

Inspection of St John's Church of England Primary School

121–147 Orts Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 3JN

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 September 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	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils from a wide range of cultural heritages enjoy attending this friendly and welcoming school. Uniquely, the church is situated at the heart of this school. This reflects the central importance of the school's Christian ethos. It underpins a tangible culture of respect which is lived out by staff and pupils.

Right from when pupils start in the early years, warm relationships with staff are nurtured. The youngest children are made to feel secure and confident in their new surroundings. Pupils feel safe and cared for and know that if they need to talk to someone about their worries, there is always a trusted adult to help. One pupil told inspectors, 'This feels like your second home, teachers take time to listen and to help us, however long this takes.'

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils both socially and in their learning. They encourage all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to strive to be the best they can. Behaviour around the school is calm, and pupils know that unkindness towards each other is not tolerated. They are taught how to build positive, healthy relationships, meaning there are very few incidents of bullying.

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

This is an inclusive school where leaders aspire for all pupils to enjoy learning and achieve their best. Leaders carefully consider what pupils need to learn, and how to sequence this to help pupils remember what they have been taught. Where pupils with SEND need extra support, this is planned and targeted to promote success. For those pupils who require a bespoke and personalised approach, leaders have worked with experts to develop a specialist nurture class to meet their needs.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils and encourage them to always do their best. Staff check what pupils know and can do. However, in some classes pupils are not always given activities that really help them remember the important information or knowledge that they have been taught. In foundation subjects, consistent effective processes are not in place for teachers to quickly identify where pupils have misconceptions or key gaps in important knowledge.

Many pupils at this school speak English as an additional language. Leaders have therefore rightly understood the need for staff to take an even sharper focus on teaching important vocabulary and language so all pupils can access learning. This is especially evident in the early years.

The teaching of reading is a real strength. Right from when they first join the school, children are taught phonics using an effective programme. Adults are experts in helping pupils learn to read. Staff are quick to notice when a child needs extra

help to catch up. The intervention used is targeted and effective. The books children use to practise reading match the sounds they are learning. This grows their confidence and helps children to become fluent readers. Pupils eagerly listen to and read a diverse and interesting selection of books. The children in the early years enjoy stories and rhymes throughout the day. As a result, pupils develop a love of reading.

Leaders have high expectations of behaviour. This is demonstrated in the kindness and respect that is deep-rooted in the interactions between pupils, staff and visitors. Pupils also learn about understanding and respecting people who are different to themselves. Thoughtful assemblies take place in the church, which many pupils describe as a special place in the school. They learn about what spirituality means to Christians and to people from other religions. Children in the early years are provided with opportunities to explore their capabilities and try new experiences. The outdoor area has been developed to include riding trikes and a small tree for safe climbing in the little forest area. Children enjoy getting to know one another in play activities that help them to learn to share and take turns.

Local governors care about the school. They recognise they need to make sure that they are more closely checking on the school's work so that they can bring the necessary support and challenge to leaders. Oversight and support from the trust provide further oversight and support to increase the effectiveness of governance.

School leaders have worked tirelessly and effectively to do what is right to improve this school. Their plans to continue this work are well thought through. Staff feel that leaders are considerate of their workload. New teachers to the profession speak well of the support and guidance they receive from leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders know pupils and their families well, and act with empathy and sensitivity for the pupils that they help. Staff receive training to make sure they recognise when a pupil might need help. They precisely record any details that may be a cause of concern. Leaders are swift to take action when needed and work well with external agencies to get extra support for pupils who need it.

Pupils are taught how to be safe online and know what to do if they are worried. They say they can talk to trusted adults in school who will help them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Local governors do not consistently assure themselves that school leaders are setting the right priorities, and whether the actions taken consistently meet the

statutory duties. Local governors need to ensure they implement rigorous systems and processes to continue to check on the work of school leaders.

- Leaders have not fully implemented a consistent assessment system across the school in all subjects. Leaders need to put in place an effective assessment process across foundation subjects so that teachers can identify and quickly remedy any gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Sometimes the work provided does not help all pupils achieve leaders' ambitious aims. This means that some pupils have gaps in their understanding. Leaders need to ensure that teachers have the necessary expertise they need to match activities carefully to be able to check what pupils know and remember.

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.

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	142735
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	10238337
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	430
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kathy Winrow
Chair of governing body	Simon Hodgson
Headteacher	Martina Parsons
Website	www.stjohns.reading.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 and 5 December 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St John's Church of England Primary School is a larger-than-average primary school.
- The school has a higher-than-average proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The school became part of the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust in January 2022.
- The school is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Oxfordshire. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in 2019 and graded good.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has breakfast and after-school clubs. These are managed by school leaders.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 met with the headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, other senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers, and teaching assistants.
- The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of the local governing body and the chair of trustees. Inspectors also spoke with the chief executive officer and a representative from the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and outside during social times.
- Inspectors reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising safeguarding records, speaking to staff and governors and discussing this with pupils.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted Parent View. They gathered the views of pupils and staff through surveys and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including school improvement documentation and governing body minutes.

Inspection team

Jo Petch, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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