

Inspection of St James' CofE Primary School, Coldwaltham

Church Lane, Coldwaltham, Pulborough, West Sussex RH20 1LW

Inspection dates:	7 and 8 January 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils speak with maturity and fondness about their school, which they describe as 'small, fun and peaceful'. They take pride in looking after each other. Older pupils take on responsibility for being role models to younger ones. Everyone gets along together well.

The school is a happy and harmonious place, where pupils feel valued, safe and cared for. Children settle easily into school in Reception. They learn to work and play with the older pupils in their class quickly. Occasionally, though, the youngest children experience fewer opportunities for wider learning because the physical environment is not yet fully developed to promote all aspects of the early years curriculum as well as it could be.

Expectations of achievement have risen. This means that pupils increasingly attain well and are suitably prepared for the next stages of their education. Pupils generally behave well and work hard. Any incidents of poor behaviour are resolved quickly by staff.

Parents and carers are very supportive of the school. They like the strong sense of community and high levels of nurture provided for their children. Parents value the additional opportunities on offer. These include clubs and activities such as creative writing, mindfulness and outdoor learning in the woods. These help pupils to grow in confidence and thrive.

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

The school has worked with determination and focus in response to the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. This has not been without challenges as the school has continued to undergo changes to staffing and class structures. Despite this, considerable improvements have been secured.

The curriculum has been fully ordered and sequenced from Reception to Year 6. It sets out what knowledge pupils will learn clearly. This is well considered to help build on prior knowledge in logical steps. The school knows that not all subject leaders have yet had the opportunity to closely monitor whether the curriculum is building knowledge effectively across the school. They have rightly identified this as an important action.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs carefully identified. Appropriate adaptations are made where needed so that pupils with SEND are included and successful. Parents of pupils with SEND are right to be positive about the support that they and their children receive.

Teachers have secure knowledge of the content that they teach. This helps them to deliver the curriculum effectively. Teachers recap on previous knowledge, identify gaps and develop pupils' understanding well across the curriculum. On occasion, this practice is not consistent across the school. The school knows that there is still some work to do to support staff in this so that all pupils always do their best and expectations are consistently high.

The school has ensured that learning to read is a priority for everyone. Phonics training for staff and new resources have been put in place. This has resulted in higher ambition and outcomes for all pupils. Staff have embraced these changes and the help that they have had to improve. Reading is taught well. Any pupils who need to catch up have been identified and given the help that they need to do so successfully.

Right from the start in Reception, pupils develop a love of books. The youngest children bubble with excitement when they identify work by the same illustrator in several stories. Older pupils discuss the language and impact of a range of poems confidently and knowledgeably. Pupils have extensive vocabularies and ask thoughtful questions.

The school's values are an intrinsic and important part of school life. Pupils demonstrate these through their everyday words and actions. They are thrilled when this is recognised by being selected as a 'values ambassador'. Carefully selected books and resources, and visits to cities, including London, help pupils to build an understanding of life beyond their small village community.

Pupils are polite and considerate. Relationships across the school are warm and good-humoured. Pupils explain how they 'check in with each other'. As a result, playtimes are harmonious and pupils work well in pairs or teams in lessons. They generally listen to each other and build on ideas and suggestions well.

Pupils like coming to school. Most attend school regularly. Where this is not the case, the school works well with families to identify any reasons for absence. Effective support is then put in place.

Governors share the ambition of school leaders to continue to drive the school forward and secure the very best for pupils. Staff recognise the positive changes that have been made. They feel involved in these changes, their workload is suitably considered and as a result, pupils are coming on in 'leaps and bounds'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There remains some inconsistency in expectations of what pupils already know and can do. When this happens, pupils do not attain as well as they could. The school should continue to support all staff in developing their pedagogy and knowledge of prior learning so that pupils systematically build the knowledge that is set out in the curriculum to a high standard.
- The school does not have consistent systems in place to monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum. This means that they cannot fully evaluate the impact of the

curriculum. The school should continue to support and develop subject leadership in a way that ensures that everyone knows what is working well and what needs further development.

- Some aspects of the physical environment, for example the outside space, are not fully developed in early years. This means that children's opportunities to develop playing and active learning are not as fully supported as they could be. The school should ensure that the physical environment offers children in the early years a full range of opportunities for effective learning.

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	125978
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10341614
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	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Richard Charman
Headteacher	Elizabeth Martin (Executive headteacher)
Website	www.st-james-coldwaltham.w.sussex.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 July 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school. The school is federated with one other local primary school. The executive headteacher is headteacher of both schools in the federation.
- The school has recently been restructured and now comprises three mixed-age classes.
- This school is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Chichester. Its last section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in February 2019.
- The school offers before- and after-school care.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with a range of school staff. The lead inspector also met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The inspector had telephone conversations with a representative from the local authority and the Diocese of Chichester.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects. The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult as part of the early reading deep dive.
- 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.
- The inspectors reviewed responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff surveys and spoke to some parents at the school gate.
- The inspectors talked to staff to gather their views about the school, including their workload and well-being. The inspectors met with several groups of pupils, as well as speaking to pupils during lessons and at lunchtime.

Inspection team

Deborah Perkins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Giles Osborne

Ofsted Inspector

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