

Inspection of a good school: St James' Church of England Primary Academy

Pokesdown Hill, Christchurch Road, Bournemouth, Dorset BH7 6DW

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 January 2023

Outcome

St James' Church of England Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at the school. Staff greet them warmly at the start of the day, playing music to welcome their arrival. The whole school participates in celebratory 'sign and sing' collective worship. Pupils enjoy a wide range of lunchtime activities, including table-tennis, cricket, reading and football.

The school's values are firmly rooted in the Christian ethos of the school. Pupils know why learning through 'love, hope and forgiveness' matters. They make clear links with these values and the school rules to 'be ready, be respectful and be safe'. Leaders have high expectations for behaviour, and pupils live up to them. In lessons, pupils listen carefully and are keen to learn. As a result, they achieve well.

Pupils feel safe and well cared for. They have no concerns about bullying. Parents recognise this caring culture, with one reflecting the views of many, commenting, 'the school has built a strong community where the children are supportive of each other'. Staff enjoy greeting ex-pupils, who accompany family members at the end of the school day. Pupils understand that, when you join the St James' family, you will always be welcomed as a member of it.

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

Leaders are determined that the school's curriculum will prepare pupils to be global citizens, ready for the next steps in their education and life. This ambition is understood by all staff and is evident in all aspects of school life. Across all subjects, leaders ensure there is a clearly defined sequence of what pupils need to learn and remember. However, in a few subjects, this work has only recently been completed and is yet to have its full impact. In these subjects, pupils do not always have a secure knowledge base to draw on in their current learning.

The teaching of reading sits at the heart of the curriculum and, as a result, pupils read well. Staff use a consistent approach from the moment children start school in Reception. This means that children use their phonics strategies to read with increasing fluency. Older pupils who need extra help with their reading receive it through carefully considered interventions. Whole class reading sessions allow pupils to interrogate texts and develop their comprehension skills. Leaders work relentlessly to promote a love of reading. Pupils are motivated to read through their class reading areas, regular library visits and the reward of sharing a book at a local café. Many pupils enjoy recommending books to their friends through the class reading scrapbooks.

Pupils are enthusiastic mathematicians and achieve well. Teachers benefit from the strong leadership in mathematics, with frequent training and professional development opportunities. As a result, teachers have strong subject knowledge. They ensure there is an emphasis on pupils using correct mathematical vocabulary, starting from Reception. Teachers help pupils to remember their learning through regular reminders, such as the 'flashback four'. This means that pupils make clear and useful links within their mathematical learning. As a result, they confidently apply their mathematical knowledge and skills when problem solving.

Leaders make sure that staff know how to accurately identify and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There is an expectation that they access learning alongside their classmates, with appropriate support. Pupils who need more personalised provision receive it from highly skilled staff. Activities that support sensory needs help pupils to prepare for the school day in a calm environment.

Many pupils benefit from the wider opportunities available to them. Leaders create a club offer, which includes a range of activities. There is widespread celebration about the sporting success of several school teams. However, leaders recognise that not all groups of pupils are well represented across these clubs. The number of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND who choose to join a club is low.

Pupils are knowledgeable about their locality and the wider world. They show empathy and understanding towards different cultures and those who face adversity in life. Older pupils talk about the importance of welcoming new families to the school, and they show an awareness of the impact of financial hardship. Pupils enjoy their leadership opportunities, which include house captains, as well as play and digital leaders.

School and trust leaders ensure that all staff have access to an extensive range of training and professional development. They also take positive steps to check on staff well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure there is a strong culture of safeguarding. This is achieved through regular staff training and a shared belief that no issue is too small. All staff know how to identify

and report any concerns. Leaders follow up these concerns and are tenacious in securing the right support for their families. Pupils know who they can talk to if they have any worries. They are knowledgeable about the measures they can take to keep safe when using the internet. Governors and trustees routinely check the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding procedures.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few foundation subjects, the curriculum has recently been reviewed and updated. As a result, it is not yet having the impact leaders intend. Pupils cannot always remember key knowledge to make links with their previous learning. Leaders need to ensure that teaching of clearly sequenced knowledge and skills in these subjects has the impact they intend.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND who attend the school's extra-curricular clubs is lower than other pupil groups. As a result, these pupils do not benefit from wider development opportunities. Leaders should identify and address the potential barriers to participation for these groups of pupils.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually, this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St James' Church of England Primary School, to be good in March 2013.

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.

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	140760
Local authority	Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole
Inspection number	10256747
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	409
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of transition board	Mandy Watson
Headteacher	Alastair Brown
Website	www.stjamescebourne-mouth.com
Date of previous inspection	27 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Pupils across the school were observed reading to a familiar adult by the inspector.

- The inspector took account of parents' responses to Ofsted Parent View and parents' written comments. She also talked with groups of parents on the morning of the second day of inspection.
- The inspector met with a range of staff to gather their views about the school and took account of staff's responses to Ofsted's confidential staff questionnaire.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to them informally during social times. She also took account of pupils' responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- The inspector met with representatives from the trust and the local governing body. She also had a phone call with a representative from the Diocese.

Inspection team

Kate Fripp, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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