

Inspection of a good school: St Peter's CofE (Aided) Primary School

Potters Green, Station Road, Cowfold, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 8QZ

Inspection dates:

1 December 2021

Outcome

St Peter's CofE (Aided) Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's Christian learning attitudes and aims of 'love, learn and aim high' weave through everything at St Peter's. Pupils enjoy spending time with one another while learning and playing. One child told an inspector, 'We are all friends here.'

Pupils enjoy school and learning. They take on responsibilities such as becoming a librarian, assembly monitor or play leader. Pupils are proud to play an active role in the life of the village, for example 'Greener Cowfold'. Pupils are taking part in a campaign to raise awareness about recycling.

Pupils told inspectors that there is no bullying at this school. Staff and parents agree. Pupils trust the adults in school. Pupils know if they need help in the classroom or the playground there will always be someone to help them. Lessons proceed without interruption because pupils behave well.

Adults have high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour. Disruption to pupils' learning during the COVID-19 pandemic has been minimal. Strong links between home and school meant pupils continued to learn well. Pupils enjoyed a focus on their well-being when they returned to school after the last school closure.

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

Leaders have planned a curriculum that exposes pupils to life beyond this small village. They have formed links with other local schools and a school in Tanzania. Pupils told an inspector that they were excited to learn about pupils in Tanzania, commenting that 'these are friends we haven't met yet!'

Pupils learn a broad range of subjects. They achieve well, especially in English and mathematics. Leaders have recently worked on sequencing the knowledge and skills they want pupils to remember. This work to review the curriculum has been interrupted by

COVID-19. Therefore, some subjects are still being worked on, for example art and design and technology.

Teachers who lead on subject development have strong subject knowledge. They use this to select the resources teachers use to teach their lessons. Subject leaders support teachers to adapt these resources to make sure learning is relevant to the pupils in this school.

Throughout the school, teachers break learning down into small steps. In lessons they check what pupils can and cannot remember. Teachers use this information to plan what their class will learn next. Pupils know and understand what their teacher wants them to learn. Teachers encourage pupils to think like historians and scientists. In mathematics lessons, children in the Reception and Year 1 class are guided to think for themselves and make observations about what they see. This means children quickly develop a sense of number and shape.

Reading weaves through all the subjects pupils learn. In all year groups, including the Reception Year, pupils listen to a range of stories and books read by their teacher. Teachers select these class readers to deepen pupils' understanding of the topics they learn. Teachers use assessment to select the books pupils take home. Pupils know exactly how well they are getting on with reading and how to get better.

Children in Reception start learning phonics from the very first day of school. This continues into Years 1 and 2. Pupils get regular practice through reading books that match the sounds they learn in their lessons. Adults do not all use the same resources for teaching phonics. They have received different levels of training. This means some pupils fall behind. These pupils take part in extra lessons so that they get back on track. Most pupils can read fluently by the end of Year 2.

Teachers and other adults provide the right amount of support to remove barriers to learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Adults make sure these pupils have the 'right target at the right time'. Adults track the support pupils receive away from the classroom. This is to make sure it is supporting pupils to make more progress with their learning, and they are.

Pupils have a growing understanding of differences. They are taught about different cultures and to celebrate diversity. They show high levels of tolerance for one another. They learn together without disruption. This is because they know how to behave well. Pupils enjoy the trips their teachers plan for them. Teachers and pupils are keen to get back to the annual residential school journey that has been put on hold due to COVID-19.

Recent staffing changes have added to staff workload at all levels. However, staff feel well supported by the headteacher. They are happy working at the school. Leaders appreciate the support received from the diocese and local authority. The governing board is mindful of the well-being and workload of the headteacher.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Adults know the pupils very well in this school. Staff receive regular training. If they have a concern about a pupil's safety, they know how to refer this on. Routines are in place to share information about vulnerable pupils and their families. This means, when needed, pupils quickly get the support and help that they need. Leaders complete the required checks before staff and volunteers start work in school.

Leaders and teachers have worked hard to help pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe online and when out and about in the local community. Pupils know who to go to if they have any worries.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not yet planned all of the national curriculum subjects in the same level of detail. In art and design and technology, leaders have not identified what knowledge pupils are intended to learn and remember over time. Consequently, teachers are left to decide what to teach. Leaders need to continue to coherently plan and sequence each curriculum subject across the school, so that teachers know what knowledge they are aiming to build over time.
- Phonics teaching is inconsistent. Teachers have differing levels of expertise and use a variety of resources. This means some pupils do not meet the school's own milestones for learning to read and need extra support to get back on track. Leaders have purchased new resources to support the teaching of phonics. They need to continue with their plans to implement these to improve teachers' and teaching assistants' subject knowledge and the consistency of approach.

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 May 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	126025
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10200208
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
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	Sarah Vaughan-Turner
Headteacher	Giles Kolter
Website	www.stpetersce.eschools.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average sized primary school.
- There have been significant staff changes this academic year. Two senior teachers have left and have yet to be replaced. Leaders plan to recruit for January.
- The school is a voluntary-aided Church of England school. In its most recent section 48 inspection, in January 2018, it was graded outstanding.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders, members of staff and three representatives from the governing body. An inspector also held a telephone discussion with a representative from the diocese and local authority.

- Inspectors spoke with parents at the school gate and considered the 24 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and parents' written responses.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, science 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 also looked at pupils' books and curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- Inspectors looked at the school's own evaluation and development plans.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils, parents and staff about the school's work to keep pupils safe. They considered a range of safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Clare Haines, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Clare Vallence

Ofsted Inspector

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