Inspection of St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, South Weald

Wigley Bush Lane, South Weald, Brentwood, Essex CM14 5QN

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	**Outstanding**
The quality of education	**Outstanding**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Outstanding**
Personal development	**Outstanding**
Leadership and management	**Outstanding**
Early years provision	**Outstanding**
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged 'Outstanding' at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since June 2009.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish in the culture of high expectations and care at this school. They know that adults will help them when they need it. This gives them the reassurance to challenge themselves and to try new things. Pupils grow in confidence, guided by the school's belief that 'all things are possible'.

From the start in the early years, children are keen to learn. They are interested in the new ideas their teachers introduce clearly. Across the school, pupils are highly engaged in their lessons. They are attentive and settle eagerly to the tasks set for them. Pupils achieve exceptionally well.

Pupils embody the school values such as being trustworthy, respectful and friendly. These guide their behaviours and understanding of the rules. As a result, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils learn good manners and use these consistently.

There is a wealth of opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests. Pupils work with staff to shape some of this provision, such as the history club, which they requested, or the book club they help to run. Parents appreciate the care and commitment of staff.

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

The school is highly ambitious for all pupils. It puts in place high-quality provision so that pupils achieve highly and develop as well-rounded individuals.

Governors regularly reflect on the effectiveness of the curriculum with staff and pupils. Together, they plan improvements, put these in place and review their impact. Staff are swift to identify barriers for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). All pupils have their needs met exceptionally well, enabling them to benefit from the excellent curriculum provided.

Consistent, effective teaching approaches are in place across the school. Teachers are very clear about what pupils need to know in every subject and how this prepares them for their next steps. Teachers check how well pupils understand and can use new ideas. They use this information to make finely graded adjustments to their teaching. This helps pupils to secure the most important ideas and vocabulary rapidly. Teachers provide frequent opportunities to revisit learning and apply ideas in new contexts. This gives pupils the strong foundations on which to build new ideas. Staff give extra help, explanations and resources for those who need it. The school plans trips, visits and visitors carefully to enrich the curriculum and bring learning to life.

Pupils quickly learn to read. This starts straight away, in the early years. The curriculum for reading is set out in small steps. Pupils get frequent practice of their developing skills with books matched carefully to their phonics knowledge. Teachers spot anyone who needs extra support in learning to read. Precise assessments

ensure that the right help is in place to develop pupils' reading skills. Pupils develop into enthusiastic and discerning readers.

Teachers' high expectations for behaviour start with the youngest children. Clear routines are set up and embedded from the beginning. Adults model the school values and refer to these frequently. Staff reward and encourage behaviours such as kindness and consideration as well as academic achievements. From the early years, children learn to sustain concentration, to share and take turns, even without adult direction.

The school actively promotes regular, punctual attendance. It rigorously reviews attendance records to spot any gaps or difficulties. The school provides the right support and challenge to families to help to bring about improvements in attendance when required.

Respect and care for all is woven through all that the school does. British values, such as democracy, are brought to life for pupils. For example, in history, pupils learn about the suffragette movement. The school council ensures that the views of pupils influence decision-making. Pupils encounter positive and diverse role models in the books they read and through a range of trips and visitors. Pupils develop into responsible, considerate citizens. For example, pupils learn how to carry out first aid and they collect litter in the church grounds nearby. The choir sings enthusiastically and tunefully for older local residents. Pupils also learn to think deeply about philosophical questions and contemporary topics.

Governors use their skills and expertise to support continuing school improvement. Governors know what the school does well. They work with leaders and pupils to consider how to make things even better. They value the staff and are proactive in promoting their well-being. Staff recognise and appreciate this. There is a strong, shared vision and teamwork between all the adults in school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	115164
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10255045
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	411
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Victoria Dorrington
Headteacher	Iain Gunn
Website	www.stpeterssouthweald.org
Date of previous inspection	9 June 2009

Information about this school

- The school does not use any registered or unregistered off-site providers of alternative education.
- As the school is designated as having a religious character, it is inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The last section 48 inspection of the school took place in November 2019. The school will receive its next inspection within eight years of this date.

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.

- Inspectors met with senior staff in the school including the headteacher, chair of governors, and the designated lead for safeguarding. Inspectors also spoke with representatives of the local authority and the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and art and design. 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 some samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum for modern foreign languages and reviewed examples of writing across the curriculum.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 160 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View. This included 128 free-text responses submitted. Inspectors also considered the 35 responses to the staff questionnaire and 139 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Lynne Williams, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Danny Wagstaff	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Fowler	Ofsted Inspector

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