

Inspection of Sticklands Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Summer Lane, Evershot, Dorchester, Dorset DT2 0JP

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's vision, 'aspire, believe, belong and achieve - let your light shine' underpins the inclusive culture and community ethos of the school. The school sets high expectations for all pupils. As a result, pupils' attitudes to school are incredibly positive. They are proud of the school and enjoy learning. Pupils are highly motivated. The majority of pupils learn well.

A positive and respectful culture permeates throughout the school. The school establishes high expectations for pupils' behaviour right from the start. Children in early years quickly learn the expected routines. For example, the mantra 'choose it, use it, put it away' helps them to learn to be independent in their choices and to look after resources.

Pupils treat others with kindness and respect. Pupils know that there are adults to talk to if they have a worry. As a result, pupils feel safe.

Pupils are taught the importance of equality and to celebrate difference. The school teaches pupils about protected characteristics and discrimination. Pupils learn the importance of treating others fairly. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

The school provides numerous opportunities for pupil leadership such as school council, eco club and well-being warriors. These opportunities help pupils to learn about responsibility.

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

The school has carefully constructed a clear and ambitious curriculum for all subjects. It sets out the knowledge that the school expects pupils to know and remember. The curriculum builds from strong foundations in the early years. The school has high aspirations for pupils. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school swiftly identifies pupils' needs and ensures that appropriate support is put into place.

Reading is a priority. Staff are well trained to support pupils with learning to read. They swiftly identify when pupils fall behind and give them the help they need to catch up. Pupils read books that match the sounds they know and have learned. This helps them to read with increasing fluency and confidence.

Pupils develop a love of reading. The school has identified high-quality texts for pupils to read to develop their breadth of reading. From the start of Reception, children are immersed in poems, rhymes and stories. As a result, older pupils talk enthusiastically about the books they enjoy. One described reading as going to 'different places in your mind'.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. Their clear explanations help pupils to learn new content. Teachers successfully adapt the learning to support pupils with SEND to learn the same curriculum alongside their peers. In core subjects, such as mathematics, pupils reg-

ularly revisit prior learning. Consequently, they build on what they already know to develop a strong understanding. In some subjects, pupils do not have opportunities to recall earlier learning. As a result, their knowledge and understanding are less secure in these subjects.

In English and mathematics, staff effectively check what pupils know and can do. However, in some wider curriculum subjects, teaching does not check well enough what pupils have learned and remembered. This means some pupils have gaps in their understanding.

The school acts on any weaknesses that emerge. For example, the school took quick and effective action to strengthen mathematics and reading following a dip in key stage 2 outcomes. Consequently, the provision for mathematics and reading is strong. However, in a few subjects, the school does not have oversight of how well the curriculum is being delivered in the classroom. It does not yet effectively check how well pupils learn in those subjects. The school has rightly identified that there is more to do to improve pupils' spelling and handwriting. Nonetheless, this work is in its early stages. Some pupils make repeated errors with spelling and letter formation.

Pupils are polite and well-mannered. They understand the school rules well. Most pupils attend regularly and on time.

The school's work to support pupils' personal development is exemplary. A wide range of opportunities enrich and extend pupils' learning beyond the academic. For example, the school's work on career development. A carefully planned curriculum including visitors to school helps to encourage and inspire pupils to 'dream big' about their future aspirations.

Pupils learn to become active citizens in the community. For example, writing to residents of a local care home and charity fundraising. This helps pupils to understand the difference their actions can have and to develop empathy and understanding.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They value the care and support the staff provide. One parent reflected the views of many in their comment that 'the school goes above and beyond'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school's oversight of how the curriculum is delivered and its impact on pupils' learning is not secure. As a result, there is some variability in how well pupils learn and remember important knowledge over time. The school must

ensure that there is better oversight of how well pupils learn in all subjects so that the school can act where improvements are needed.

- The teaching of writing does not yet secure pupils' accurate spelling and letter formation. Some pupils do not yet have the fundamentals of writing that they need to be ready for later work. The school should ensure that the new writing curriculum is fully embedded to provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop and practise their writing and secure age-appropriate knowledge and skills.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	113799
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10344494
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	85
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Suzie Mutch
Headteacher	Ruth Adler
Website	www.sticklands.dorset.sch.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	21 and 22 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- The headteacher took up the substantive post in September 2023, following a period of acting headteacher from April 2023.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Salisbury.
- The school had its last denominational education inspection under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in February 2020.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- 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 of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, curriculum leaders and a group of teachers.
- An inspector held meetings with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects including writing, physical education, science and languages.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. An inspector also spoke with parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted online staff survey.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Additionally, inspectors spoke to pupils to discuss their views of the school.

Inspection team

Nicky McMahon, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paula Marsh

Ofsted Inspector

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