

Inspection of a good school: Sherborne St John Church of England Primary School

Church Lane, Sherborne St John, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG24 9HT

Inspection date:

23 June 2022

Outcome

Sherborne St John Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's rules of 'be safe, be ready, be respectful' have a clear impact on pupils' day-to-day experiences. Pupils feel safe at school and parents rightly think their children are well looked after. Pupils work hard and are eager to reach their teachers' high expectations. They collaborate well and are keen to discuss things with each other. Pupils are justifiably happy and proud to be at this school.

The vast majority of pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. Strong seeds are sown for developing pupils' positive attitudes in Reception, where children are taught how to behave and work together. Pupils are confident about what to do and who to tell if they have any concerns. On the rare occasions that pupils are not as kind as they could be to each other, adults deal with this quickly and effectively. More serious incidents are very rare indeed.

Pupils understand the school's values of 'trust, truth and forgiveness' and put them into practice. They have a strong sense of what is right and wrong. Pupils care for each other and know what it means to be a good friend.

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

Pupils acquire a wide range of knowledge from Reception through to Year 6. The curriculum builds progressively from the early years, so that pupils' learning accumulates based on what they have learned before. While pupils achieve well overall, they do so particularly strongly in subjects such as mathematics. Where this is the case, leaders identify the knowledge pupils learn very specifically and structure the curriculum highly effectively. Additionally, teachers' very strong subject knowledge means that through checking pupils' learning, they are able to make sharply honed adjustments to meet pupils' needs. This includes how teachers adapt tasks and lessons expertly to make sure pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. Not all subjects are yet as

effective as the strongest, however. For example, although teachers check what pupils have learned in history, it does not lead to the same level of subsequent fine tuning of the curriculum. Pupils are not as clear about why they are learning something or what they need to do to improve.

The majority of pupils achieve well in reading. Many learn to read quickly. This starts in Reception, where children are taught to read and then to write accurately. Teachers build on this in Year 1 onwards, so that pupils become enthusiastic readers who read regularly. Staff are trained well and have good subject knowledge. Reading is promoted within the school across every class. Older pupils hear younger pupils read, and pupils enjoy hearing adults read to them regularly. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on some pupils' reading, leaders are tackling this effectively and pupils who have fallen behind are catching up because of the support they get. At times, however, weaker readers are given books to practise their reading which are not matched to their phonic knowledge precisely enough. This means they do not learn to read as swiftly as they could.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities within the curriculum. Staff are working hard to restore this provision to the same level as before the pandemic. They have started re-introducing a range of trips, for example to Marwell Zoo, to local allotments to link with a project about plants and growing, to Stubbington Study Centre and to Queen Mary's College Science Centre. Pupils immerse themselves in specially themed days focused on different historical periods, for example Ancient Egypt, Rome and the Victorian era. Pupils learn to play a range of musical instruments and go to local theatres to see shows and music events. All pupils participate in drama productions. Extra-curricular provision is growing again too, which leaders plan to widen further in the near future.

Governors and leaders prioritise staff workload and well-being by making sure the right resources and approaches are in place. Leaders introduce new strategies in ways that are positive and well thought through. They also make sure that staff have time to prepare for important events like parent consultation evenings. Leaders recognise how hard staff work, for example through initiatives like the upcoming 'well-being day'. There is a very strong culture in the school amongst staff of working very hard for the pupils but looking after each other as well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained and vigilant. They are knowledgeable about the potential signs that indicate that there might be concerns about a pupil. Staff know how to use the school's effective systems for referring any issues. Leaders' comprehensive recording supports their quick, effective and appropriate actions. They liaise closely with the local authority and maintain good levels of communication with external agencies. This means pupils get the support that they need. Pupils are taught how to stay safe, including on the internet. Leaders conduct the appropriate checks on members of staff. Governors keep close oversight of safeguarding procedures.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not learn to read as swiftly as they could. While the majority of pupils are accurate, fluent and enthusiastic readers, at times weaker readers are given books to read that do not match their phonic knowledge precisely enough. Leaders should ensure that books are selected more carefully to accelerate these pupils' achievement in reading.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' learning is not as well developed in the foundation subjects as it is in subjects like maths, where assessment is very effective. This means that teachers are not able to finely tune what they teach in these subjects. Leaders should develop assessment processes in foundation subjects, so that teachers can make sure the curriculum meets pupils' needs fully.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 2012.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	116315
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10227833
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	116
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Edward Ruane
Headteacher	Karen Payne
Website	www.ssj-school.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Winchester. The last statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools was in July 2018 when the school was judged to be good.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and three governors, including the chair of the local governing body. An inspector talked to a representative of the local authority on the telephone.
- Inspectors met with a range of pupils, parents and staff, also taking into consideration their responses to Ofsted's questionnaires about their views of the school.

- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's plans for future improvement and minutes of governor meetings.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss safeguarding, look at records, policies and processes relating to safeguarding and talked to pupils, staff and governors about this aspect of the school's work. An inspector also reviewed the school's checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour when moving around the school, in lessons and at break and lunchtime.

Inspection team

Matthew Haynes, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Laura James

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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