

Inspection of St John's Meads Church of England Primary School

Rowsley Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN20 7XS

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 March 2024

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	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Katherin Weeks. This school is part of the Diocese of Chichester Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mark Talbot, and overseen by a board of trustees chaired by Luke Irvine-Capel.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel safe and cared for. They relish the close attention the school pays to their emotional well-being, which is reflected in a calm school atmosphere. The school expects pupils to behave well. This is demonstrated through pupils' positive conduct and how they speak to each other and adults. They trust adults to listen and help them with any worries.

The school has high expectations for learning for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In the early years, children are supported to achieve well. However, the school's ambition is not consistently realised in the rest of the school. There is variation in teaching across different subjects. As a result, pupils' recall of what they have learned is inconsistent.

Pupils benefit from many opportunities that broaden their understanding of the world. They appreciate these opportunities, are open-minded, and welcome different cultures and experiences. Pupils are particularly proud of their roles as pupil leaders. They relish opportunities to lead assemblies, support younger pupils, and advocate for the school in the community with issues such as parking. They feel part of a close community and well prepared for the following stages of education.

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

The school has identified the precise knowledge and skills it intends pupils to learn. From Reception onwards, the curriculum is broad and well sequenced. There is a clear focus on helping pupils to learn ambitious vocabulary over time.

Pupils get off to a strong start in Reception. There is a clearly sequenced curriculum for what children should know and be able to do. Staff follow the planning effectively. They accurately check what children know and can do. This information is used well to inform future teaching and activity choices. All staff in Reception are effectively trained. They use this to support children using high-quality language and model positive behaviours clearly. Consequently, children in Reception achieve well and are ready for the next stages of education.

Pupils love learning in the rest of the school. Lessons are full of enthusiasm and high-quality language. However, staff sometimes design tasks that do not match the planned curriculum. In addition, they do not check pupils' understanding with sufficient accuracy. This means that pupils do not remember as much of the curriculum as the school intends. Staff swiftly identify if pupils have any additional needs. Some pupils with SEND are given effective support, but this is inconsistent. In 2023, pupils achieved above the national average in mathematics and writing in key stage 2. However, current achievement is less strong in these subjects and variable in the rest of the curriculum, including for the most disadvantaged pupils.

The school prioritises reading. Older pupils follow a structured reading programme and enjoy an ambitious range of books to read. In 2023, key stage 2 pupils achieved

highly compared to national. However, the provision for younger pupils is less consistent and this is reflected in the most recent weaker published outcomes. Staff have received reading training, but there is variation in the quality of phonics teaching in key stage 1. The school has not checked that staff follow the programme rigorously.

Pupils are kind and behave respectfully. From Reception onwards, pupils are taught how to act positively towards others. At playtimes, pupils feel safe. They behave in a friendly manner and enjoy interacting with pupils of all ages. If there are disagreements, pupils are sufficiently skilled to resolve these sensibly and know when to ask adults for help. Pupil's attitudes to school are reflected in positive attendance and punctuality figures.

Personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils develop a secure understanding of different perspectives and views on the world. This is supported by carefully chosen books, experiences, and trips. Interactions with local police, various faith groups, and community figures supplement a carefully planned curriculum for personal development. The school uses local community figures to help pupils develop a sense of acceptance and understanding of diversity. This is reflected in what pupils know and think about other cultures and lifestyles. Consequently, pupils develop into well-rounded modern citizens.

The school's ambition has not yet been fully realised to ensure that all pupils, especially those with SEND, achieve well. Leaders at all levels are passionate about the school's development. However, recent staffing turbulence has slowed improvement work. Those responsible for governance have not provided sufficient oversight and challenge so that the ambition of the school is successfully met, and all pupils benefit from a good quality of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The teaching of reading lacks consistency from Year 1 onwards. As a result, pupils at the earliest stages of learning to read, including those who are disadvantaged, do not read with sufficient fluency or accuracy. The school must ensure that all staff are equipped with the skills and knowledge and follow the phonics programme closely to teach reading effectively.
- Teaching does not consistently build on what pupils already know and can do. As a result, pupils do not learn as well as they could, including those with SEND. The school should support staff to design tasks that help all pupils to learn the most important content and then accurately check what they have known and can do.

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	147712
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10296462
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	202
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Luke Irvine-Capel
Headteacher	Katherin Weeks
Website	www.meads.e-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This school joined the Diocese of Chichester Multi Academy Trust in February 2020
- The school is a Church of England school in the diocese of Chichester and its last section 48 inspection was in April 2017
- The school currently makes use of one unregistered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
- 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.
- The inspection team met with the headteachers, senior leaders, teachers and pupils. The lead inspector met with the members of the governing body, including

the chair of governors, and also with members of the trust board and the chief executive officer.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, music and languages. 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 pupil's work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- 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.
- The inspection team observed behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day. They considered the views expressed on Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Toby Martlew, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Zoe Enser

His Majesty's 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 2024