

Inspection of St Helens Primary School

Broomlands Close, St Helens, Ryde, Isle of Wight PO33 1XH

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 October 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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?

Pupils arrive at school excited for the day ahead. They are polite and cheerful in their greetings to staff. Parents appreciate the nurturing atmosphere and how families also feel part of the school. They value the information the school shares with them on its website and at frequent parent and teacher meetings.

Strong relationships exist between pupils of all ages. Pupils help each other and show they are kind and caring. Weekly reading groups help to strengthen these bonds. Pupils from different classes enjoy sharing books. They look forward to this time together and value how it creates new friendships as well as a love for reading.

Pupils behave well and live up to the school's high expectations. They are keen to learn and achieve well. Pupils demonstrate the school's value of respect in all they do. If they have any friendship problems, they know that staff will help them. They learn about ways to keep themselves safe and who their trusted adults are.

There are many opportunities for pupils to engage with the local community. They are delighted to be involved in local carnivals such as the Isle of Wight's Mardi Gras where they represent the school with pride.

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

The school ensures that all pupils experience a curriculum that prepares them for their next stage of education and beyond. There are clear processes to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and they then receive effective support. In all subjects, there is clarity about what pupils need to learn and when.

The attention given to pupils' personal development and wider opportunities is impressive. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular clubs. These reflect pupils' interests as well as providing wider opportunities for all. The clubs include skateboarding, computing and seasonal sports. Teaching staff are ever mindful about making the most of the school's location. Pupils enjoy their school trips and link them clearly with their classroom learning. For example, pupils know that the trip to Osborne House is a key part of their historical learning about the Victorian era. Younger pupils visit the nearby beachfront and learn the importance of looking after the shoreline habitat and wildlife.

In lessons, pupils learn how to discuss current issues and moral dilemmas in a highly respectful way. For example, older pupils understand the concepts of negotiation and compromise and use these skills to frame debates. Teachers' skilful use of 'floor books' in personal, social and health education means that pupils' responses are collated and referred to in future learning. Pupils enjoy looking back through these books, which are highly effective at helping them to remember their previous study.

Pupils learn to read well. This begins with a phonics-based approach as soon as children start school in Reception. Across the school, pupils enjoy their familiar reading routines, which include songs and rhymes to help them remember their letter sounds. They have access to reading books that match the sounds they are learning. As pupils progress through the school, those who need additional help with their reading receive it. Parents are provided with a wealth of information so they can support their children with reading at home.

In lessons, pupils have access to a wide range of resources. They use mathematical aids to determine the value of numbers and structure their calculations. Resources are adapted when appropriate. For example, in art, pupils with SEND have access to tools and equipment that allow them to be successful with their learning. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are motivated to try their best. However, occasionally, the tasks or activities selected by teachers do not always have a clear learning outcome. This means that a few pupils are not able to fully participate and make progress with their learning.

Teachers use a range of methods to help pupils remember what they have learned. For example, in phonics lessons, sounds and 'tricky' words are recapped. In mathematics, pupils complete a fluency exercise before they move on to their new learning. Pupils make use of their classroom 'working walls'. However, there are times when learning moves on too quickly. This means that in a few subjects, pupils' misconceptions are not identified and addressed as well as they should be.

The governing body understands its statutory responsibilities and the importance of challenging and supporting school leaders. It recognises the challenges that face a small staff team when sharing workload and is careful to check up on staff's well-being. Staff, including early career teachers, feel well supported by school leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, assessment is not used as well as it could be to identify gaps in pupils' learning. Consequently, future teaching does not address these gaps in knowledge precisely enough. The school should ensure that teachers identify pupils' misconceptions with precision and consistently secure pupils' knowledge and understanding over time.
- Curriculum tasks do not always have a clear enough focus on the intended learning. This means that some pupils do not participate fully or benefit from the chosen activity. Leaders should ensure that teaching activities allow all pupils to access the learning and benefit from the intended curriculum.

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	118169
Local authority	Isle of Wight
Inspection number	10287908
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gary Booth and Matthew Searle (co-chairs)
Headteacher	Carl Wake
Website	www.sthelenspri.iow.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any 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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the 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.

- 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 lead inspector had meetings with senior school leaders and representatives from the governing body and the local authority.
- The inspectors analysed responses to the staff survey and spoke to staff about their views on the school.
- The inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, additional free-text responses and communications passed to them. The lead inspector also spoke with parents on the morning of the second day of the inspection.
- The inspectors met with a range of pupils to learn their views about the school. They also took into account the responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Kate Fripp, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Vickie Farrow

Ofsted Inspector

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