

Inspection of Steep Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

95 - 97 Church Road, Steep, Petersfield, Hampshire GU32 2DE

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Children in this school have a wonderful start and go on to become confident and successful learners. From early years onwards, pupils are exceptionally well behaved. They act courteously and are polite. They demonstrate the school's values by being kind and generous to each other.

There are very strong and respectful professional relationships among pupils and staff. As a result, pupils are very proud of their school and enjoy attending. Parents and carers equally value the work of the school. Typical comments include 'This is a school where children feel valued and part of the school family.' Pupils talk with conviction about fairness and tolerance at an age-appropriate level. They demonstrate this in the way they treat each other, regardless of any differences between them.

This school is aspirational for all pupils. They enjoy learning because they experience an ambitious and interesting curriculum. In class, pupils pay close attention to their teachers and work with great effort.

This is an inclusive school where pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are given the knowledge and tools that they need to access the whole curriculum and full school experience. Pupils make good progress through the curriculum. Year 6 pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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

The school has developed a rich and ambitious curriculum that inspires and engages pupils. For example, in design technology, pupils enjoy learning about noted engineers and use computer-aided design for their project work. The curriculum focuses on ensuring that pupils can build and connect knowledge across a broad range of subjects. The school has thought carefully about what it wants pupils to learn and when.

There are strong systems in place to check pupils' progress through the curriculum and to identify any gaps in their knowledge. Teachers use this information well to secure pupils' understanding across subjects. Occasionally, staff do not design activities precisely enough. This can make it harder for pupils to learn.

The school expects pupils to achieve highly, and they do. The school ensures that the additional needs of pupils with SEND are identified quickly. Pupils with SEND achieve well in all key stages. This is because teaching staff make skilful adaptations to the curriculum.

Children settle very quickly into Reception because of familiar and consistent routines. Professional relationships between staff and children are exceptionally strong and caring. The school plans inspirational activities to develop children's knowledge and skills in early reading and mathematics. Staff use every opportunity to hold high-quality conversations, prompt thinking and move children on in their learning. Woven throughout the curriculum are experiences such as visits from the fire brigade. These are designed to enrich pupils' experiences.

The school prioritises reading. Skilled staff quickly identify those pupils who struggle to read. They put in place effective help so that pupils catch up rapidly with their peers. Well-trained staff deliver phonics sessions expertly. They carefully check that pupils are progressing well. This means that pupils quickly become fluent readers who are enthralled by interesting stories. The school ensures that pupils will encounter a wonderfully wide range of high-quality books that helps them understand the world from a variety of perspectives.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils throughout the school listen attentively to their teachers and their peers. The school makes sure that pupils and their families understand the importance of being at school regularly. Consequently, pupils have very high attendance and love to come to school.

The school ensures that pupils have a secure understanding of what it means to live in modern Britain. The school encourages pupils to recognise the importance of equality and respect. Pupils learn about different types of families, cultures and religions because of a carefully considered personal, social and health education curriculum. The school makes sure that all pupils can participate in, and make the best of, the vast array of clubs and activities on offer to them.

The school is led with passion and determination. There is a strong culture of mutual support and teamwork. Staff are passionate about ensuring that every pupil has the best possible chances to enjoy school and achieve well. Governors hold a strong and accurate understanding of the school. They share leaders' ambition and are highly effective.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, work set in lessons is not precisely matched to the important knowledge that pupils need to learn. As a result, some pupils find it harder to learn and commit new information into their long-term memory. The school should ensure that the work set to help pupils secure and embed their learning precisely matches the knowledge set out in the curriculum.

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	116319
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10341440
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	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Adrian Conroy
Headteacher	Lou Romans
Website	www.steep.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 June 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Steep Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is in the Diocese of Winchester. The school's most recent Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools under section 48 of the Education Act took place in February 2024.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club for pupils.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, design technology and art. For each deep dive, inspectors 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 inspectors met with the headteacher. The inspectors also met with representatives of the board of governors, including the chair of governors, and with representatives of the local authority and the Diocese of Portsmouth.
- The inspectors met with some pupils and members of staff to discuss their views about the school. The inspectors also took their views into account through their responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- The inspectors met some parents at the school gate. They also took into account responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Ginny Rhodes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Joyce Lydford

Ofsted Inspector

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