

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

Swan Lane, Whetstone, London N20 0PL

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 July 2022

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are rightly very proud of their school. They show this by working hard, looking after their environment and taking care of each other. Pupils said they enjoy school so much because everyone knows everyone. They look forward to learning and, like their teachers, have high expectations. All pupils learn successfully here.

Pupils know that the school's ethos is about valuing and respecting others. This makes pupils, of all faiths or none, feel welcome and part of the community. Pupils behave very well. Staff sort out any problems that might occur, including rare cases of bullying. This makes St John's a happy and safe place to be.

Pupils play their part in different aspects of school life. Pupils look forward to the time spent with their 'buddies' from different year groups. They take part in a range of projects together, such as in design and technology. Older pupils help their younger buddies learn to read and practise their mathematics.

Pupils feel listened to by leaders. They have many ways to say what they think. For example, pupils enjoy the 'Big Voice' sessions which take place throughout the year to share their ideas and suggestions. Pupils show kindness to others beyond the school too. For example, they deliver food parcels to charities and 'boxes of joy' to people who are homeless.

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

Pupils achieve well at this school. They rise to leaders' high expectations. Pupils are motivated to learn and try their best. Teachers work hard to ensure that pupils are prepared well for each stage of their education, including the move to secondary school.

The curriculum in every subject is well planned and sequenced. Leaders have identified the most important things pupils need to remember over time. Leaders make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same

curriculum as everyone else, with the right support. In most subjects, leaders' checks on pupils' learning are used effectively. But in some subjects, leaders' assessments do not precisely check the specific subject content pupils have been taught. Where this is the case, leaders have started to put this right. They have designed new procedures for checking pupils' knowledge in these subjects.

Teachers give pupils opportunities to recap and build on what they have learned previously. For example, pupils in Year 2 recalled important facts and key words from their learning about the Great Fire of London. They demonstrated a deep understanding of how the king at the time ordered houses to be pulled down to stop the fire spreading. In mathematics, pupils in Year 6 knew to use their prior knowledge of multiplying decimal numbers to help them work out the scale factors of different shapes. Children in the early years had been taught the meanings of the words 'first', 'then' and 'finally'. They built on this knowledge to help them programme their electronic caterpillar. They had great fun watching it move along the track they had created.

Staff get to know pupils very well. This helps them to quickly identify pupils who need more help with their learning. Pupils with SEND said that staff are good at breaking difficult concepts into smaller chunks. They like it when staff use pictures to explain what is happening now and what is happening next. This helps pupils to manage routines throughout the day.

Early reading is a priority for leaders and staff. The school's phonics programme helps pupils to build their knowledge well right from the start of early years. Pupils become increasingly secure in using phonics to read and write accurately. Staff promote the importance and enjoyment of reading. Pupils enjoy selecting books from the library. They read all around the school, including with their friends under the trees outside.

Pupils' positive attitudes to learning ensure that lessons are not disrupted. Pupils get the chance to join different groups in school, such as the faith and school councils. Pupils take part in a wide range of activities, such as workshops led by professional scientists, footballers and authors. They like the competitions with different schools, especially in sports. Pupils in Year 6 spoke positively about the residential trip to the Isle of Wight and how this helped to build their self-esteem. Children in the early years talked with enthusiasm about the insects and other bugs they saw on their recent visit to a nature reserve.

Teachers help pupils to learn about others. Older pupils recently learned about different types of family, including families with same-gender parents. Pupils said that they respect people for who they are. As one pupil put it, 'We are all human beings.'

Everyone supports each other to do their very best for the pupils. Staff said that they can always turn to leaders for advice. Leaders, including governors, take seriously everyone's mental health. They make decisions carefully, with staff workload and well-being in mind.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that all staff know what to do to keep pupils safe. Staff have the training they need to be alert to any concerns about pupils' well-being or safety. Leaders work closely with other professionals, including social workers and the local authority children's services team, to keep the most vulnerable pupils safe. When parents and carers need extra support with things outside school, leaders work hard to get them the help they need.

Pupils demonstrate a deep understanding of online safety. They know why it is important to keep themselves safe when using social media apps and online games, for example.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment procedures in the foundation subjects do not focus closely enough on whether pupils have learned and remembered specific subject content. Because of this, leaders have introduced a new approach which aims to check precisely pupils' knowledge in each subject. Leaders should make sure that the new procedures are embedded throughout the school. They should use these to check that pupils learn and remember important subject content over time. In doing so, leaders should be mindful not to create additional workload for teachers.

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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2012.

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	101321
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10200333
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Imogen Hall
Headteacher	Curtis Sweetingham (Executive Headteacher) Catherine Mitry (Head of School)
Website	www.stjohnsn20.barnet.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a Church of England religious ethos. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in July 2017.
- The school is part of a soft federation with another school in Barnet. The executive headteacher leads both schools.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

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 leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, head of school and phase leaders. He met with the chair of governors and six other members of the governing body.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and

looked at a sample of pupils' work. The inspector also looked at curriculum documentation, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work in some of the other subjects.

- The inspector checked the single central record of staff suitability checks. He met with leaders responsible for safeguarding and spoke with staff and pupils about the school's safeguarding arrangements.
- The inspector reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View as well as the responses to the staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Gary Rawlings, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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