

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

Priory, Wellington, Somerset TA21 9EJ

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Inspection dates: 30 November and 1 December 2021

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils live up to these expectations. They respect the school rules and behave courteously. Leaders resolve the rare incidents of bullying quickly and effectively.

Pupils benefit from the school's strong inclusive ethos. Staff care about pupils' education and well-being. The nurture room helps pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to learn purposefully in a place of calm. The pastoral team ensure that pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties are identified quickly. These pupils are supported in an environment of safety and security.

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils. However, in a few subjects, the curriculum is not established well enough. Teachers provide enjoyable activities but not a curriculum that helps pupils to remember the important knowledge they need. Consequently, pupils are unable to build on prior learning. Leaders are aware that improvements to the reading curriculum are needed. Work has started recently but there is more to do.

Leaders encourage pupils to make a positive contribution to the school. Pupils take on their responsibilities with great pride. They enjoy their leadership roles, for example, as pupil chaplains and play leaders.

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

There have been considerable changes to the leadership of the school since the previous inspection. This has resulted in weaknesses emerging in some subject curriculums. Current leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's improvement priorities. However, the development of the curriculum has been stalled by the impact of COVID-19 and staff changes.

The school's phonics programme is not firmly in place in key stage 1. Children in the Reception class learn to read as soon as they start school. However, weaknesses in the implementation of the curriculum, and delays in training staff, mean that pupils' knowledge and skills in reading do not develop as well as they could. Teachers' use of assessment is variable. Some pupils are given books to read that are not matched well to their ability. This has resulted in too many pupils, including some pupils with SEND and those who need to catch up, struggling to remember the sounds letters make and to read fluently. Leaders have ambitious plans to improve the reading curriculum. Nonetheless, there is an absence of focused leadership to drive the early reading improvements forward at the pace needed.

Leaders have promoted the importance of reading well with pupils and their families. More and more older pupils are enjoying reading. They talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors and the inspiring books that teachers read to them each day. Pupils enjoy taking part in reading competitions and, as a result, are reading more often.

Leaders have set out the important knowledge and skills that they want pupils to learn and by when in most subjects. For example, leaders have established a highly effective mathematics curriculum. Expectations of pupils' mathematical thinking are high. Teachers routinely check what pupils have learned. Misconceptions are picked up immediately, so most pupils have a secure understanding of what they are learning.

In a minority of subjects, leaders have not identified the important knowledge pupils need with enough precision. The curriculum is too focused on the activities that pupils will complete to develop skills. Learning does not build on what pupils already know or help them to learn more. This leaves them with missing bits of knowledge.

Leaders take great care to ensure that pupils with SEND are identified quickly and have learning that meets their needs. This is successful in most subjects. For example, teachers adapt mathematics activities appropriately when extra support is needed. Pupils choose from a range of practical equipment to help them to learn confidently alongside their peers. Pupils, who spend some of their time in the nurture room, benefit from specialised support from knowledgeable staff. Consequently, they learn well and achieve success.

Pupils and staff model the school's Christian values. Pupils behave well and lessons are free from disruption. Leaders provide a wealth of opportunities for pupils to become caring and responsible citizens. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum teaches pupils about the wider world, healthy lifestyles and relationships. Pupils learn about world religions, cultural differences and human rights. They talk about diversity and tolerance with respect for others who have different views.

Staff appreciate the attention leaders give to their well-being and workload. Staff morale is high. They are proud of their school and refer to it feeling like 'a family'.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that reading may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The processes for checking the recruitment of staff are strong. Risk assessments are in place to mitigate potential dangers or behaviours. Staff know of the latest safeguarding updates from the Department for Education. Leaders are vigilant for signs of sexual harassment and abuse. They manage the rare cases swiftly and responsibly. The pastoral team make sure that the most vulnerable pupils are safe.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including online. Lessons help pupils to gain a secure understanding of healthy relationships.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is at various stages of development. In some foundation subjects, the curriculum does not develop pupils' knowledge well enough. Consequently, pupils have gaps in their understanding. Subject leaders should strengthen the detail of their curriculum plans to better build the knowledge that pupils need in all subjects.
- Leaders have not implemented a successful, consistent programme to teach early reading. This has resulted in too many pupils still being at the early stages of reading. Leaders need to urgently implement their chosen reading programme so that pupils learn to read with fluency and automaticity.
- Too much teaching of early reading is not based on secure subject knowledge or pedagogy. Staff do not check the sounds pupils know well enough. This means that some pupils do not progress through the reading curriculum gaining the fundamental knowledge that they should. Leaders need to ensure that all staff develop expertise in teaching and assessing reading effectively.

## 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 now 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 school to be good on 29 and 30 September 2015.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123900
<b>Local authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199552
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	201
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	John Preston
<b>Headteacher</b>	Olly Priestley
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stjohnscofeprimary.co.uk">www.stjohnscofeprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	29 and 30 September 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The leadership of the school has changed significantly since the previous inspection. The headteacher and mathematics leader joined the school in September 2018. A new leader for pupils with SEND started in September 2021. Many governors are new to their roles since the previous inspection, including the chair of governors.
- The school is a voluntary aided Church of England school. It was inspected in April 2017, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.
- The school has established a 'nurture room'. Some pupils with SEND spend part of their time learning in this provision.
- The school use three alternative providers.

## 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, she visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils'

work, spoke with some pupils, teachers and curriculum leaders, and viewed curriculum plans. Leaders accompanied the inspector in conducting most of the deep dive activities. The inspector also considered pupils' learning in PSHE and French.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteachers and the leader for pupils with SEND.
- The inspector met with three members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with a county council school effectiveness leader.
- The inspector considered school documentation, including behaviour and bullying records. She also reviewed leaders' school improvement and self-evaluation plans.
- The inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and the pastoral team. She checked safeguarding records, including the single central record, safer recruitment administration and a sample of risk assessments.
- The inspector took into account 13 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including eight written comments. She also considered the responses to staff and pupil surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Sue Costello, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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