

Inspection of St John's CofE Primary School

Blakebrook, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY11 6AP

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 January 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at St John's CofE Primary School. Leaders have set high expectations for what pupils should learn and how they should behave. This has proved successful. The school's Christian ethos plays a central role in school life.

Pupils generally behave well. In lessons, pupils listen carefully to their teachers and have positive relationships with staff. At social times, pupils eat together sensibly and enjoy playing with their friends. Bullying is uncommon. The school's anti-bullying ambassadors help to spot issues so that these can be dealt with swiftly by staff.

Leaders have significantly strengthened the school's curriculum. The reading and mathematics curriculum is well structured. In other subjects, leaders have set out what pupils should learn. However, there is more work to do to make this clearer and to help pupils know and remember more over time.

Leaders provide a range of wider opportunities for pupils' personal development. There are several different extra-curricular activities, including a popular football club run by the town's local team, Kidderminster Harriers. More recently, several pupils have attended a Christmas crafts and cookery club. Leaders also run popular residential trips in Year 4 and Year 6.

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

The headteacher, other leaders and the trust have an accurate view of the school. This has helped to focus their efforts on improving many key areas of the school's work. Most staff, though not all, share leaders' values and vision, and what they are trying to achieve.

Leaders have ensured that reading is a high priority throughout the school. Right from Reception, children begin to learn their phonic sounds. Staff regularly check what children know and understand. This allows leaders to group children appropriately so that they receive the most effective support. Teachers continue to teach phonics in key stage 1 so that pupils develop their ability to blend words accurately and read with fluency. Where pupils fall behind, they are given extra support to help them catch up. Leaders invested in new texts during the COVID-19 restrictions so that pupils are now given books that are well matched to their phonic knowledge. As a result, pupils make strong progress in their reading, given their low starting points.

Teachers use assessment strategies effectively in mathematics to check what pupils know and where gaps in knowledge exist. Leaders use this information to help structure the curriculum so that it closely meets the needs of pupils. Teachers help pupils build on what they already know and deepen their understanding of key concepts. Opportunities to reason and problem-solve are well integrated into the

mathematics curriculum. Pupils enjoy their learning in this subject and make good progress.

In other subjects, leaders have used the national curriculum to help set out what pupils should learn. Subject leaders have carefully sequenced topics so that they are logically ordered. While leaders have considered the end-points pupils should reach, in some subjects, not enough careful thought has been given to specifying the smaller chunks of learning needed to build towards these end-points. Furthermore, teachers do not consistently check that pupils are secure in their learning before moving on to something new. This means that some pupils struggle to remember their learning and to link ideas together.

Leaders are highly knowledgeable about pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in the school. They ensure that pupils with SEND are accurately identified and that teachers adapt learning where necessary to meet their needs. Leaders work closely with other agencies so that pupils benefit from the support of external practitioners. Pupils with SEND are well integrated into school life and have full access to the curriculum.

Leaders have put in place an effective personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum. Each year, pupils revisit key themes so that they develop their understanding of topics, such as healthy lifestyles and celebrating difference, over time. As part of the topic 'dreams and goals', the school ran a successful careers fair, where pupils were able to listen to different professionals. The school's assembly programme is well structured so that pupils develop their understanding of recent news stories and fundamental British values.

The local governing body provides effective support and challenge to leaders. Its members are aware of their delegated duties from the trust, and carry these out well. Some staff, in response to Ofsted's survey, questioned the impact of the changes that leaders have made. This does not match with what inspectors found. Nevertheless, there is further work to do to ensure all staff understand the rationale for any change so that all staff collectively share leaders' vision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all appropriate checks are carried out on adults before they begin working at the school.

Leaders have clear systems and processes in place for identifying pupils who need help. Staff receive annual safeguarding training along with weekly briefing notes which bring to their attention any emerging concerns. Staff are clear about how to report concerns and about where these need to be recorded. Leaders keep accurate and up-to-date logs of safeguarding concerns, and ensure that pupils get help and support in a timely way.

Pupils learn to keep themselves safe through the PSHE curriculum, such as when working online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, leaders have not precisely identified the smaller blocks of learning that help build towards the aims of the national curriculum. This means that some pupils struggle to link their ideas together and build on what they already know. Leaders should ensure that they carefully identify what key knowledge sits beneath each curriculum end-point so that it is clear how learning builds over time.
- Teachers do not consistently check that pupils have grasped what they are learning in some foundation subjects. This means that, in some subjects, pupils cannot use knowledge fluently and gaps in knowledge go unchecked. Leaders should ensure that teachers systematically check that pupils are secure in what they know so that gaps and misconceptions can be spotted quickly.
- Some staff do not understand the rationale for the changes that leaders have made. This means they have a negative view of the school and feel disconnected from its journey of improvement. Leaders should continue to find ways to engage with all staff so that they collectively share leaders' vision.

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	144999
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10256806
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	316
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Rosie Shorter
Headteacher	Caroline Lowe
Website	www.stjohns.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined The Spire Church of England Learning Trust in September 2018.
- The headteacher, who was previously the deputy headteacher, became substantive in her post from September 2018.
- The school has a Christian ethos.
- The school runs a breakfast club for pupils who attend the school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors focused on the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and geography. Inspectors examined leaders' curriculum plans, visited lessons,

looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about the way these subjects are taught. They also looked at other subjects to check how they are planned and taught.

- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about behaviour, attendance, the school curriculum and improvement planning. The school website was also checked.
- Inspectors talked to staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements. They examined how leaders make employment checks on staff and scrutinised further safeguarding records. They also asked how incidents reported by pupils are recorded and analysed.
- Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with the chief executive officer, members of the local governing body, school improvement advisers, the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

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