Pupils learn about diversity, equality and tolerance, linked to the school's values. They understand what it means to be a good citizen. Pupils relish the opportunity to receive a 'Vale Academy Character and Citizenship Award'. The trust-wide awards system helps pupils build their strength of character and citizenship skills. They do this through well-planned curriculum opportunities. These include showing acts of kindness, acquiring new skills and taking on positions of responsibility. Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. They know what it means to be mentally healthy. Pupils enjoy visiting the outdoor peace garden, where they can take time to reflect and think. Clubs,

such as rock band, football and arts and crafts, help to nurture pupils' talents and interests.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They feel valued and supported to do their job well to help pupils flourish. Governors and trustees have a secure knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment in the foundation subjects is not as effective as it is in English and mathematics. As a result, the school is not able to identify the precise gaps in pupils' knowledge in these subjects over time, and therefore pupils do not achieve as highly as they could. The school should strengthen the assessment practices so it has more clarity about the impact the curriculum is having on deepening pupils' understanding.

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 October 2018.

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	142664
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10296436
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	211
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Beth Taylor
CEO of the trust	Richard Evans
Headteacher	Lucy Ottaway
Website	www.stjamesprimaryhanney.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	2 and 3 October 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2022. The chair of the local governing body was appointed in March 2023.
- The school is part of Vale Academy Trust.
- The school is part of the Church of England Diocese of Oxford. The school's last section 48 inspection was carried out in October 2023.
- The school currently uses four unregistered alternative providers.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school club.

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 inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, staff and pupils. The inspector also met with representatives of the board of trustees, the local governing body, the chief executive officer and representatives of the trust.
- The inspector spoke to a representative from the diocese and representatives of the alternative providers.
- The inspector met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils during playtimes and in lessons.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in 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 pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, including parents' free-text comments, were considered. The inspector also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; evaluated safer recruitment practices; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; met with the designated safeguarding lead and a deputy safeguarding lead; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Darren Aisthorpe, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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