

St James CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125978
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	340887
Inspection dates	30 September –1 October 2009
Reporting inspector	David Marshall

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	77
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Bertwistle
Headteacher	Mrs Michelle Clifford
Date of previous school inspection	6 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons, and held meetings with the headteacher, teaching and support staff, parents and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including the school development plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, provision for those pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, minutes of governors' meetings and 32 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' attainment in the 2009 national tests in Key Stage 1, the level of achievement of the current pupils and checking the school's strategies for assessment and their analysis of progress
- confirmation of the apparent strengths in pupils' personal development and the effectiveness of the school's measures to enhance spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- the contribution of the curriculum and extra-curricular activities to outcomes for pupils and to the development of community cohesion
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels, including the governors, in enabling continuity and improvement in the light of the recent changes. (These include having Year 6 pupils in the school for the first time and building

Information about the school

St James is a small, rural school serving the village of Coldwaltham and surrounding area. Nearly all the pupils are White British, with a small number of mixed-race heritage. No pupils have English as an additional language. There are a small number of pupils who are currently eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is much smaller than the national average and none has a statement of particular need. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage comprises one full-time Reception class for children aged four and five.

The school has gained several awards in recent years such as the Artsmark, Activemark and Basic Skills Quality Mark.

As a result of a collaboration agreement with an even smaller local primary school, the headteacher shares her time equally between the two schools.

The school is currently in the throes of a major rebuilding project due to be completed by the end of 2009.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St James is a good school and has a number of considerable strengths. The pastoral support, guidance and care provided for every child is excellent. As a result, by the time pupils leave the school, they are mature and very thoughtful young adults who have made a positive contribution to the school and the local community.

A very supportive atmosphere for learning exists that ensures pupils make good progress, enjoy their learning and achieve well. Their good attendance and the happy faces in many lessons and around the school are testimony to this. The school successfully instils in the pupils a strong spiritual, social and moral understanding that accounts for their outstanding behaviour and positive attitudes to school. As one parent wrote, 'Overall, I think this is a super little school and the staff are getting the best out of my children.'

The headteacher provides good leadership. She is very ably supported by the assistant headteacher and all staff. The way they have kept the school functioning so well during the current immense upheaval of the rebuilding work is a testament to their commitment and enthusiasm. Documents show that developments are driven forward at a good pace. Strengths and weaknesses are speedily identified because the school has good systems for monitoring its work. The school has improved from its position at the time of the last inspection. Their capacity to continue to improve is good.

Reception children start with skills and understanding that are in line with expectations for their age. They get a good start to their education and achieve well in the Reception class. Thanks to the outstanding care shown by all adults, pupils of all abilities continue to make good progress throughout the school. By the time pupils leave school, records show they achieve above expected levels for their age in a range of subjects. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from very well focused support and make very good progress; most attain average standards.

The academic guidance provided for pupils has improved since the last inspection. In lessons, teachers are generally good at explaining new concepts and providing help through individual support when pupils have difficulty in understanding. However, the school's practice to enable maximum progress by the setting of targets is inconsistent. When questioned, pupils did not know about their targets for improvement and could not explain easily what they needed to do to make their work better. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly, but do not always use comments well enough to point their pupils towards the next steps in learning and marking does not link with pupils' individual targets.

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and based on trying to make

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sure that all pupils enjoy learning. By providing good quality help from very well qualified teaching assistants wherever it is needed, the least able and most vulnerable pupils make very good progress. The staff have made a conscious effort to make the curriculum as exciting and interesting as possible and the rich variety of topics cover all subjects well. The school does much to promote their place in the local community and works effectively with the church, the many local nurseries and playgroups, and local businesses. Its recent audit of community cohesion, undertaken by governors and staff, is underpinned by a careful analysis of the school's context. While these links with the local community are good, pupils' awareness of, and preparation for, living and working in a culturally diverse Britain are less well developed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the pupils make maximum progress consistently across the school by:
- setting challenging targets for pupils in all classes
- ensuring that marking consistently focuses on what pupils need to do to improve next.
- Enhance pupils' understanding of their place in a culturally diverse Britain and extend the school's provision for community cohesion by:
- instigating the findings of their recent careful analysis
- implementing their twinning plans with schools in other localities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Throughout the school, pupils achieve well and enjoy their learning. All groups of pupils, including the most able and those most vulnerable, make good progress. Pupils enter the school with skills and understanding that vary but are usually broadly in line with those expected for their age. Effective organisation and careful assessments enable pupils to make good progress immediately. Standards at the end of Year 2 are generally above average and the more able pupils do especially well. Much of the pupils' success in reading and writing is due to the school's strong emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills.

Pupils continue to make good progress across a wide range of subjects through the school. For instance, music is a strength of the school and pupils are given many opportunities to develop their musical talents. The standard of both singing and recorder playing witnessed during the inspection was impressive. The many opportunities made available, including those from the exceptional peripatetic teacher, are taken up eagerly and the number of pupils playing different instruments is exceptional for ones so young. The standards reached by pupils in English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology (ICT), combined with their keen appetite for teamwork, and their interest in learning, prepares them exceptionally well for their transition to the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

In most lessons observed, teaching was effective and so pupils made good progress. They were well motivated by the ideas and resources presented and were keen to please their teachers and other adults. This was evident in a Year 1/2 lesson where the pupils' responses about the buildings from around the world, which they could see on the interactive whiteboard, were very carefully focused on the building work in the school now. As in all lessons observed, the pupils could hardly wait to share their thoughts and ideas. This is a reflection of the way the school constantly encourages good behaviour, attentiveness and hard work. A common planning format prompts staff to consider the needs of different groups of pupils, such as those with special educational needs and pupils at different ability levels. This helps focus the work of the excellent support staff in lessons. In addition, there are well-targeted additional programmes. These approaches ensure that different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make the progress expected of them. Through the many well-developed innovations, the school provides a detailed 'creative curriculum' that enables subjects to fit together seamlessly. Pupils have many opportunities to use and develop their writing, mathematical and ICT skills in all subjects. The work of the Year 6 pupils in ICT where they recorded their projects in a multimedia format, and told the story of Peter and the Wolf', complete with animations, was impressive. When questioned, they asserted they really enjoyed this work and 'we

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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get to do exciting things'. The quality of the art work around the school, much of it developed through the zeal of a support assistant, is very impressive.

Another stunning example of this approach to the curriculum was the 'Apple Day' observed during the inspection. The impetus provided by the excellent visitors was exploited to the greatest possible extent by the school. No area of the curriculum was omitted and a great deal of enjoyment was achieved, too. Some of the normally rich range of activities outside lessons, which add considerably to pupils' enjoyment, are in abeyance at the moment due to the building work. However, generally good use is made of the local community.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides a clear educational direction for the school and works very closely with a wide range of other agencies and partners to achieve success and enhance provision. In this school, teamwork is strong and a shared leadership style ensures that there is not excessive dependence on the headteacher, who is in a different school for half of the week. The assistant headteacher and her colleagues share the headteacher's drive and vision for improvement, and are clearly excited by the many possibilities that the new school buildings will afford, and for which they have planned so well.

The administrative and caretaking teams play a central role within the school. Their work is much appreciated. There is a corporate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development based on an accurate diagnosis of its work. The school, therefore, has a good strategy to support different groups of pupils, which has led to improved outcomes for pupils in many areas. There is an effective plan for further development and a shared vision and willingness to work hard to make further improvements. However, while the main improvement actions are identified correctly, it is not always clearly recorded how these have grown from work in the past and, therefore, how they will develop in the future. The governing body brings a wide range of skills to bear to act as critical friends and requesting explanations where this is judged to be necessary.

The school takes its duty to promote equal opportunities seriously and is effective in this. It values the opinions of parents and pupils and acts upon these. Procedures to safeguard pupils' well-being, safety and health are rigorous and all members of staff are

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well trained. The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is satisfactory. A plan and clear actions are in place for promoting pupils' understanding from a local perspective. Links with other schools and agencies are harnessed very well. The need to expand its links to provide a national and global perspective is well understood by the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a good start to their education in the Reception class. The huge level of commitment and care shown by all school staff is evident in the way that children settle into the school so well and immediately begin to learn. A parent wrote, '(I am) impressed by how well both my children settled into the school.'

Staff work especially hard to give the children a real sense of determining their own way forward, which guarantees their full involvement in all activities. Children make good progress because all adults have high expectations, provide clear routines and enable children to build strong, positive relationships. The enthusiasm and enjoyment of the children as they made their apple pictures was infectious. Although the classroom provides a stimulating learning environment and resources are used well, there are significant restrictions currently due to the building work being completed at the school. It is a tribute to the teacher concerned that so many worthwhile outdoor activities are being provided despite the difficulties. Staff get to know the children very well. They make a careful note of all responses and feedback. This information is being collated well and being used particularly well to ensure that the least able and most vulnerable settle well.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents who returned questionnaires or who spoke to the inspection team are very happy with the school. They consider that the school has a dedicated team of staff and the headteacher leads and manages the school well. They agree that the school has a very warm, supportive and friendly atmosphere and that their children make good progress. Inspectors fully endorse these views. A small number of parental criticisms were offered constructively, and where inspectors agree that these concerns are indeed issues, such issues appear as judgements in the body of the report. There were no particular trends in the very few criticisms received by inspectors.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St James CofE Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 77 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	81	5	16	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	26	81	6	19	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	9	28	21	66	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	38	19	60	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	53	14	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	56	12	38	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	59	12	38	1	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	11	34	18	56	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	41	17	53	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	38	17	53	1	3	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	41	17	53	2	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	63	10	31	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	66	10	31	1	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



2 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St James CofE Primary School, Coldwaltham, RH20 1LW

I am writing to thank you all for making us so welcome when we came to the school recently. We did enjoy our visit. Yours is a good school with many strengths, and we agree with what you told us ' it is a really fun place to learn. Here is a list of some of the things that we think are really good.

- The school looks after you extremely well and you all make good progress in your learning.
- You behave exceptionally well, get along with each other and feel safe in school.
- You all have very good ideas on how to make things better and the teachers always listen to what you want.
- You really understand how to live healthily.
- You find lessons interesting and really enjoy school.
- There are plenty of exciting things for you to do both in school and on visits and in clubs.
- The headteacher and staff manage the school very well.

We know you are all excited and looking forward to being in the school when the building work has been completed, and the school quite rightly has many plans on what it needs to do to improve next. The staff now spend some time checking on how well you are making progress. We have asked them to make sure that you are given targets to improve so that you understand how to make your work better and that you can all, together, keep a check on them so that you make maximum progress in the future. We have asked your headteacher and staff to make sure you are given the chance to look at and understand about how children and adults live in places that are different from where you live.

Yours faithfully

David Marshall

Lead Inspector

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