

Inspection of St James' CofE Primary School, Coldwaltham

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

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 July 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very proud of their school. They reflect thoughtfully on how they grow in confidence each year as they progress upward through the classes. Older pupils say that teachers help them develop their independence so that they feel well prepared for moving on to secondary school.

Leaders have created a nurturing environment. Pupils feel very safe and cared for. Pupils behave well and are taught to show the school values of respect, kindness, honesty, positivity and teamwork to one another. Pupils say that bullying does not happen, and they trust adults to deal quickly and sensitively with any worries they have.

Pupils describe what a friendly place this is. During breaktimes they enjoy playing active and imaginative games and exploring nature areas in the school grounds. The enticing forest school area is well loved by pupils. They eagerly look forward to their outdoor learning sessions.

While leaders have high expectations, pupils are not yet confident in explaining what they know and understand, because the planning in most subjects is in the early stages of development. Also, not all pupils can access the curriculum fully because further improvements are required to ensure all pupils are taught to read effectively.

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

Over recent years, changes in leadership and staffing have made it difficult for leaders to focus on implementing the improvements needed. Leaders do have a clear and ambitious vision for the high-quality education that they want to provide, and this is being planned. However, this is at an early stage of development, particularly in the foundation subjects. Alongside this, systems to check that pupils are learning and remembering the intended knowledge and skills are not yet in place, meaning pupils have gaps in their understanding. Leaders know they must focus on developing the knowledge and practice of teachers in all subjects so that pupils can confidently learn across the curriculum.

Leaders want all pupils to read well, and while many become fluent readers, some do not. The school uses a well-sequenced phonics programme which starts in Reception and continues into key stage 1. Although staff have received training, pupils are not always corrected when they make mistakes. This means pupils do not always receive the appropriate targeted help they need. Too often, books are not matched to the sounds that pupils have been taught, meaning pupils cannot practise what they have learned. Consequently, some pupils are not learning to read fluently.

Time is taken to build strong relationships with pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and their families. However, precise identification of pupils' needs is not consistently in place. The assessments of individual pupils' needs are then not always used well enough to carefully plan learning. Leaders are currently

focusing on this to ensure all pupils receive the necessary support to achieve everything they are capable of.

In Reception, children enjoy real-life learning experiences. Their delight and curiosity about the world were evident when they described to an inspector how caterpillars change into butterflies. Staff adapt learning activities to children's own interests. However, as yet, not all of the foundation areas of learning are coherently planned to help children build on previous learning. This means that the children may not have the knowledge they need as they move into key stage 1.

The school's dedication to supporting pupils' personal development is a strength. From when children start in Reception, they are taught to establish kind and considerate relationships. Older pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as working with the school council. Pupils take part in a variety of clubs. Visits and trips are used to bring to life future opportunities and inspire the pupils. For example, a class recently attended workshops at the local theatre, exploring the many roles involved backstage.

Leaders have created an inclusive environment. The warm relationships between staff and pupils create a respectful and calm culture. Consequently, pupils behave well. Pupils are keen to work hard and take pride in their work. For example, they were keen to explain to an inspector the different techniques they had used to create a watercolour painting. There is a focus on celebrating achievements, and pupils are taught how to be resilient learners. This means they can debate and disagree with ideas in a respectful and appropriate way.

Governors are very knowledgeable about the school. They offer constructive challenge to leaders in their shared determination to make the school the best it can be. Staff support this by showing dedication to caring for and supporting pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know pupils and families well. They are quick to notice and respond when help is needed. Leaders make sure that adults are well trained. This means that they follow the school's clear processes when they have a concern. Leaders are thorough and unafraid to pursue extra help or specialist support. They make sure pupils and families get all the support they need to stay safe.

Pupils can explain how they have been taught to stay safe online. They are confident that they can always ask for any help if they are worried or concerned.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders are not always checking that the planned curriculum is being taught effectively. This means that pupils have some gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should continue to develop teachers' subject knowledge and teaching expertise as well as implement processes to make sure the curriculum is being implemented consistently.
- The early years curriculum is not yet coherently mapped across the seven areas of learning. This means that leaders cannot be sure that children have the knowledge and skills they need to move forward with their education. Leaders are aware of this and are developing their plans to ensure all children are ready for key stage 1.
- The school's validated phonics programme is not always being delivered effectively. Pupils are not reading books that match the sounds they know. This means that some pupils, including the weakest readers, develop gaps in their phonics knowledge. Leaders need to ensure that every adult has the knowledge and expertise to teach the programme. They should also make sure that pupils read books that closely match the letters and sounds they have learned.
- While there have been some recent improvements in the identification of the needs of pupils with SEND, this is not yet precise enough. Leaders should continue to focus on ensuring all pupils with SEND have their needs identified consistently and accurately and that teaching staff are equipped with the necessary expertise to ensure pupils with SEND achieve well.

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	125978
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10227098
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	77
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ray Jackson
Headteacher	Lizzie Martin (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.st-james-coldwaltham.w-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 and 9 March 2017, 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 another local primary school.
- There have been some recent changes in the senior leadership of the school.
- 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 does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has a breakfast club. This is managed by school leaders.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher who is also the designated safeguarding lead, other senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and teaching assistants.
- The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. She spoke with a representative from the local authority and a representative from the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and outside during social times.
- Inspectors reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising safeguarding records, speaking to staff and governors and discussing this with pupils.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted Parent View. They gathered the views of pupils and staff through surveys and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including school improvement documentation and governing body minutes.

Inspection team

Jo Petch, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tracey Brunton

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022