

Inspection of St John's RC Primary School

Chepstow Road, Chorlton-Cum-Hardy, Manchester M21 9SN

Inspection dates: 8–9 October 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to St John's. They have positive attitudes towards school and are friendly towards one another. The school richly deserves its status as a 'rights respecting' school. Pupils live the school's core values of love, joy, respect, gratitude, kindness and resilience.

Pupils know that the school is a safe place to be. Staff have excellent relationships with pupils. They are watchful and care for pupils well. Pupils work and play well together in a purposeful atmosphere. The pupils we spoke to told us that there is no bullying. Leaders are thorough in their approach to managing pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well as a result.

There is a vast range of lunchtime and after-school clubs, which help to nurture pupils' individual talents. Pupils attend clubs such as comedy drama, violin and a wide range of sporting activities. Leaders ensure that there is something for everyone.

Parents and carers are happy with the school. Many commented on the positive changes that they have seen in recent years. Leaders and governors have high expectations for pupils. However, leaders and governors know that there is more to do to realise their ambitious vision for the school.

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

The headteacher has ensured that there is focus on developing the quality of education in the school. She has reinvigorated the ambition among staff.

Leaders have refreshed the school's curriculum. They are clear about what they would like pupils to achieve in each subject. Teachers make meaningful links between subjects to help pupils know and remember more. Pupils' recall of their learning is strong in many subjects, such as science and computing. However, there are some tweaks needed to consistently achieve their aims across all subjects, for example in Spanish. This is because many subject leaders are new to their roles. They have not had the opportunity to check regularly on the quality of education in their subjects to bring about the necessary improvements.

Leaders have put reading at the heart of the curriculum. Teachers choose interesting books so that pupils develop a love of reading. The books pupils read match the sounds that they learn. However, teachers' approach to the teaching of phonics between different year groups is disjointed. Some less able pupils repeat learning from the previous year when they are capable of moving on more quickly. Despite this, pupils progress well to become confident and fluent readers as they move through key stage 1. By the time they leave the school, pupils achieve well in reading compared to other pupils nationally.

In writing and mathematics, pupils' knowledge and skills are developed well.

Teachers clearly explain to pupils how to be successful in their writing. This enables pupils to write confidently and for different reasons in Years 5 and 6. However, teachers do not always expect younger pupils to have high standards in their handwriting and spelling. Leaders are aware of this, and their actions have ensured that this is improving in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4. In mathematics, pupils have opportunities to solve problems to deepen their understanding. By the time they leave the school, pupils' attainment in mathematics is often higher than that of pupils nationally.

Teachers are aware of the needs of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For example, some pupils take part in meditation to ensure a calm start to the day. Staff have received specific training to understand pupils' needs well. As a result, these pupils achieve well.

In the early years, children write words and simple phrases from an early stage. They quickly grasp the sequence of numbers up to 10 before moving on to more complicated work. However, children's control of a pencil means that their work is sometimes untidy. Children explore their well-resourced learning activities with enthusiasm. Their achievement is typically above that of other pupils nationally.

There is an exceptional programme of additional activities, such as residential trips, for all key stage 2 pupils. For example, Year 5 pupils take part in a Spanish exchange visit. The school has received awards due to the successful promotion of physical education and sport. The strong personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils' behaviour is respectful. This helps them to learn from each other. Older pupils especially enjoy their debates, for example on pollution. They enjoy listening to others' opinions and points of view.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff receive regular training, so they know how to keep pupils safe. Staff know pupils well. They are well placed to notice any signs of abuse. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. They have a good awareness of online safety and the steps that they need to take to protect their privacy. The headteacher has ensured that the needs of vulnerable pupils are met well. Parents say that they can approach the school if they need help and that their concerns will be acted upon.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- It is clear from leaders' actions that they have taken great strides to improve the school's curriculum. However, there is a lack of consistency in the quality of education in some subjects. Senior leaders should ensure that subject leaders

check on the quality of education in their subjects more regularly. Subject leaders should make sure that the quality of the curriculum is consistently strong in all subjects and year groups. Senior leaders have identified this and are in the process of bringing this about to realise their intent for the curriculum. Ofsted's transition arrangements were taken into account on this inspection.

- For the lowest-ability pupils, leaders should make sure that there is a more seamless transition between the phonics work completed in different year groups. Although pupils revise sounds they have already learned, this could be completed more quickly. These pupils should also have more opportunities to practise the sounds they already know before moving on to learning new sounds. This will help lower-ability pupils to develop their phonics knowledge more successfully.
- In the early years, teachers should support children to develop their fine motor skills more widely. This will ensure that children learn to write neatly and will set the foundations for better handwriting in key stage 1 and beyond.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	105546
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10110167
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	433
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Father P. McMahon
Headteacher	B. O'Donoghue
Website	www.stjohnsrc.net
Date of previous inspection	6 November 2006

Information about this school

- A new headteacher and assistant headteacher were appointed in 2017. Since the last inspection, almost all teachers are new to the school.
- St John's is a Roman Catholic school. The school's last section 48 inspection for schools with a religious character took place in May 2018.
- The governing body runs before- and after-school provision on the school site.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- We met with the headteacher, senior leadership team and subject leaders throughout the inspection.
- We spoke with representatives from Manchester local authority and from Salford archdiocese.
- We met with groups of pupils from across the school, both formally and informally, to ask them about safeguarding. We also met with the headteacher, governors, teachers and teaching assistants. We reviewed documentation which

included the school's safeguarding policy, the register of checks carried out on new employees and safeguarding records.

- We looked at the school's behaviour records, observed pupils at breaktimes and discussed behaviour and bullying with pupils.
- We spoke with parents at the start of the school day.
- We considered reading, writing, science and PSHE as part of this inspection. For these subjects, we spoke with the headteacher, met with curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils, undertook an analysis of pupils' work and visited lessons. We heard pupils read. We also spoke to key stage 2 pupils about their work across the curriculum.

Inspection team

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