

Saint James' Church of England Primary School

Moorgreen Road, West End, Southampton, Hampshire, SO30 3EG

Inspection dates 21–22 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is good school.

- The school is improving rapidly. The inspirational leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher has raised the expectations of pupils and teachers for what they can achieve.
- The leadership team is strongly supported by a highly effective governing body. Governors are very knowledgeable about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.
- Achievement has improved significantly and is now good. Pupils make good progress. By the time they leave school at the end of Year 6, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The youngest children get a good start to their education in the Reception classes. By the time they start Year 1, they are confident learners.
- Pupils who are identified as having individual learning needs are supported well and make good progress. Pupils who are entitled to support through additional funding also make good progress.
- Leaders check teaching very thoroughly and make sure that staff receive the right training to help them improve their skills.
- Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy the range of different activities which helps to make their learning interesting. Their attendance is above average.
- Behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around school. Pupils show great respect for each other and the adults in school.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and know how to stay safe. Their parents overwhelmingly support this view.
- The curriculum is rich and varied. It provides a wide range of opportunities that makes learning interesting and encourages pupils to aim high.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very successfully. The wide range of clubs, visits, visitors and activities contributes strongly to pupils' well-being and their enjoyment of school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure that pupils make outstanding progress.
- Adults in the Reception classes do not always make sure that when the children choose their own activities they still make rapid progress.
- Teachers do not always adjust the work during lessons to take account of how well their pupils are learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors collected evidence on teaching and learning by observing aspects of lessons in all phases of the school and in all year groups. Four lessons were jointly visited with the headteacher. Inspectors looked at work from all year groups and talked to pupils to assess their understanding and attitudes to learning.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and members of the leadership team, middle leaders, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, staff and several groups of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 94 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the data from the school's own surveys of parental opinion. They also took account of 39 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors looked at the school's development plan, its self-evaluation, information on attainment and progress, records of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, records of behaviour, a wide range of policies and procedures, and the arrangements for safeguarding.
- Inspectors attended assemblies and listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

Grace Marriott, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Ken Bryan	Additional inspector
David Westall	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St James' Church of England Primary School is larger than most primary schools.
- Children in the early years attend full time in the Reception classes.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for children who are looked after and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is much lower than the national average. Currently there are no looked after children in the school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is low, as is the proportion who speaks English as an additional language.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards for attainment and progress expected by the government.
- Since the previous inspection there has been a number of changes of staff. The previous headteacher retired at the end of the summer term 2014 and the deputy headteacher became acting headteacher for the autumn term. The current headteacher worked in the school part time in the autumn term 2014, alongside the acting headteacher, and took up her post as the substantive headteacher in January 2015. A new subject leader for mathematics was appointed in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To raise teaching from good to outstanding, so that pupils make outstanding progress, school leaders need to make sure that:
 - teachers use the feedback from questioning pupils to help them adjust lessons to meet pupils' needs and increase the rate of progress
 - adults in the Reception classes intervene more quickly when children are engaged in activities of their own choosing to help them to gain more from these activities and move their learning on more rapidly.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have established a strong working partnership, building successfully on the improvement shown in 2014. They have established an ethos where everyone has very high expectations for what their pupils can achieve, without losing the caring and supportive ethos of the school.
- Leaders regularly analyse information about pupils' progress very carefully with class teachers and discuss how to make sure that pupils' individual needs are met. The evidence from current pupils' work is that pupils are well on track for good results this year, particularly at the higher levels in mathematics.
- The additional funding received for disadvantaged pupils through the pupil premium is well managed. Pupils' needs are carefully assessed and support put in place to help these pupils overcome any difficulties they may have. As a result, the gaps in achievement between these pupils and their peer groups are closing.
- The leaders of English and mathematics have a clear focus on raising standards in their subjects, and the impact of their work can be seen in higher standards and better teaching. Some of the systems, however, have not had time to show a long-term impact.
- The leadership team checks the quality of teaching very thoroughly through regularly observing lessons, reviewing the quality of pupils' work, and checking teachers' assessments.
- Teachers are held accountable for the progress of their pupils. They receive good quality training to help them improve their skills and make sure that their pupils make faster progress.
- The inspection team agrees with pupils, staff and parents that the school is a safe place to work. All statutory requirements and arrangements for safeguarding are met. Regular training helps to ensure that everybody understands their responsibilities. Staff do not tolerate any type of discrimination.
- Discussions with parents and the response to the on-line survey showed that parents are very supportive of the school. The vast majority would recommend it to others.
- A few parents felt that homework was not always appropriate, and that they do not get enough information about their children's progress. The school is aware of this and is considering how to improve these aspects.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs well and provides well for their equality of opportunity. Basic skills activities are planned well, particularly phonics (the sounds letters and combinations of letters make) in the younger age groups.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. It is carefully planned to make sure that all subjects contribute through art, music, literature, history and the study of other cultures. Pupils also enjoy a very wide variety of enrichment activities, particularly in sports, art, music and drama.
- The school prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education and for life in modern Britain. The election of head boy and head girl, which was timed to coincide with the General Election, gave pupils an excellent introduction to democracy, the rule of law and how to be good citizens. They learn to understand and respect other people's values.
- The school uses primary sport funding well to increase the opportunities for pupils to take part in sport, improve the facilities and equipment available, and provide specialist coaching and teaching for pupils.
- The school has a good relationship with the local authority and has benefited from well-targeted challenge and support. This has been particularly useful in improving the quality of teaching and checking the accuracy of school judgements.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body has been a key factor in driving improvement. It is very knowledgeable about the school and uses its expertise and experience highly effectively to hold senior leaders accountable for how well the school is performing compared with other schools. Governors understand the data on pupils' achievement and are fully involved in determining the school's priorities and for setting and monitoring targets for improvement. Governors have excellent knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and make sure that the pay policy is linked to teachers' performance. They have supported the leadership team in taking appropriate action to deal with underperformance, whether this relates to pupils' progress or the quality of teaching. Governors carry out all their legal responsibilities, including ensuring the safety of the staff and pupils in the school.

are outstanding

The behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The school is a friendly, welcoming and orderly community in which pupils can, and do, flourish. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is exemplary.
- Pupils are keen to learn and have excellent attitudes. They concentrate very well and try hard in lessons. They listen attentively to their teachers and to each other, learning to respect different opinions and beliefs.
- Pupils take considerable responsibility for their own behaviour, working well both individually and in small groups. Typical of this was the behaviour of pupils in Year 3 when practising their 'opera' as part of their topic on Italy. They worked together well because they understood exactly what was expected of them.
- Relationships at all levels are excellent. During discussions with inspectors, pupils were very positive about how the staff help them. Pupils trust adults and believe that they will listen and be supportive if pupils have any problems.
- Pupils willingly take on responsibilities, for example as peer mentors, librarians and as members of the elected school council. Pupils are also enthusiastically involved in working for a number of charities. They have particularly strong links with an education charity in Kenya.
- Attendance is above the national average. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to attend, but staff are also thorough in their approach to managing attendance and follow up quickly on any absences.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils are very clear about how to keep themselves safe. They know about different types of bullying, including e-safety and prejudice-based bullying. They confirm that bullying is not a problem at the school. As one pupil said, 'There isn't any bullying here.'
- Parents responding to the on-line survey were almost unanimous that their children feel safe in school and that the school manages behaviour well. Policies relating to safety are clear, well understood and applied.
- Staff receive regular updates on safety issues, and newly appointed staff are recruited using safe recruitment procedures.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers have high expectations for what pupils can achieve, and teaching is planned systematically to build on what pupils already know, understand and can do.
- During lessons, staff question pupils to check understanding and adjust their approach to take account of how well pupils respond. Where this is done most effectively, pupils make very rapid progress, but this is not carried out consistently enough in all classes to ensure outstanding progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to meet pupils' needs. Teaching assistants are well briefed to provide support for different groups and also provide teachers with useful information on how well their pupils are progressing.
- The introduction of the school marking policy, which all teachers use, has had a positive impact on achievement. Pupils understand the system and how they are expected to respond to the marking. Most of them respond positively to the guidance teachers give them.
- Phonics teaching in Reception and Key Stage 1, and good guided reading sessions, give pupils a secure foundation in reading. Across the school, teachers make good use of current topics to make sure pupils have opportunities to practise their reading and writing skills. For example, pupils in Year 6 were seen preparing good presentations on their work on Brazil.
- The quality of teaching in mathematics is improving. Teachers make sure that pupils have regular practice in the main elements of mathematics and that they fully understand what they are doing before moving on to the next stage. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to move some pupils on more quickly through more challenging questioning.
- Teachers check pupils' progress regularly and thoroughly. Where pupils may be at risk of falling behind, individual support helps them to catch up. As a result, pupils with special educational needs make good progress, as do disadvantaged pupils and those with English as an additional language.
- Attractive and interesting displays of work in classrooms and around the building help to raise aspirations by showing pupils what they can achieve. The displays are particularly good in art and English.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well and are well prepared for the next stage of their education, whether that is moving from Reception to Key Stage 1 or from Year 6 on to secondary school.
- In the Reception classes, more children are now reaching a good level of development in all areas of learning. Results in Key Stages 1 and 2 show an upward trend from 2012. In 2014 the outcomes of the Key Stage 1 tests were well above average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. In Key Stage 2, results were well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics.
- Checks on pupils' current progress show that pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are on track to achieve better results in national tests this term. The systematic focus on improving teaching is bringing about more secure progress and better achievement. This applies to all groups of pupils, including those with English as an additional language and those supported by additional funding.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Teachers use the available information well to provide them with effective targeted support. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that pupils are responding well and benefiting from their teachers' higher expectations and the additional attention given to their needs
- The achievement of the most-able pupils is good, and improving. In 2014, the proportion who achieved the higher levels in the Year 6 tests was well above average in reading and writing, and also in the grammar, spelling and punctuation test. In mathematics, it was above average.
- The increased emphasis on the teaching of reading is helping to improve the rate of pupils' progress and raise standards. Pupils read confidently and talk knowledgeably and with enjoyment about a variety of books.
- Regular progress meetings with class teachers and the leadership team ensure that pupils at risk of underperforming are identified and supported quickly.
- In Year 6, the gap between the small number of disadvantaged pupils and their peer group in reading, writing and mathematics is closing in relation to the national figures. In relation to other pupils in the school, in 2014, the gap widened. Pupils on average were just over a term behind in writing and mathematics and just over two terms in reading. Almost all these pupils had made the progress they were expected to make, but did not make better than expected progress. The evidence for current pupils is that these gaps are closing rapidly as a result of effective action to increase their rate of progress.

The early years provision is good

- Children join the Reception classes with knowledge, skills and understanding which are broadly typical for their age. In 2014, the proportion of Reception children reaching a good level of development across the different areas of learning was similar to the national picture.
- Children generally made good progress in learning to read, write and count, but a few children did not make as much progress as expected in learning how to manage their behaviour and feelings.
- The staff have reviewed how they support the children to help them learn. This has had a highly positive impact. Many more children in the current Reception classes have already achieved a good level of development than did so last year.
- Interesting indoor and outdoor areas encourage children to find learning exciting. Sometimes, though, when children are enjoying the activities they have chosen for themselves, staff do not intervene quickly enough to help children gain more from these activities and take their learning even further.
- Children have many opportunities to develop good social skills in a welcoming and safe environment. They behave well and learn to follow instructions. They are generally able to concentrate on activities, happily sharing toys and other equipment. This prepares them well for the move to more formal education in Key Stage 1.
- Teaching is typically good. Planning, particularly for activities around developing literacy and numeracy, takes account of what the children already know, and ensures that the activities are suitably challenging. Staff keep good records of children's progress and achievement which they shared with parents.
- Leadership and management are good. The deputy headteacher is acting as the early years leader until the new leader takes up post in September 2015. She has been instrumental in improving the teaching of phonics and the early stages of writing and mathematics.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	116331
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	462424

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	411
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Wiseman
Headteacher	Michelle Marsh
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 May 2013
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