

St James Church of England Primary School, Hanney

The Causeway, Wantage, Oxfordshire OX12 0JN

Inspection dates

2–3 October 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have created a culture of care and aspiration. They ensure that the school's Christian values combine with academic ambition for all.
- Leaders and the trust provide highly effective support and professional development, which have improved teaching, the curriculum and pupils' outcomes well.
- Governors use their wide range of skills alongside support from the trust to hold leaders to account well. They recognise that subject and middle leaders have only limited responsibilities, with too much falling on senior staff.
- Safeguarding is effective. All involved in the school understand the processes and their roles in keeping children safe.
- Teachers make effective use of the strong relationships that they have established with pupils. Most learning tasks are planned well and build on pupils' prior achievements.
- Pupils enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum that is supported by extra-curricular activities, including trips and sports.
- Pupils are confident and well behaved. They display a love of learning and are proud of their school, especially the buddy system, where Year 6 pupils work to help Reception children.
- Current pupils make good progress across most aspects of the curriculum, especially with reading. Pupils display a love of reading and are inspired by their teachers' enthusiasm for books.
- Pupils' attainment is good overall. It is now in line with, or better than, national averages at the end of key stage 2. However, pupils are not secure when applying their mathematical knowledge to complex problems.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are supported well. They make strong progress from their starting points.
- In Reception Year, children settle quickly and make strong progress. Phonics is taught well, and children are well prepared for their transition to Year 1.
- Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the way that staff quickly get to know children and so meet their needs.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop subject and middle leaders to enable them to take on further responsibility and accountability.
- Improve teaching and learning in mathematics, so that pupils increase their confidence when applying their knowledge to more complex problems.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has established a culture of care and aspiration throughout the school. She has ensured that the school's Christian values underpin academic ambition for all pupils. This has created a happy and successful school community, described by one pupil as being, 'good, because everyone is nice to each other'.
- Leaders have worked closely with advisers from the trust and other trust schools to develop teaching, learning and assessment well. Together, they have ensured that all staff have high-quality training alongside access to professional development networks that have been very effective. Support for both experienced colleagues and those new to the profession is strong. All staff who spoke with the inspector and responded to the online staff survey said that they valued this.
- Staff themselves feel valued and morale is high. They particularly like the way that the headteacher is aware of their potential workload and leads by example. They share the headteacher's ambition, and work together well as a cohesive team.
- Leaders have an accurate knowledge and understanding of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They are determined to ensure high-quality teaching for every child. They have put in appropriate support and plans when, on occasions, there is variation or inconsistency in this quality.
- Subject and middle leaders benefit from ongoing support and challenge from the trust. They are very positive about it, with one describing it as, 'a hub of support'. They are aware that, as the school grows in size, so their roles and responsibilities grow. Leaders have well-considered plans so that there is greater leadership capacity ready when it is required.
- Leaders have ensured that additional funding is used effectively. Staff use their strong professional relationships with pupils to identify any barriers to learning and speedily address them. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is systematic when analysing pupils' potential needs and the impact of any support work. She makes sure that advice from external experts is followed and that teachers are supported well to implement any suggestions.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain and for the next stage in their education. Leaders have worked hard to balance pupils' academic learning with their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils enjoy extensive extra-curricular opportunities, including a wide range of sporting activities. Consequently, pupils are confident and articulate and display a love of learning.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils have a broad and balanced curriculum overall. Pupils enjoy an exciting 'hook' to each topic and often display their learning to their parents through exhibitions or performances.
- Parents are very happy with the school. Many mentioned the care they can see staff demonstrate and the good relationships that they have built with pupils. A typical comment was, 'There is a family feel where children are nurtured to reach their full potential.'

Governance of the school

- The trust works closely and effectively with the local governing body to which it has delegated responsibility for the day-to-day governance of the school. It has provided effective training and support for local governors, and a representative from the trust sits on the local governing body. This has ensured smooth communication.
- Governors have used their wide range of skills alongside the support from the trust to scrutinise the work of school leaders closely. They have increased their level of challenge to leaders and routinely ask apposite questions and test the information that they are given. Consequently, governors hold leaders to account well, including for the use of additional funding.
- Governors do not shy away from asking pertinent questions of the trust in order to ensure that pupils at St James get the best possible deal.
- Governors and the trust have supported leaders well with the extensive building work. They have shouldered much of the burden such a project brings so that leaders can focus on ensuring a high quality of education for pupils.

Safeguarding

- Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and staff have been trained well. Consequently, they have good knowledge of their roles and responsibilities. They understand that any worry that they might have could be a 'missing piece of the jigsaw' that could help to keep a child safe.
- Governors and the trust routinely monitor safeguarding processes, including recruitment procedures. All checks to ensure the suitability of adults to work with children are completed thoroughly and recorded clearly.
- Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe in school. They described how to keep themselves safe in different situations, for example when crossing the road or when online. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and those who spoke to the inspector, agreed that their child feels safe at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have supported teachers well to plan lessons that are interesting and engaging. Learning activities are generally purposeful and based on pupils' prior learning. Pupils learn well when they are challenged to complete work that is well matched to their prior achievements.
- The teaching of reading has developed well over time. Pupils display a love of reading, often inspired by their teachers. Pupils confidently and enthusiastically spoke about their reading to the inspector, one saying, 'It's cool to read at this school'. Pupils are confident to explore different texts and do so accurately and with insight.

- Throughout the school, pupils use their reading and phonics skills to write well. Teachers make the purpose of writing clear and pupils understand why they are writing and consider their audience well. They are keen to develop their vocabulary and to add precise description to their work.
- The teaching of mathematics has also developed well and is increasingly effective. The structures introduced in Reception Year and key stage 1 have been established throughout the school and pupils are increasingly successful with their mathematical work. A weakness has been identified in pupils using their skills to tackle more complex mathematical problems. Teachers are increasing their level of challenge to pupils so that they develop their confidence to apply their mathematical skills to solve more complex problems independently.
- Teachers weave in trips and visits to support learning across the curriculum. Pupils enjoy these and often refer back to experiences to help them with their work. The recent ride on the vintage 'naughty bus' was a particular highlight for Year 1 pupils.
- Pupils present their work with pride, showing a high level of care in their achievements.
- Teachers follow the school's assessment policy well, using this to quickly support pupils if they struggle with their learning in reading, writing or mathematics. However, the system for monitoring pupils' progress in the wider curriculum is newer and so its impact on learning is not yet clear.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported well. They develop the specific skills that they need, alongside their peers, due to the carefully tailored support that they receive.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The pupils are confident and articulate. They are proud of their school and the ways that they can demonstrate their Christian values. A group explained to the inspector that it was important to be tolerant and kind because, 'We are all people'. They also highlighted the buddy system, whereby Year 6 pupils help Reception children to settle quickly, as something that makes the school 'amazing'.
- Pupils are also proud of their democratic school council and some are already planning their future election campaigns. They feel that adults at the school listen to them and change aspects that pupils suggest. For example, playtime routines have recently been changed, something that pupils welcome.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of what bullying might be and say that it doesn't really happen at St James. If people are mean to each other, pupils are confident that staff will sort things out quickly.
- Pupils have benefited from ongoing teaching and learning about safeguarding, including from external experts. Some explained clearly to the inspector how they would keep themselves safe, including when online or playing a home video-game

console. However, some pupils had already forgotten the important messages from a recent safety visit.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Across the school, most display respectful and courteous behaviour, focusing well on their learning but also being aware of others. When working in groups, pupils were careful to make sure that everyone got their fair turn at each role.
- A small minority are slower to focus on their learning or the teacher, and need to be reminded. The clear and simple school behaviour rules are effective in supporting them to improve this.
- Attendance improved rapidly in 2016 and has remained better than national averages since then. Leaders are acutely aware of those pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality is not as strong as it could be and are working well with parents to address this. Early signs are very promising.
- Leaders have adapted the school environment well to deal with the growing pupil numbers alongside the extensive building works. The school is an orderly environment. Pupils understand the need to be sensible and not disturb anyone else, and the vast majority manage this well. They use the outside spaces sensibly, including at playtime.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' current good progress and attainment were not reflected by the published information for the end of key stage 2 in 2017. That showed that pupils' attainment was lower than national figures in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Achievement and results improved in 2018. The provisional results indicate improvements in all three areas. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in each subject is at or above that found nationally. This information also confirms that pupils' progress in these subjects has improved when compared with that of 2017, especially in reading. This is due to leaders' work to improve teaching, learning and assessment.
- Pupils do particularly well in reading, but their progress in mathematics is hampered by their weaker skills in tackling complex problems. This is confirmed by the provisional results for 2018. A higher proportion of pupils than nationally attained the high score in the reading test, but no pupils achieved highly in mathematics.
- In key stage 1, pupils are also achieving well. Provisional 2018 results show that the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics is higher than that attained nationally.
- Pupils' phonics skills are secure. The proportion of pupils in Year 1 attaining the expected standard in the phonics screening check has been around the national figure for the last three years. In 2018, all Year 2 pupils attained the expected standard.
- The school's assessment information and work in pupils' books show that, overall, current pupils are making strong progress across the curriculum, including in English

and mathematics. This is helping pupils to reach age-related expectations, and often exceed them, particularly in reading.

- Overall, the small number of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are making progress in line with that of their peers. Some are making very rapid progress from their starting points due to leaders' effective use of the pupil premium funding.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making strong progress from their starting points. Leaders and teachers work very well with external specialists to ensure that these pupils receive timely and appropriate personalised support.

Early years provision

Good

- Children get off to a positive start to school life in Reception Year. This is due to the effective leadership and teaching that are combined with a sense of care that helps children to settle quickly. At the time of the inspection, the children had only been in the setting for a few weeks, but were already confident and keen to show the inspector around the different exciting areas, including the outdoor stage and mud kitchen.
- The Year 6 buddy system helps the Reception children to settle quickly. Children like the way that they have lunch in their 'family groups' with their buddies and can play with them if they want to. This helps to integrate the new children quickly into the life of the school.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are very effective because activities are carefully planned and based on children's needs. The whole team works hard to get to know children and their families well, meeting with parents and using technology to communicate with them regularly. Many who responded to Parent View commented on this very positively.
- Children make good progress from their different starting points and attain well. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception Year has historically been in line with or above that seen nationally. In 2018, this proportion rose again and is higher than previous national figures. This shows that children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Leaders from the trust have provided effective support, which has developed the leadership of early years well. There are many new initiatives that show early promise, including changes to planning and assessment, 'learning superheroes' and 'focus child'. Leaders are aware of the need to evaluate and refine these before introducing too many new ideas.
- As in key stage 1, phonics teaching is strong. Children enjoy the songs and games and join in enthusiastically. Staff capture children's interest in sounds well when they are playing, and children are confident when saying and starting to write sounds. Over the course of Reception Year, they make good progress and join Year 1 confident to work out how to write new words.
- Leaders ensure that the safeguarding and welfare requirements for early years are well met. Children like the clear structures and rules for play. They behave well and listen carefully to adults and each other.

School details

Unique reference number	142664
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10059278

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	136
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Catherine Tysoe
Headteacher	Janice Peacock
Telephone number	01235 868232
Website	www.stjamesprimaryhanney.co.uk
Email address	office@hanneyce.vale-academy.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St James Church of England Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school for pupils aged five to 11. As a Church of England school, it is part of the Diocese of Oxford.
- The school converted to become an academy and joined the Vale Academy Trust (VAT), a multi-academy trust, in March 2016. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good in all areas.
- The trust directors set the strategic direction of the school and are accountable for the school's performance. They delegate the governance of the school to a local governing body.
- The headteacher joined St James in January 2016. She is supported by an executive headteacher from the trust. Other personnel from the trust visit and support school staff and governors as needed.

- There have been many staffing changes over the last two years.
- A breakfast and after-school club for pupils is run by a separately inspected provider. There is also a separately registered and inspected pre-school on the site. These were not considered as part of this inspection.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British origin.
- The proportion of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average. A lower than average proportion of pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school was judged to be good at its last section 48 inspection in December 2016. That inspection reported on the religious character of the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited all classes more than once to observe learning, speak with pupils and look at their work. All visits to classrooms were made jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, SENCo, early years leader and other staff. The inspector also met with governors (including the chair of the governing body), members of the trust, the chief executive officer and director of learning from the trust. She took account of the views of the 14 members of staff who responded to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- The inspector spoke to pupils during lesson visits and at playtimes and lunchtimes. She met with two groups of pupils formally. She also considered the 38 responses to the online pupil questionnaire.
- The inspector spoke to parents at the start of the first day of inspection and took account of the 30 responses to Parent View, along with the 21 written responses.
- The inspector considered a wide range of documentation, including information available on the school's website and records relating to pupils' attainment, progress, attendance and behaviour. Information on governance, including minutes of governors' meetings was scrutinised. The school's self-evaluations and improvement plans were examined, along with records of the school's work to keep pupils safe.

Inspection team

Lucy English, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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