

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

Sallowbush Road, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE29 7LA

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 October 2021

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where everyone is welcome and pupils say that 'it feels like an extended family'. Pupils enjoy coming to school and playing with their friends. Pupils are happy, safe, and well cared for. It is a calm and pleasant place.

Pupils have 'the chance to learn, grow and make friends in a happy and inclusive environment.' Pupils behave well in the classroom because they know what is expected of them. They enjoy the variety of subjects they learn about. Pupils are polite and respectful to other people.

Breaktimes and lunchtimes are sociable occasions. Pupils say that bullying is rare. When it does happen, pupils say that adults take it seriously and deal with it straight away.

Pupils enjoy the roles and responsibilities they hold across the school. For example, as school parliament representatives. The elected school eco champions work to raise awareness of how everyone can become more environmentally friendly. Other pupils enjoy carrying out roles such as being a distribution manager, an environment manager or interpreter. In these roles, pupils said that they can make the school even better.

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

Leaders have carefully considered the knowledge pupils should learn in each curriculum subject. Staff have benefited from well-focused training in how to deliver this curriculum to pupils. As a result, staff organise learning over time in a logical order. This helps pupils to learn well in each of the subjects they study including broadening pupils' knowledge of words and their meanings. Pupils told the inspector that they find their work challenging and interesting and always try their best, especially when completing extended writing in different subject areas.

Leaders have trained staff in their chosen phonics programme and have invested in reading books that are well matched to the sounds that children are learning. Children

start learning phonics as soon as they join the Reception classes. They carry on with their daily reading lessons as they move on to Year 1 and Year 2 so that children learn to read effectively. Leaders make reading a high priority across all the year groups. It is at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils told the inspector they enjoy reading and visit the school library to select books.

Staff in the early years have a good understanding of how young children learn. They develop children's language skills quickly and securely. The curriculum provides an effective range of opportunities for children to develop in all areas of their learning, including in their early reading, writing and mathematical skills. Children learn to play together and to follow school routines. Leaders work closely with teachers in Year 1 to ensure that children leave Reception ready for their next steps in education. The indoor environment and activities support children's learning well in Reception. However, the outside learning area is under resourced. It does not match the ambitions of the school's early years curriculum as well.

Adults meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Well-trained teaching assistants work with individuals and small groups so that these pupils can access the same curriculum as their peers and make progress in this curriculum.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Classrooms are calm and orderly. Pupils are interested in their learning and listen well to their teachers. The school behaviour policy is applied consistently. This means that pupils can get on with their learning. At breaktimes, pupils behave well. They enjoy playing with their friends and making up games. There are ample staff for them to go to if they have a concern at breaktime.

Pupils have a good understanding of tolerance and respect. They celebrate the differences between people. Pupils understand the value of democracy. Elected pupil representatives to the school parliament contribute to decisions about how the school runs. The school is now restarting many of its extra-curricular opportunities. Pupils are now being encouraged to sign up for forthcoming activities.

The trust and governors know what is strong and what needs to improve in the school. They provide leaders with the necessary challenge and support so that the school continues to improve. Staff appreciate the consideration governors and leaders give to staff workload and well-being. However, some changes to subject planning are recent. Leaders have not checked fully that all plans continue to have the desired outcomes intended on pupils' learning.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that the quality of outdoor learning experiences in Reception and the implementation of the newer subject plans may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All required checks are made when appointing new staff. Safeguarding training for staff, including the 'Prevent' duty, is up to date. Staff are alert to possible signs of neglect and abuse. They report their concerns to the designated safeguarding leads immediately. Leaders take prompt action, when necessary, to protect children, in response to concerns raised. Pupils are taught about the risks to their safety and what to do if they have concerns about keeping safe in and out of school. Governors and employees of the trust check safeguarding records and processes regularly to keep pupils safe from harm.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- For all subjects, there are detailed and coherent plans in place. This work has been completed recently. How well the curriculum planning is being implemented has been partially tested by leaders. As a result, leaders have not yet identified precisely what is going well and what actions are needed to improve the delivery of the curriculum further. Leaders should continue to monitor the implementation of the curriculum to identify how it could be developed further.
- In Reception, the outdoor learning environment does not provide the resources needed to meet the intention on leaders' curriculum plans. Consequently, children's learning experiences in the outdoor environment do not fully promote their development and progress across the curriculum. Leaders should further improve this so that it matches the aspirations of the early years 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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St John's CofE Primary School, to be good in June 2014.

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	144289
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10200452
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	360
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Maxwell
Headteacher	Kate Lund
Website	www.stjohnsps.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy on 1 July 2017. When its predecessor school, known by the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged good.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust (DEMAT).
- The school has a local governing body. The local governing body is responsible to DEMAT's trust board.
- The most recent section 48 inspection, which is an inspection of the school's religious character, took place in June 2015.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, leaders of specific subject areas, groups of pupils and members of staff.
- The inspector met with the chief executive officer of DEMAT, the director of education of DEMAT and the school performance director of DEMAT.

- The inspector looked at the safeguarding policy and procedures, the school's self-evaluation, minutes of meetings of the governing body and other information provided by school leaders.
- The inspector observed pupils during their breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. The inspector met with the leaders of these subjects, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, spoke with pupils about their work, and listened to pupils read.
- The inspector analysed the 12 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and the 12 free-text responses from parents, and viewed parents' comments the school had received and the 27 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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