

# St John the Baptist Church of England Controlled Primary School

Solomons Lane, Waltham Chase, Southampton, Hampshire SO32 2LY

## Inspection dates

13–14 June 2017

|  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>                 | <b>Good</b>          |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management   | <b>Good</b>          |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | <b>Good</b>          |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare  | <b>Good</b>          |
| Outcomes for pupils                          | <b>Good</b>          |
| Early years provision                        | <b>Good</b>          |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- This is a good and improving school. The school's central values, expressed as 'respect, friendship, trust', are evident throughout every aspect of the school's work.
- Leaders and governors know the school's strengths well and have successfully driven improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. They have clear plans for further development.
- Pupils are making good progress due to effective teaching and their positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy school and are keen to do well.
- Children in the early years make good progress. Adults skilfully channel children's enthusiasm within a stimulating learning environment.
- The school's rich curriculum provides relevant contexts for pupils' learning and thoroughly engages them. An extensive range of extra-curricular activities contributes significantly to pupils' academic and personal development.
- Pupils frequently use their literacy skills across the curriculum, but opportunities for them to apply their mathematical and computing skills in other subjects are limited.
- Warm and mutually respectful relationships between adults and pupils underpin the school's harmonious atmosphere.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted successfully. Pupils behave well, and are friendly, polite and courteous.
- Pupils benefit from many opportunities to express their opinions and contribute to school life. They understand the democratic process and have a strong sense of tolerance and fair play.
- Parents feel welcome and value the extent to which their children are cared for and kept safe.
- Pupils demonstrate increasing resilience and self-reliance. The extent to which teachers capitalise on this, and provide opportunities for pupils to develop their independence, is inconsistent across the school.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop pupils' confidence, self-reliance and learning skills, by:
  - encouraging pupils to pursue their own lines of enquiry
  - providing further opportunities for pupils to gather information for themselves
  - ensuring that children in the early years have sufficient time to independently carry out tasks of their own choosing.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to practise, consolidate and extend their mathematics and computing skills across the curriculum.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Since her appointment at the beginning of the school year, the headteacher has worked with relentless determination to drive improvements. With the strong support of the deputy headteacher, middle leaders and governors the school has moved forward in many ways.
- A clear vision and shared ambition permeates the school. High expectations regarding the quality of the teaching, pupils' attitudes to learning and the breadth of the curriculum are bearing fruit.
- A close eye is kept on the quality of teaching. Leaders carry out regular classroom observations, together with checks on pupils' progress, to identify and share successful practice. They also identify where further training and support for teachers are needed. This close monitoring contributes to accurate self-evaluation.
- Subject leaders are highly effective. They are empowered to take leading roles in promoting effective teaching, and designing an imaginative and challenging curriculum. Staff feel valued. They are enthusiastic, and are willingly and successfully implementing initiatives.
- The rich curriculum provides many memorable experiences for pupils. They benefit from an extremely wide range of after-school clubs. Pupils respond enthusiastically to studying topics such as the cold war, ancient Egypt, and the Victorians. Learning about displaced families, poverty and the industrial revolution makes a valuable contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Opportunities for pupils to be elected to the various pupil councils and to be appointed prefects give them first-hand experience of democracy. Fundamental British values are also promoted successfully through the personal, social and health education curriculum. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils have ample opportunities to practise, consolidate and extend their literacy skills across the curriculum. This is evident in pupils' writing as Egyptian explorers, for example. Opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical and computing skills in other subjects are more limited because these are not systematically included in curriculum planning.
- Additional funding is used effectively. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged benefit from a wide range of additional support to help them overcome any barriers to progress and achievement. Additional equipment for physical education has been acquired and specialist sports coaches demonstrate to pupils and staff how it can be effectively used.
- The vast majority of parents are very positive about the school. The headteacher, with the support of governors, has led a successful drive to increase parental engagement. Initiatives include: monthly lunches for children and their parents; information on the

school's approach to phonics teaching; a weekly 'drop-off' coffee shop; and a coffee and cake club for parents with children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governance is very effective. Governors have a wide range of skills, experience and expertise. Their responsibilities are distributed effectively to ensure that all their statutory duties are met.
- Governors keep well informed. They receive detailed reports from the headteacher, they use parent surveys and invite subject leaders to their meetings. They visit the school regularly to talk to staff and pupils, and to gather first-hand information about how the school's central values of, 'respect, friendship, trust' are integral to school life.
- Minutes of the meetings of the governing body record many insightful questions to school leaders. Performance management is effective and governors do not shirk from supporting the headteacher in ensuring a robust response when weaknesses become apparent.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have created a culture where safeguarding is a core responsibility of all adults in the school. Leaders ensure that all necessary checks are made on adults who work in or visit the school.
- The required employment checks are made. The site is secure and well supervised. Staff are appropriately trained and there are regular safeguarding updates throughout the year. Consequently, all staff are clear about the procedures for passing on concerns about pupils' welfare.
- Pupils are taught how to keep safe. They look out for one another and are secure in the knowledge that they could speak to an adult if they had concerns about themselves or a friend.
- Record-keeping is comprehensive and systematic. The school works effectively with parents to keep pupils safe. There are good arrangements to act in partnership with families, and external agencies, when children need support or protection.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teachers plan lessons well. They are quick to adjust plans during lessons according to how pupils respond. Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to address any emerging misconceptions and to provide pupils with further challenge when necessary.
- Pupils rise to teachers' high expectations and have taken on board the schools 'REACH' (Resilience, Enthusiasm, Ambition, Creativity, Hands-on learning) approach to learning. Teachers implement the school's marking policy consistently. Pupils were keen to describe how they assessed their own, or their classmates', work. One explained, 'Star for good work, steps for what to improve, and strategy for how to improve.'

- Teachers use questions well to prompt pupils' thinking and deepen their understanding. They ensure there are plenty of resources to hand to support pupils' learning. Pupils talked enthusiastically about the 'toolkit' they use for literacy. A wide range of practical resources for mathematics helps to reinforce pupils' basic number.
- Planning in literacy helps pupils to make links between reading and writing. Pupils are taught how to 'read between the lines' as they analyse extracts from challenging texts. They described how they enjoy reading lessons. One explained: 'In guided reading, I pick up ideas and use them myself. When I'm writing, I often wonder, "Where did that come from?"'
- Teachers set activities which build on pupils' existing knowledge and understanding in mathematics. They regularly set 'prove it!' tasks which challenge pupils to think of different ways to explain how they arrive at solutions to problems. This helps pupils deepen their mathematical understanding.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They adopt the approaches modelled by teachers when interacting with pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported. They mostly learn alongside their classmates in lessons but benefit also from working with support staff individually, or in small groups.
- Occasionally, the teaching does not fully capitalise on pupils' positive attitudes and secure learning skills. Teachers miss opportunities to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding by encouraging them to pursue their own lines of enquiry and gather information for themselves.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Parents' responses to a recent school survey indicated that the overwhelming majority feel welcomed and are confident that their children are happy, looked after well and kept safe. Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, showed a similar picture, although a minority of parents expressed concerns about the management of behaviour and bullying.
- Inspectors thoroughly considered the extent to which parents' concerns are well founded. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and very well looked after. They said bullying is a rare occurrence and they are confident that adults would move swiftly to stop it.
- The school's approach to managing behaviour was carefully explained in a recent newsletter. The inspection found that pupils with complex social, emotional and mental health problems are supported very effectively. Disruption in lessons is rare and, for the most part, these pupils fully participate in learning.
- Pupils contribute to assessing potential risks before school trips, and this contributes to their understanding that they can take personal responsibility for their own safety. Systematic training, for example in road safety and the use of the internet, means

pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe.

- Many parents were highly appreciative of the school's attention to pupils' development and welfare. Their comments included: 'St John's is a very caring school which has a real sense of community spirit', 'This is a very nurturing school' and 'St John's is a safe and positive learning environment.'

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In lessons, pupils listen well and are keen to learn. They cooperate with one another and are mutually supportive. Pupils in the Years 5 and 6 classes demonstrated this as they debated the introduction of railways to Southampton. They argued the pros and cons in good spirit.
- Pupils are resilient and try hard. They work well independently, although some pupils lack the confidence to gather information for themselves, and are over reliant on teachers' guidance.
- Pupils are polite and courteous within the school's atmosphere of mutual respect. They make sensible choices from the wide range of activities on offer during breaktimes. Boys and girls play happily together. Their behaviour in assemblies is exemplary.
- Pupils demonstrate high levels of care and friendship. This is evident, not least, in the way they show understanding when a classmate with complex social, emotional and mental health needs occasionally requires the attention of their teacher.
- Pupils enjoy school. Attendance has improved and is above the national average. Absence is monitored systematically and the school works hard to support the few parents whose children are frequently absent.

## **Outcomes for pupils**

## **Good**

- Pupils' achievement has improved over the last two years. Pupils are now making good progress and reaching above-average standards. Pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their different starting points, reflecting the school's success in helping pupils to overcome barriers to learning.
- The school's detailed assessment information indicates that pupils in each year group are making at least good progress. This is also evident in the progress in pupils' books.
- Pupils' progress in phonics has accelerated recently due to an increased emphasis on early reading skills. The older pupils read widely and are increasingly adept at analysing texts, drawing inferences, and identifying how authors use figurative language to engage the reader. Pupils discuss their reading preferences maturely. One remarked, 'I prefer reading to a video; reading puts a movie in your head.'
- Pupils' writing is increasingly well presented and free from mistakes. Pupils typically make rapid progress to reach above-average standards in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Handwriting is a strength, with most pupils writing neatly and fluently in a joined script.

- Underpinned by their secure basic number skills, pupils achieve well in mathematics. They learn to apply their skills in a range of contexts, developing a greater depth of understanding.
- Pupils make good progress in science, reaching above-average standards. They develop very secure scientific skills, such as hypothesising about causes and knowing what is required to conduct fair tests.
- The most able pupils are rising to the increased challenges. By Year 6, they routinely use their mathematical knowledge to solve complex problems. They write in a range of styles with considerable flair. For example, drawing on her reading of 'Wolf Brother' by Michelle Paver, one pupil wrote,
 

'Furious, murderous eyes stared out at the endless darkness of the forest... its colossal claws killed all joy... running down its face, a long scar stood there like a memory.'
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, are making similar progress to other pupils nationally. Teachers ensure that they have appropriate support, and challenge, in all lessons. The proportion working at a greater depth in reading, writing, mathematics and science is comparable to the overall national picture for other pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. In addition to the extra help they receive, teachers ensure that they are supported effectively during day-to-day lessons.
- Pupils' secure basic skills and increasing depth of understanding, together with their positive attitudes to learning, mean they are well prepared for secondary education and beyond.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- The early years provision is managed well by a very experienced practitioner. Due to effective teaching, children make good progress and an above-average proportion reach a good level of development.
- Recent improvements in self-evaluation have given a more accurate picture of the provision, and have resulted in developments to the range of learning opportunities outdoors. Children enjoy learning in the well-resourced and spacious areas, which include a copse where they enthusiastically explore the natural environment.
- Children make good progress in developing their early language and number skills. This contributes to the fact that an above-average proportion of children typically reach a good level of development by the end of Reception.
- Adults take every opportunity to interact with children to promote their communication and language skills. They also allow time for children to follow their own ideas and explore things for themselves. Some children have the potential to further develop their independence and extend their skills in this way.
- Children behave well. They are interested and enjoy all that they do. When finding out about the work of a veterinary practice, for example, they demonstrated very positive attitudes. They sustained their enthusiasm and concentration. Children are polite and listen intently to their teachers. They cooperate well with one another.

- Parents are fully involved in their children’s learning. They contribute to assessing children’s starting points as they transfer from pre-school settings. Effective use of technology enables parents to have continuous updates on their children’s progress and to add their own comments on their development. Parents are confident that their children are kept safe.
- Children are well prepared for their transition to Year 1. They have secure basic skills and are eager to learn.

## School details

|                         |           |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Unique reference number | 116314    |
| Local authority         | Hampshire |
| Inspection number       | 10032864  |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Type of school                      | Primary   |
| School category                     | Voluntary controlled  |
| Age range of pupils                 | 4 to 11   |
| Gender of pupils                    | Mixed   |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 295   |
| Appropriate authority               | The governing body  |
| Chair                               | Petrina Hillier   |
| Headteacher                         | Kay Bowen   |
| Telephone number                    | 01329 833141  |
| Website                             | <a href="http://stjohnthebaptistprimary.co.uk/">http://stjohnthebaptistprimary.co.uk/</a> |
| Email address                       | <a href="mailto:office@st-john-pri.hants.sch.uk">office@st-john-pri.hants.sch.uk</a>      |
| Date of previous inspection         | 25–26 March 2015  |

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is slightly larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2016.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The governing body makes arrangements for breakfast and after-school clubs. These are run independently of the school.
- Children in the early years attend full-time in one of two Reception classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed activities in all year groups. Most observations were undertaken with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body and a member of the local authority.
- Meetings were also held with pupils to discuss their views on their learning and well-being, and with parents to gain their views about the school.
- Inspectors heard pupils read from Years 1, 2 and 6. They talked to pupils at breaktimes and in the lunch hall, in lessons and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents including: information on pupils' performance across the school; school improvement plans; the school's evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment; governor minutes; and curriculum plans.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of pupils' books to see what progress had been made across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors took account of 126 responses to the Ofsted parent survey, Parent View, and 148 responses to a recent parent survey carried out by the school. They also considered the results of the inspection questionnaires completed by 90 pupils and 13 members of staff.

## Inspection team

|                              |                  |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Rob Crompton, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Alan Jenner                  | Ofsted Inspector |
| Debra Anderson               | Ofsted Inspector |

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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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