

# Inspection of St John's Cathedral Catholic Primary School

Cottage View, Landport, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO1 1PX

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Inspection dates: 12 and 13 July 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

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

The atmosphere at the school is calm, joyful and purposeful. Pupils behave extremely well and take great delight in learning and working together. Children in the early years share and take turns while listening to each other attentively. Pupils in all classes are eager to achieve well because of the high expectations staff have of them. Pupils look forward to coming to school and the vast majority attend very regularly.

Pupils form a diverse but close-knit community. They have high levels of respect for one another and prize equality. They know about people with different backgrounds, abilities and beliefs, learning to consider and understand them deeply. Pupils make good friends with each other. They socialise together enthusiastically and value each other's company.

Pupils develop noticeably strong character traits during their time at school. These include honesty, compassion and a desire to support each other. Bullying is almost unheard of. Pupils have a clear sense of justice and know why this is important. They learn to be responsible for their own actions. They make a very positive contribution to school life which culminates in Year 6 pupils acting as role models and mentors for younger pupils.

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

Pupils achieve well across a broad curriculum. They gain particularly deep levels of knowledge in certain subjects, for example, geography. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make strong progress because staff adapt the curriculum effectively using leaders' expert guidance. Teachers and teaching assistants are very knowledgeable, highly dedicated and well trained. They check on pupils' learning and provide extra support when needed. Leaders organise and design the curriculum thoughtfully to make sure it is ambitious for all pupils. This is strongest in the early years, where no limits are placed on children's learning. In some subjects, particular elements of the curriculum are not as strong as others. For example, leaders recognise that pupils' reasoning in mathematics is not as well developed as other aspects of their mathematical knowledge.

Pupils are motivated readers and confident communicators. Leaders prioritise children's language acquisition when they begin school in the early years. Whatever children's starting points, their abilities to read and write are nurtured carefully so that they start Year 1 very well prepared. Most pupils learn to read accurately as they get older, engaging with many stimulating books. They are regular readers. Leaders have rightly identified that pupils would benefit from exposure to an even wider range of types of books and texts and plan to address this. While staff provide additional help for pupils who need it, this is not always fully effective. Importantly, the books these pupils use to practise becoming fluent readers are not matched to

their phonic knowledge closely enough. Consequently, these pupils do not learn to read as quickly as they could.

Leaders make sure that pupils' personal development is just as important as their academic studies. Leaders invest great effort in successfully addressing pupils' pastoral needs, supporting their physical and mental health effectively. Consequently, all pupils are able to benefit from the considerable range of opportunities the school provides. These include many extra-curricular activities that the majority of pupils participate in, plus a host of enrichment activities throughout the year. A particular focus on the arts means that pupils learn to play instruments, perform in concerts in school and at other venues, sing regularly and skilfully, and participate in high-quality drama productions. Pupils' talents in sport and other areas are also cultivated. A strong sense of team spirit characterises these activities, alongside recognising and celebrating individuals' achievements. This aspect of the school's work is something parents particularly value.

There are many other strengths to leadership at the school. For example, leaders and governors ensure the school establishes and sustains very strong relationships with parents. Parents are very appreciative of all the school does for their children. They rightly recognise leaders' high ambitions for pupils, including those with SEND. Governors are knowledgeable and effective. Leaders have the trust and support of staff. They lead by example and with clear moral purpose. Leaders are considerate of the well-being of staff. While many staff feel well supported, some feel that leaders could take their workload into account more when introducing new initiatives or approaches. Although governors have set expectations for staff about their work-life balance, not all staff are clear about these. Processes for monitoring and managing staff workload are not fully in place.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding risks and are swift to identify, record and report them. Leaders make sure staff are well trained, including about specific issues in the local area. Relevant records are managed well by leaders and they involve external agencies quickly and appropriately to get effective support in place. Governors have the right expertise and monitor this aspect of the school's work very well. Leaders make all of the necessary checks on staff before they start work at the school. In every year group, pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe.

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

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

- Pupils' learning in certain subjects is stronger in some aspects than in others. This means that they do not yet achieve consistently highly across the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that all elements of the curriculum are equally very effective.

- Some pupils who are weaker readers are not learning to read as quickly as they could. At times, the support they receive is not matched to their needs closely enough, including the books they use to practise phonics. Leaders should make sure that all approaches and resources are focused on helping these pupils make the best progress that they can in reading.
- Leaders' and governors' strategies for managing staff workload are not yet fully effective. Specific expectations are not clearly or widely understood. Staff work extremely hard but do not have robust, systematic routes to engage with leaders and governors about workload. Governors and leaders should establish clear processes for communicating with staff about strategies to manage workload and for liaising with staff about how effective these are.

## 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>	116385
<b>Local authority</b>	Portsmouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	10228541
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	243
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Nicholas Speller
<b>Headteacher</b>	Laura Park
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stjohnscathedralschool.org.uk">www.stjohnscathedralschool.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 and 13 March 2008

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Portsmouth and had its last section 48 inspection of its religious character in March 2019 when it was judged to be outstanding.
- The school currently uses one alternative provision, The Harbour School.
- The proportion of pupils at the school who are eligible for pupil premium funding is well-above average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND at the school is above average.
- Early years provision consists of a Nursery class, in which some children attend part time and some full time, and a Reception class.

## Information about this inspection

The 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 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, music and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with the subject leader, observed pupils at work, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator.
- The lead inspector met with a number of governors including the chair of governors, a representative of the Diocese of Portsmouth and a representative of Portsmouth local authority.
- The inspection team reviewed a wide range of information provided by the school, including safeguarding records, information about behaviour and attendance, minutes of governors' meetings, and the education, health and care plans for some pupils with SEND. Inspectors also reviewed leaders' own evaluation about the effectiveness of the school and their plans for further improvement.
- An inspector met with some parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors took account of parents' responses to Ofsted's confidential questionnaire.
- Inspectors talked to a wide range of pupils and observed their behaviour in lessons and at social times.
- Inspectors took account of pupils' and staff's responses to Ofsted's confidential questionnaires. An inspector also met with a number of support staff.

### **Inspection team**

Matthew Haynes, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Debbie Bennett

Ofsted Inspector

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