

Inspection of a good school: St John's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Kingsmill Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 3JU

Inspection dates:

15–16 October 2019

Outcome

St John's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

St John's is a happy school where pupils 'learn, love and laugh together'. Pupils enjoy many aspects of wider school life, including sport, choir and trips. They proudly told me about qualifying for the county finals in table tennis for the third year running. As one pupil said, 'There is something for everyone at St John's.' Playtimes are active and enjoyable, with a wide range of things to do.

Pupils are articulate and polite, with a thirst for learning. They say that their teachers are dedicated to helping them learn. Expectations of pupils are high and they try their best in everything they do. Leaders encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour. The school's values, 'Love, respect and truth', guide pupils to make the right choices. Consequently, pupils behave well.

Pupils told me that there is always a member of staff to talk to if they are worried. They feel safe in school. If they do fall out with their friends, staff help them to reflect about what happened. They know that staff will always make things better again. Pupils said that bullying is rare and they do not worry about it.

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

St John's is well led and managed. Leaders know exactly what they need to do to further improve the good quality of education in the school. They have carefully thought about what they want pupils to learn in each subject. They have also considered the order in which they want pupils to learn new knowledge and skills. In English and mathematics, this works well. For example, there is a sharp focus on children in the early years learning the correct mathematical vocabulary. During the inspection, children could confidently use the words 'longer' and 'shorter' while making snakes. However, the order in which pupils learn knowledge and develop skills in some subjects does not always build quite as well

as it needs to on what pupils have previously learned.

Pupils want to learn. They ask challenging questions to help them understand. Teachers answer them well because of secure subject knowledge. For example, in a mixed Year 3 and 4 geography lesson, a pupil wanted to know more about the 'Ring of Fire'. The teacher used what pupils had already learned to help them understand what causes the volcanic activity.

Children in the early years get off to a flying start in their reading journey. Teachers use songs and rhymes well and children remember what they have learned. Children quickly build up their phonics knowledge. Anyone who finds learning letter sounds hard is swiftly identified and extra help is given. This support is skilful and pupils catch up.

Pupils understand how often they must read at home and rise to these expectations. Pupils enjoy reading and talk fondly of the stories their teachers read to them. In key stage 2, leaders carefully select the books that pupils study in their English lessons, and pupils develop their reading skills well.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn extremely well at St John's. Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum for these pupils. Staff have received high-quality training which has resulted in a skilled workforce. Teachers provide pupils with SEND with the right support. Leaders put the needs of pupils at the heart of all decisions they make.

Staff and pupils understand the behaviour policy well. Lessons are not disrupted by poor behaviour. Leaders have high expectations of how pupils should behave. They do not tolerate bullying.

Pupils are responsible. They enjoy the leadership roles available to them, such as house captains and young interpreters. Leaders pay great attention to pupils' well-being and mental health. For example, pupils know how to stay calm by using relaxation techniques they have learned. Pupils contribute well to the community, for example when they focus on helping others by collecting food items for the local food bank.

Leaders are committed to developing the skills of teachers in being able to lead others. Subject leaders are regularly given time to check on the quality of teaching in their subject. They know where any inconsistencies remain. They support and challenge their colleagues well. Leaders have involved all staff in developing the curriculum. Staff understand the purpose behind what they teach. They like working at St John's. Leaders are considerate of staff workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff understand exactly what to do if they are concerned about a child. They regularly spend time talking to staff about different scenarios and risks. This has led to a vigilant culture. Everyone knows their role in keeping pupils safe.

Leaders know their pupils well. There is strong communication among the safeguarding team. Safeguarding records are detailed and leaders' actions are swift and well considered. The headteacher is determined to get the right help for pupils and families when needed.

Leaders carry out appropriate safeguarding checks on the suitability of staff to work in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have revised what they want pupils to learn in all subjects. This includes the key vocabulary that leaders have identified they want pupils to know and remember. Leaders need to refine the curriculum plans further so that teachers always teach knowledge and skills in the most appropriate order and in a way that helps pupils understand and remember more.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 1–2 February 2011.

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 are 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	116400
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10111327
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	312
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Geoff Knappett
Headteacher	Angela Nicholls
Website	www.st-johnscofe.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 March 2016

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to leadership, staffing and governance. The headteacher and deputy headteacher took up their posts in September 2016. There has been some instability in leadership due to long-term absence at senior level.
- The chair of the governing body took up his role in September 2018.
- The school is located in the Diocese of Portsmouth and Winchester. The school received its last section 48 inspection in March 2016.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, I met with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. I also met with the chair of the governing body and two other governors. I spoke to a representative from the local authority on the telephone.
- The provision of reading, mathematics and geography was considered as part of this inspection. This involved speaking to subject leaders, teachers and pupils. I also visited lessons and looked at pupils' work and leaders' planning.
- To inspect safeguarding, I met with two of the school's designated safeguarding leads,

spoke to staff, governors and pupils, checked recruitment procedures and looked at safeguarding records and policies.

- I considered the 95 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, including 67 free-text comments. In addition, 31 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff were considered, as were 37 responses to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire

Inspection team

Lea Hannam, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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