

Inspection of a good school: St John's CofE (C) Primary School

Wombourne Road, Swindon, Dudley, West Midlands DY3 4NB

Inspection dates:

7 November 2019

Outcome

St John's CofE (C) Primary School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

The pupils at St John's are happy and feel safe. Staff and pupils share a strong sense of community and collective responsibility for the school. Pupils are polite, well behaved and proud to be part of the school. Staff and pupils exemplify the school values of 'Play, pray, prosper'.

Leaders want pupils to achieve highly. However, they have not made sure that all teachers have had enough training to help pupils achieve the standards of which they are capable.

Pupils play happily together. The older pupils hold positions of responsibility, such as being part of the school council, which they say helps them to develop important life skills. Pupils told us that bullying rarely happens and, if anyone is unkind to another pupil, staff deal with it straight away.

Leaders have a strong commitment to developing pupils' appreciation of culture. They make sure that all children are given a wealth of opportunities, such as visits to the theatre, residential trips and a variety of after-school clubs. These activities are well attended.

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

The school offers a broad curriculum. Pupils have a wide range of interesting and relevant experiences, which support their personal development well.

Leaders are now prioritising reading well. They see reading as the key with which pupils can unlock learning in all subjects. The culture of reading is starting to develop across school. Teachers begin teaching phonics in Nursery and phonics is taught daily up to the end of Year 2.

While leaders know how phonics should be taught, they have not made sure that this is

put into practice. Currently, the teaching of reading does not help pupils who have fallen behind to catch up quickly enough. Pupils' reading books do not consistently match their phonics knowledge, which is slowing their progress. This is especially the case for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, some pupils develop into confident and fluent readers. They enjoy reading regularly to adults at home and in school.

In mathematics, there is a mixed picture. Leaders have not set out clearly how pupils' knowledge and skills should be developed in different year groups or in each mathematical topic. In key stage 1 and lower key stage 2, pupils' books and discussions with pupils show that teachers do not build on pupils' prior learning well enough. Therefore, some pupils are unable to choose the appropriate mathematical strategies to solve different calculations. However, in upper key stage 2, pupils are more confident in talking about their mathematical knowledge and how to apply it to their work to help them solve problems. For example, inspectors saw pupils applying their knowledge of times tables when rounding and estimating.

Art is a strength of the school. The curriculum is well sequenced and planned clearly. It takes into account what all pupils need to learn. Pupils build on their art skills very well from one year to the next. For example, pupils learning about shading in the work of Salvador Dali talked about how these techniques built on their learning from the previous year. Pupils talk confidently about the skills and knowledge they have learned in their art lessons. They have a real passion for the subject. The art curriculum offers a wide range of experiences and there are plans in place to visit the local art gallery. Craft clubs are well attended.

Leaders understand the importance of providing all children, including two- and three-year-old children, with a good start to their education. Children in the early years enjoy a range of activities and experiences which are well matched to their needs.

Governors play a key role in the school. There has recently been an increase in the number of governors who are skilled and trained to challenge and support school leaders. Governors are determined to help to improve the school and are beginning to do so. However, there is still work to do.

Parents and carers spoken to are happy with the school. They particularly like the sense of belonging and the nurturing feel that this small school offers. Parents commented that their children enjoy coming to school and have lots of opportunities to enrich their learning, for example the extra-curricular clubs.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff and governors receive effective safeguarding training. As a result, staff have a good understanding of how to identify signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm.

The headteacher keeps accurate and well-organised records and works well with outside

agencies to ensure that all pupils are kept safe. Leaders know the school community well. They have put in place training for parents to help them understand the importance of keeping their children safe when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some of the lowest-ability pupils in key stage 1 and Reception, including pupils with SEND, do not have reading books that match their phonics knowledge. This hampers their ability to decode words and read successfully. To enable these pupils to reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check, leaders need to ensure that teachers choose texts that are accurately matched to pupils' reading and phonics abilities. They should ensure that pupils are provided with opportunities to practise reading skills in their lessons and beyond.
- The mathematics curriculum is not well planned and sequenced, and staff have not had enough training in the subject. Leaders should ensure that the mathematics curriculum is planned and sequenced in a logical order to enable pupils to build on their mathematical knowledge and skills so that they can know more, remember more and achieve well. They should make sure that teachers have appropriate training to enable them to deliver a sequenced mathematical curriculum.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 2–3 March 2016.

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	124278
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10111812
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gavin Bowen
Headteacher	Donna Calloway
Website	www.st-johns-swindon.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2–3 March 2016

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the school has started providing education for two-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, inspectors spoke formally with pupils about their work and school life. Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, subject leaders, governors, teachers and parents.
- The inspectors looked in depth at reading, mathematics and art. In each subject, inspection activities included discussions with the subject leader, visits to lessons, discussions with teachers, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read across all classes and talked to them about their reading.
- The inspectors considered pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire. The inspectors spoke formally with a group of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher to discuss the school's safeguarding procedures. They reviewed policies and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour,

attendance and pupils who have left the school. The inspectors spoke to pupils, staff and parents about how safe pupils are at school.

- The inspectors reviewed the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans and information on the school's website. They considered the six responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors considered the 12 free-text responses to Parent View, Ofsted's parent questionnaire. They also spoke to some parents at the beginning of the school day.

Inspection team

Kate Brunt, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Josie Leese

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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