

Saint James Church of England Primary School

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

Inspection dates

14–15 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have worked hard to drive improvement and eradicate weaknesses. Their efforts have been successful, and the school has continued to improve since the previous inspection.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are well attuned to the needs of pupils. They question pupils well to find out what they know and understand and adapt their teaching to meet pupils' needs.
- Governors are skilled, well trained and know the school well. They use their findings to challenge and support leaders to improve the school further.
- The local authority has worked closely with the school over the past few years. The high level of support put in place has helped staff to grow and develop. As a result, the local authority now uses these colleagues to support other local schools.
- Pupils make strong progress in all subjects. High proportions attain at a high standard in mathematics and reading. Nevertheless, teaching does not routinely equip pupils with the skills to write at a high standard.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. In class, pupils thrive on the clear boundaries and instruction they receive. They enjoy their lessons and work hard to do their very best.
- Pupils embody the school values of courage, love and respect. They are considerate of their peers, families and adults, both within and outside the school gates. Pupils know how to look after their own mental health and how to keep safe.
- Children in the early years make a strong start and quickly adopt the excellent behaviour and attitudes seen in the rest of the school. They are taught to read well by skilled and caring staff.
- Disadvantaged pupils make strong progress because, when they make mistakes or find learning hard, they are supported to get things right. However, plans to help these pupils do not set out clearly enough how they will be supported to attain at a high standard.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that greater proportions of pupils write at a high standard.
- Improve leadership and management by sharpening systems for supporting disadvantaged pupils so that higher proportions attain at greater depth.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, ably supported by her deputy headteacher, is ambitious for the school and its pupils. After a dip in standards in 2017, leaders worked tirelessly to evaluate the weaknesses in the school and address them head on. As a result, the school has improved its performance and is firmly back on track.
- Middle leaders are a cohesive and ambitious team. They monitor and support their colleagues to develop their teaching and ensure that pupils make strong progress throughout the curriculum. As a result, standards between classes and year groups are similarly high.
- The sport premium is used effectively to help pupils to develop their talents. The well-attended range of clubs and competitions encourage pupils to stay active and develop a passion for sports and teamwork. Leaders evaluate the effectiveness of sports premium funding carefully and use this to inform their future spending.
- Leaders possess a clear and detailed understanding of the needs of pupils in the school and use this to identify and support pupils who need extra help. They work well with teachers, parents, carers and external agencies to make sure their planned activities can include everyone, regardless of their academic or physical ability. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) thrive in this warm and inclusive school.
- The curriculum is designed to ensure that pupils can achieve well in a wide range of subjects. For example, pupils in Year 3 created collages of poppies using a range of mixed media, and considered, carefully, the symbolism and meaning of their designs in commemorating those who have lost their lives to war. Pupils throughout the school develop a strong scientific understanding and regularly undertake interesting experiments. Year 5 pupils, for instance, used their scientific understanding to separate rice from flour, and salt from water. The well-designed and thoughtful curriculum promotes pupils' academic and personal development well.
- Staff at all levels are supported well to meet leaders' high expectations and to continually improve their professional understanding and skills. Staff work with established leaders in both St James' and other local schools to share, create and improve their practice. The well-established coaching programme helps staff to consider their development needs, and puts in place clear and effective actions to improve further. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is continually improving. Nevertheless, staff do not possess sufficient subject knowledge to help pupils consistently to write at a high standard.
- Leaders have completed significant work to identify and meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils. Staff throughout the school work hard to consider these pupils' pastoral and academic needs and have created detailed plans to help them achieve their goals. Nevertheless, these plans are often too focused on supporting pupils to attain at the expected standard and do not identify actions which will help disadvantaged pupils to attain at a high standard.

- The local authority has provided much-needed support to the school. Its staff training programme has helped teachers and teaching assistants to support pupils well and promote strong progress in class. Now that teaching capacity has been improved, the local authority uses the school as an example to others, and staff now visit other schools to share their experience and methods. Staff at all levels are confident, skilled and ambitious. There is no doubt that the school is poised to improve further.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is skilled, well informed and appropriately curious. Governors work closely with leaders to gather useful information about the school's performance, and visit often to check for themselves the accuracy of the information they are given. For example, when leaders revamped systems for vetting staff, governors oversaw the development to satisfy themselves that appropriate checks are made on all staff before they commence employment.
- Governors possess a broad range of skills and use these to hold leaders to account for the progress of pupils. They use this information to set ambitious targets for the headteacher and offer her the right amount of challenge and support to achieve them. In doing so, governors help leaders to drive further improvement.
- Governors are, rightly, proud of pupils' personal development, and embrace the school's values of courage, love and respect. They have ensured that the school is welcoming to pupils and families of all faiths, nationalities, genders and abilities. Governors recognise that they need to sharpen their monitoring of the school's equalities objectives.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding procedures are well established and fit for purpose. Checks on staff are made in a timely fashion. Staff possess a strong understanding of how to safeguard pupils and waste no time in reporting concerns when they arise. Leaders work well with the local authority and external agencies to provide families with support when they need it.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They regularly discuss and consider the emerging dangers presented by social media and the internet, considering how they can use these safely. Parents receive useful guidance and tips on how to keep their children safe and are supported to discuss this regularly with their children. This helps the whole community to take responsibility for their own, and others', welfare and safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- In class, staff and pupils share first-class relationships, underpinned by respect and understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities. Classrooms are typified by a warm but purposeful atmosphere, where pupils can think, work and develop a love of learning. The attitudes of staff and pupils in the school contribute greatly to the strong

progress that pupils make.

- Staff use effective questioning to assess pupils' understanding and adapt their lessons accordingly. When pupils need a little extra help, staff waste no time, offering useful guidance to support pupils to correct misunderstandings. As a result, pupils who fall behind in lessons catch up quickly.
- Teachers possess strong subject knowledge and use this to develop well-planned learning activities. For example, pupils in Year 3 developed their own avatars in computing lessons which they later used as characters in games they programmed themselves. In French, Year 1 learned to identify parts of their own body, carefully following their teacher's excellent pronunciation of the words. Teaching is, typically, very precise, and this helps pupils to understand and learn new concepts quickly.
- Staff use their strong understanding to support pupils with SEND. Carefully considered adaptations are made to ensure that pupils can join their peers in class. Pupils welcome this and appreciate that everyone at Saint James' will learn at a different pace and in different ways. Pupils with SEND make strong progress and integrate very well with their peers.
- Pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, receive useful feedback both from teachers and from support staff to help them identify their next steps. Much of this happens in class to help pupils make quick adjustments to their work and prevent misunderstandings. Pupils readily ask for help when they need it but only when having tried their best to solve their problems independently. This sets pupils up well for the next stages of their education. However, teaching does not typically push disadvantaged pupils to attain at a high standard.
- Pupils are taught to read well from an early stage, developing a secure phonics understanding in Reception and Year 1. As pupils' reading improves, they use this to support their learning in a range of subjects. For example, pupils in Year 1 read explanatory texts about animals to help them identify and label diagrams in science. Pupils' strong reading skills contribute to their learning in a range of subject areas.
- Pupils write well in a range of subjects and take great pride in the presentation of their work. For example, pupils in Year 6 wrote thoughtful diaries reflecting the experiences of soldiers in the Second World War, which demonstrated their empathy, understanding and strong writing skills. Nevertheless, pupils are not routinely supported to write at a high standard.
- Pupils throughout the school complete appropriate homework, which helps them to develop and practise their learning. Parents appreciate the new system for homework and the opportunity to be involved in their children's learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils consider a range of faiths in addition to their own. The curriculum ensures that pupils regularly enjoy opportunities to compare and contrast the traditions, celebrations

and iconography of a range of religions. As a result, pupils are imbued with a sense of tolerance, respect and interest for those with different beliefs to their own.

- Pupils are encouraged to look after their mental health. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the 'worry box', which helps them to tell adults about their concerns and apprehensions. A range of staff, including the chaplain, emotional learning support assistant, and child-and-family-support worker, are on hand to offer expert advice, guidance and signposting when required. As a result, pupils' concerns are heard and addressed quickly, allowing them to develop highly positive attitudes to learning, play and friendships.
- Pupils learn to appreciate people of all ages. Recently, pupils wrote to members of the church community to learn about their lives and experiences. This resulted in the formation of the well-attended knitting club, where pupils and local residents sit side by side to enjoy crochet and conversation. Collectively, they are now working to learn about the challenges faced by the elderly, and have made 'twiddlemuff' hand-warmers to help those suffering from dementia.
- Pupils value the attributes and kindness of others. Pupils and staff regularly update the 'kindness' display which recognises those who go the extra mile for others in school. This public display celebrates and details the kindness and compassion which permeates the whole school community.
- Pupils in Year 6 develop the skills they need to thrive in secondary school. The school's 'rolling-programme' initiative encourages them to choose, resource and plan their own learning. As a result, these pupils become highly independent problem solvers who develop a deep love of learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils and staff share exceptionally strong relationships in class and show great care and consideration for each other. Pupils know exactly what is expected of them and feel that the behaviour policy is consistently well deployed. As a result, lessons are calm, orderly and respectful.
- On the playground, pupils interact brilliantly and relish the opportunity to play and chat about their day. They enjoy the use of the first-class space and particularly appreciate the large field, play equipment and wooden 'pirate ship' climbing equipment. They note that there is no bullying and that staff are good at helping them to iron out any problems that occasionally arise.
- Leaders track behaviour very carefully and quickly pick up any poor behaviour before it begins to escalate, focusing support where it is needed most. As a result, incidents of repeated misbehaviour are extremely rare.
- Levels of attendance are exceptionally high. Leaders offer families help when attendance dips and are not afraid to challenge parents when they need to do more to support their child's education. As a result, pupils rarely miss a day at school, which supports their personal and academic development.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils possess strong calculation skills. They use these to solve problems and to reason in mathematics. For example, in Year 6, pupils converted fractions using appropriate resources and diagrams to help them check their answers. Pupils make strong progress in mathematics, and high proportions attain at the expected standard. Increasingly larger proportions of pupils attain at a high standard in mathematics.
- Last year, leaders revitalised the quality of texts that pupils read and use in class. This has improved pupils' ability to build their vocabulary and analyse the content of the texts. The vast majority of pupils read at the expected standard for their age. Increasingly greater proportions of pupils read at a high standard.
- Pupils write well across the curriculum and use this to record, evaluate and share ideas. Typically, pupils write at age-related expectations, both in English and in other subjects such as science and the humanities. Nevertheless, too few pupils write at a high standard.
- Pupils with SEND are supported by the skilled team of teachers and teaching assistants. Well-judged adaptations help these pupils to complete appropriately challenging work. As a result, these pupils make strong progress.
- Pupils make strong progress across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 2 read 'Traction Man' by Mini Grey, wrote interesting texts in the style of the author and designed the characters' new outfits using fabrics they had researched in science lessons. Pupils in Year 3 learn to play the recorder and are increasing their understanding of notation and finger placement to play an increasing repertoire of songs. Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to develop because the curriculum interests and challenges them to try new things.
- Disadvantaged pupils are supported well and make strong progress. This is because leaders know these pupils well and use additional funding to help address their needs. However, as targets are too often focused on pupils' weaknesses, they do not make sufficient progress to attain at a high standard.

Early years provision

Good

- The new early years leader works closely with senior leaders to identify areas for improvement and prepare appropriate plans to address the few remaining weaknesses. These draw upon evidence from staff, children and parents. The quality of education provided in the early years continues to improve.
- Teachers support children to develop and remodel their language through questioning. For example, staff encourage children to use similes and adjectives in their speech. The development of language supports children to communicate and contribute to discussion in the early years.
- Staff use assessment information well to identify children's needs and plan activities to help them develop well. For example, when assessments identified a weakness in the ability of children to grip their pencils, staff created a series of activities to help improve their muscle control. Children develop well because their needs are quickly

recognised and met.

- Children with SEND are swiftly identified in the early years and offered the right support to access the learning and thrive. The school has formed strong links with local nurseries which ensures that transitions for these children are well planned and efficient. This helps to smooth the path for parents and children as they take their first steps in formal education.
- Children secure strong reading skills in the early years. They develop a good understanding of phonics and use this to read simple words and texts. They enjoy the wide range of books which they can enjoy, either alone or with others. Children are well prepared to succeed in Year 1.
- Children in the early years are taught to keep themselves safe and are encouraged to tell an adult if anything worries them. Behaviour in the early years is exceptionally strong as children learn from, and mimic, the high standards seen across the school.

School details

Unique reference number	116331
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10046400

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	504
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joanna Allen
Headteacher	Michelle Marsh
Telephone number	02380 900 995
Website	www.st-james-westend.org.uk/
Email address	adminoffice@st-james-westend.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 May 2015

Information about this school

- This is larger than the average-sized primary school. Recently, the school added additional buildings to increase the number of classes in each year group to three.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is slightly lower than the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 28 parts of lessons, many with senior leaders.
- In addition to discussions with parents, 131 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account.
- A range of the school’s documentation was scrutinised to gather information on: leaders’ evaluation of the school’s performance; systems for managing the performance of teachers; behaviour and safety of pupils; safeguarding; the progress and attainment of pupils; and curriculum leadership.
- An inspector scrutinised the school’s website to evaluate the quality of information for parents and whether the school meets statutory publishing requirements.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils to gather their views about the school, and heard pupils read.
- Inspectors met with school leaders, governors, including the chair of the governing body, and officers from the local authority.

Inspection team

Dan Lambert, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Susan Conway	Ofsted Inspector
Shazia Akram	Her Majesty’s Inspector

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