

Inspection of St John CofE Primary School, Kearsley

Church Road, Kearsley, Bolton, Lancashire BL4 8AP

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 June 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including children in the early years, enjoy coming to this happy and caring school. New pupils and their families are made to feel welcome. They settle in quickly. Pupils feel safe at this school.

Leaders expect pupils to behave well. Pupils' conduct embodies the school's golden rules to be ready, respectful and safe. Any pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour benefit from the help and support that they receive from adults. Pupils are confident that leaders deal with any rare bullying issues swiftly and effectively.

Pupils enjoy playing and learning together. They are proud of the responsibilities that they are given, such as being prefects and school councillors. Children in the early years are well supported to develop independence. The youngest children are kind and helpful. They are quick to lend a hand at tidy-up time.

Pupils are proud to represent the school in local tournaments and competitions. They take part in different events to support charitable causes.

Pupils enjoy learning. They strive every day to meet leaders' high expectations for their achievement. The youngest children enjoy finding out about the world around them. Pupils and children from the early years to Year 6, achieve well in most subjects.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have developed a broad curriculum from the early years through to Year 6, which prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education.

In most subjects, leaders have thought carefully about the key knowledge that pupils will learn and the order in which this should be taught. Pupils across the school progress well through the curriculum in these subjects.

In a minority of subjects, leaders do not have sufficient expertise to lead their subjects well. They have not thought carefully enough about the building blocks of knowledge that pupils need to learn. Pupils do not learn as well in these subjects.

Leaders have provided high-quality training and support for teachers. This has helped teachers to feel confident in their delivery of the curriculum. They choose activities which help pupils to learn well. Where the curriculum has been well thought out, teachers use assessment strategies effectively to check on what pupils know and can do. Teachers provide frequent opportunities for pupils to revisit and recall previous learning. This helps pupils to deepen their knowledge.

In the remaining few subjects, assessment systems are underdeveloped. This is because the knowledge that leaders want pupils to learn is not clear. Assessment systems do not enable teachers to check what pupils have learned and remembered in the long term. This hampers the progress of some pupils.

Leaders place a high priority on teaching children and pupils to read. Pupils across the school look forward to their teachers sharing books and stories with them. Staff deliver the school's phonics programme well. Children and pupils read books that match the sounds that they have been taught. Younger pupils, including those children in the early years, use their knowledge of phonics well. Children and pupils who struggle with reading, or those who speak English as an additional language, are supported by well-trained staff to catch up quickly. Older pupils read with confidence and fluency.

Leaders carry out comprehensive checks when children start school in the early years or at different times of the year, so that they can identify quickly any pupils who may have SEND. They also work well with external agencies to assess the additional needs of pupils across the school. Teachers use this expert advice well to help pupils with SEND to access the curriculum alongside their peers. Pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs are well supported. Staff know these pupils well.

The majority of pupils behave well and do not disrupt the learning of others. Children in the early years enjoy learning alongside their friends. Pupils are polite and respectful. They are keen to answer questions in class.

Leaders ensure that pupils benefit from a wealth of extra-curricular activities. The school's Rainbow Club provides vulnerable pupils with the extra support that they need. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures, which reflect their diverse backgrounds. They are keen to contribute to their community.

Governors have worked effectively with leaders to ensure that the school continues to improve. Governors and leaders are mindful of staff's well-being and workload. Staff feel that leaders are approachable and take their views on board.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are fully aware of what to do to keep pupils safe. Leaders provide frequent safeguarding briefings to keep staff's knowledge up to date. Leaders keep meticulous records of all concerns about pupils. They follow up these concerns diligently.

Leaders and staff are alert to the safeguarding issues within the local area, such as illegal drugs and knife crime. They work well with external agencies so that pupils and their families get the timely support that they need.

Pupils are taught about different aspects of safety. For example, when they use the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a very few subjects, curriculum leaders lack the expertise and experience needed to lead their subjects well. These leaders have not thought carefully enough about the most important knowledge that pupils need to learn and when they need to learn it. Senior leaders should ensure that curriculum leaders are trained equally well so that they are fully equipped to design effective curriculums.
- In these same subjects, leaders' assessment systems are not well developed. This means that teachers do not know what pupils have learned and remembered. Leaders should ensure that approaches to assessment are used effectively so that teachers can accurately identify and address pupils' missing knowledge.

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	105241
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10226261
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	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Anne Quigley
Headteacher	Suzanne Howard
Website	www.st-johns-kearsley.bolton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Manchester. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in January 2017.
- Leaders use one registered alternative provider for a small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection that the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and they have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, middle leaders and class teachers.
- Inspectors met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. Inspectors met with a representative of the diocese. Inspectors also spoke with a representative of the local authority.

- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. They also spoke to several parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted’s online survey for staff and Ofsted’s online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors met with those responsible for safeguarding at the school. They scrutinised a range of documentation in relation to safeguarding. Inspectors spoke with staff, parents and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour during lessons and at playtimes. They spoke with pupils about bullying, behaviour and leaders’ expectations of pupils’ behaviour.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed curriculums, visited a sample of lessons, met with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and reviewed samples of pupils’ work. Inspectors also listened to pupils reading.

Inspection team

Louise McArdle, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Pippa Jackson Maitland

Her Majesty’s Inspector

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