

Inspection of St John's C of E Primary School

Heath Road, Sandbach, Cheshire CW11 2LE

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a caring school. All pupils are welcomed and made to feel part of the St John's family. Leaders and staff value all pupils and meet their needs well. In many subjects, leaders and staff have high expectations for pupils. However, in some subjects, pupils do not achieve as well as they could. This is because leaders have not thought carefully enough about the curriculum plans in these subjects.

Pupils feel safe and are happy here most of the time. Many pupils are caring and considerate towards each other. Older pupils enjoy being buddies with the younger children. This helps them settle quickly into school life. Pupils enjoy taking part in activities such as drama, sports and choir.

Many pupils behave well and have many friends. They enjoy going to the pet room together to see Milo the hamster and Nemo the fish. Pupils also appreciate the wide range of activities outdoors, where they can grow vegetables, make dens and watch the birds. On occasion, there are incidents of bullying and name-calling. Pupils say that staff do not tolerate this and deal with it quickly.

School leaders and staff work hard to support families. However, some pupils do not attend school often enough.

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

Leaders have made sure that pupils experience a broad and interesting curriculum. They have made improvements to curriculum plans in many subjects. These plans clearly outline the knowledge that leaders want pupils to learn and the order in which it should be taught. Leaders have provided training for teachers which has strengthened their subject knowledge. In these subjects, teachers know what to teach and when to teach it. They plan activities that build on what pupils already know. This helps pupils to achieve well in these subjects.

In other subjects, curriculum plans do not clearly show what pupils need to know by the end of each school year. Teachers are unclear about what pupils should already know. Consequently, teachers have low expectations for pupils' learning in some year groups. This stops pupils from building on their learning from year to year in a number of subjects.

Leaders have introduced a new way of teaching reading for pupils. This approach helps most pupils to develop a love of reading and get the practise they need to become better readers. However, leaders have not prioritised early reading. The phonics curriculum is not taught consistently by staff. Not all staff have received up-to-date training in the teaching of phonics. Many of the activities that teachers plan do not help pupils learn what they need to know to become successful readers. Pupils' reading books are not well matched to the sounds that they know. As a result, children in Reception and in key stage 1 do not achieve well in reading. This is also

the case for pupils who need to catch up and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The support that they receive is not effective and targeted to meet their needs.

Children in Reception settle quickly because they are well looked after. They feel safe. They enjoy playing with each other, they share resources, and they behave well. Staff support children to build their vocabulary, and they encourage them to extend their thinking. Curriculum plans lack ambition and are not sufficiently precise in all areas of learning. Some activities planned for children do not build on what they already know. Consequently, some children do not secure the skills they need to make a strong start to key stage 1.

Leaders make sure that pupils with SEND are welcomed into the school. The schools' highly inclusive ethos helps these pupils to settle quickly. Pupils with SEND receive the support that they need to access the curriculum as well as their peers. However, as with other pupils, in those subjects where the curriculum is underdeveloped, and in early reading, they do not achieve to their potential.

Leaders have made changes to the behaviour policy. Staff have received training so that they can manage pupils' behaviour well. Consequently, many pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. However, in some lessons, some pupils do not always behave well. This disturbs the learning of other pupils.

The curriculum provides pupils with some opportunities to develop their personal development. These include teaching pupils about keeping safe when online and outside of school. Many pupils describe a school which is tolerant and respectful of others.

Staff appreciate the consideration that leaders have for their workload and well-being. They feel valued and work well as a team.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff are well trained in keeping pupils safe. Staff know what signs of abuse to look for. They report concerns quickly. Leaders work closely with parents and external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families get any support that they need.

Pupils learn about important aspects of safety. They are well informed about how to keep themselves safe, especially when they are online. They are happy to share their worries with adults. They trust staff at the school to keep them safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum is not planned and sequenced well enough to build pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Expectations for pupils' learning in some year groups are therefore too low. This stops pupils from building on their learning from year to year. Leaders need to ensure that endpoints for pupils' learning in these subjects are more clearly defined within the curriculum. This will help to ensure that the expected progression in pupils' knowledge and skills is clear for staff and pupils.
- Leaders have not developed an ambitious and well-sequenced phonics curriculum. Some adults are not well trained to teach phonics. Pupils also read books that are not matched to their phonics knowledge. These weaknesses result in some pupils, especially those who need additional help to catch up, not making the progress that they should in reading. Leaders should ensure that a well-sequenced phonics curriculum is put in place. They should also ensure that all staff who teach phonics are well trained and that books are well matched to the sounds pupils are learning. This will help to ensure that pupils develop into confident and fluent readers.
- Leaders have not assured themselves that the early years curriculum meets the needs of all children. They have not checked that children develop, deepen and consolidate their knowledge and understanding from their starting points. This leads to children not achieving as well as they should in the early years. Leaders must ensure that the early curriculum is ambitious for all children so that they are better prepared for Year 1.
- Some pupils do not behave well and have poor attitudes to learning. This behaviour disrupts the learning of others. Leaders recognise the need to address this and have refined the behaviour policy to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. Leaders should ensure that the policy is consistently followed by staff so that pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning improve.

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.

If you are the school and 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	111334
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10199619
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	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jennifer Cox
Headteacher	Rob Whittle
Website	www.stjohnssandbachheath.cheshire.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 February 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is a Church of England school. Its last section 48 inspection took place in June 2016. The next section 48 inspection is due in 2023.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, senior leaders, the administrative officer, two governors, including the chair of the governing body, and representatives from the local authority and the diocese.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation for safeguarding, including the record of required checks carried out on school staff. They spoke with pupils

about safeguarding. They also reviewed case files. They met with the person responsible for safeguarding to discuss how the staff work to keep pupils safe.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They also observed them as they moved around the school.
- They spoke with pupils about their experiences at school.
- They looked at the 40 responses to Ofsted's Parent View, an online questionnaire for parents, and the 40 free-text responses from parents, to find out their views of the school. Inspectors spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school.
- Inspectors also considered the 16 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and physical education. They talked with the leaders of these subjects and looked at curriculum plans. They visited lessons and looked at examples of pupils' work. They also talked with teachers and pupils about what pupils were learning.

Inspection team

Julie Barlow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Joan Williamson

Ofsted Inspector

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