

Inspection of St John's Primary School

Victoria Road, Knaphill, Woking, Surrey GU21 2AS

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 October 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

St John's is a caring school where leaders and teachers know every pupil well. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They describe it as a welcoming place, where they make friends easily and learn about the importance of kindness. One parent told us, 'The school has a fantastic ethos. It feels like an extension of the family'.

Pupils enjoy their lessons. However, they do not learn as much as they should. This is because leaders have not made sure that expectations are consistently high, including in the early years. Pupils do not learn to read effectively enough.

Pupils behave well. If bullying happens, leaders deal with it effectively. Pupils talk about the school's values and how they demonstrate these through how they behave. They enjoy exploring their talents through a range of clubs and activities, including sports, crafts and outdoor learning.

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

The quality of education at the school has declined since the last inspection. Over time, leaders, governors and trustees have not checked carefully enough that strategies intended to improve the quality of education have made a positive difference.

Leaders have begun to improve the school's curriculum. They have identified the right key issues. However, this work is in its early stages. In several subjects and in the early years, there is not enough information in curriculum plans to ensure that teachers know what pupils need to learn and in what order. In addition, some staff do not have the knowledge they need to teach all the different subjects in the curriculum. Where this is the case, pupils' skills and knowledge are not sufficiently developed. Children do not learn well enough in the early years because sometimes their learning does not move on quickly enough or they have gaps in their knowledge.

Leaders are part way through setting up and resourcing a new reading curriculum. However, they have not checked carefully enough that the school's new approach to phonics is being implemented effectively, including in the early years. Some staff have not received the training they need to teach phonics precisely and accurately. As a result, they are not clear about the strategies that help pupils to remember and apply their letter sounds. Pupils learning to read are not given enough opportunity to practise their phonics skills using appropriate books.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly and accurately. Teaching assistants are knowledgeable about how to help meet pupils' needs. However, sometimes, expectations of what pupils with SEND can achieve in the curriculum are too low. Learning in lessons is not consistently adapted to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they should.

Pupils' behaviour is good. Their conduct is underpinned by the school's values of kindness and respect. Leaders have identified that some pupils struggle to manage their emotions and behaviour. Where this is the case, they have taken care to identify pupils' particular needs. They are taking decisive and effective action to improve pupils' behaviour.

Most pupils attend school regularly. There are a small number of pupils who do not attend school often enough. However, effective work by leaders to support these pupils and their families means that this number is reducing quickly.

Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities to develop what the school refers to as 'personal characteristics'. The school offers a wide range of clubs, which are increasingly well attended. Pupils feel motivated by the opportunity to become a 'values champion' or a 'star of the week'. Pupils learn about a range of topics through the PSHE curriculum that prepare them well for life in modern Britain. They are knowledgeable about topics like healthy relationships, equality and internet safety.

Parents were overwhelmingly positive about the school. They praise senior leaders in their work to create a caring, nurturing school. They were especially happy with how leaders responded to the challenges of the pandemic.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders work together closely at the school to keep pupils safe. All staff receive regular safeguarding training. Consequently, adults in the school know how to spot the signs that might indicate potential harm to a pupil. If they are worried about a pupil, they report it immediately. Leaders follow up on concerns promptly, including consulting with local safeguarding partners to ensure that pupils get the help that they need.

Pupils feel safe in school and know adults will listen to them if they have a problem. They also learn about how to keep themselves safe outside of school, for example when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leadership at all levels has not been effective enough in preventing a decline in the quality of education. Leaders, including governors and trustees, must assure themselves that plans for improvement are having their intended impact and improve outcomes for pupils over time.

- The expectations of what pupils with SEND can achieve within the curriculum are sometimes less ambitious than for other pupils, including in the early years. Leaders should ensure that staff know how to adapt the curriculum so that pupils with SEND achieve in line with others.
- Planning of the curriculum and training in its delivery is not precise enough. This means that teaching, including in the early years, does not always focus on what pupils need to know and remember. Leaders should ensure that curriculum plans are clear about what pupils need to know and the best order to learn it in. In addition, leaders should ensure that high-quality training supports teachers to implement these plans effectively.
- Leaders have not ensured that the teaching of phonics is effective enough. Some teachers and support staff do not have the knowledge they need to teach phonics with accuracy and precision. Sometimes, the books pupils are given do not match the sounds they know. Leaders must provide training to teachers and support staff involved in early reading. They should assure themselves that the new phonics scheme is fully resourced, and that teaching is effective, so that pupils get off to a quick start in the early years and learn to read fluently by the time they leave Year 2.

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

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|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Unique reference number | 140339 |
| Local authority | Surrey |
| Inspection number | 10200267 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 2 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 226 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Victor Shipp |
| Headteacher | Ellen Rinttila |
| Website | www.stjohnsknaphill.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 19 and 20 October 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- This school contains a nursery provision for children from two years old.
- Since the last inspection, the multi-academy trust this school belongs to has changed its name from The Goldsworth Trust to Bright Futures Learning Trust.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first inspection of the school to be completed since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with leaders, including the headteacher, executive headteacher, chief executive officer of the trust, other leaders, three governors, including the chair of the governing body, and two trustees, including the chair of the board.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in four subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans for a range of other subjects.
- Inspectors met with safeguarding leaders, including the home-school link worker, looked at records and policies relating to safeguarding and talked to pupils, staff, governors and trustees about this aspect of the school's work. Inspectors also reviewed the school's checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school.
- Inspectors met with many pupils to discuss their views of the school and took into consideration 21 responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors also met with a wide range of staff, including support staff, taking into account the 17 responses to the confidential staff survey.
- Inspectors reviewed and scrutinised a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' plans for improving the school, their evaluation of how well the school is currently performing, minutes of governing body meetings, and records of attendance and behaviour incidents.
- Inspectors met with some parents and considered 58 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's confidential parental questionnaire, including 56 free-text responses.

Inspection team

Chris Ellison, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Matthew Haynes

Her Majesty's Inspector

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