

Inspection of St John's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School

Boothroyd Lane, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire WF13 2LP

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 July 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and well cared for at St. John's Church of England Infant School. Leaders want all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to achieve well. Pupils are taught all national curriculum subjects. They do not achieve as well as they should, including in the early years. This is because the curriculum is not sufficiently developed in many subjects, including early reading and phonics.

Leaders ensure the values of respect, hope, friendship and forgiveness underpin all aspects of school life. Pupils know and understand the importance of each value. Parents particularly appreciate leaders' work to ensure these Christian values are woven through all aspects of children's personal development.

Pupils behave well most of the time. Leaders have established clear routines from Reception onwards. Pupils are polite and well mannered to adults and understand how to be a good friend. They enjoy the school's 'Garden of Eden' and caring for the plants. Bullying is rare. Pupils say that adults sort it out quickly if it happens. They enjoy school and feel safe.

Leaders encourage pupils to learn about people from different communities. Pupils spend time with refugees to listen to their stories. They remember the people and their stories. This helps pupils to appreciate their own and others' similarities and differences.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders have introduced a new programme for teaching phonics. It is well planned and sequenced. However, when some staff teach phonics sessions, they do not correctly pronounce the letters and sounds that pupils need to know to be able to read words. This includes in the early years. Some leaders do not have the knowledge of phonics needed to make the necessary checks on the teaching of phonics sessions. Therefore, some staff do not check that pupils say the letters and sounds accurately. As a result, some pupils struggle to decode words.

Mathematics and English are well planned and sequenced. In mathematics, leaders have identified the essential knowledge and skills that children need to remember from the start of Reception to the end of Year 6. The sequence of learning enables pupils to connect ideas and remember what they have learned. This is helping pupils to achieve well in mathematics across the whole school. Pupils in Year 1 describe directions and movement accurately when measuring angles. They describe whole, half and quarter turns. Pupils know this because they apply knowledge learned about fractions earlier in the year.

In the foundation subjects, the essential knowledge and skills that pupils need to know is not clear. This means that teachers do not always know the important knowledge they should be teaching. As a result, pupils do not gain the important information that they need for the next stage of learning. In mathematics, curriculum leaders have benefited from purposeful subject training. This enables them to support teachers in developing their own subject knowledge. However, curriculum training in the foundation subjects is in its early stages. Some subject leaders have not had training to know how to make the changes to improve the curriculum. Some teachers have not received the training they need to deliver some foundation subjects effectively.

In the early years, good relationships between staff, children and parents help children to settle well in school. Adults focus on children's communication and language skills. They show children how to take turns in conversations. This helps children to get along well with each other. They learn how to play together, helping each other to make 'soup' in the kitchen outdoors. However, the teaching of reading and writing is variable, so some children do not learn as much as they should. This means that some children are not well prepared for their future learning.

Pupils with SEND have their needs identified. All pupils with SEND have support plans with specific targets. Teachers use these targets to make sure pupils get the correct support, from adults, to achieve well. Adults break down instructions for learning into manageable steps. Pupils follow these instructions well.

Staff care about pupils' well-being. The curriculum for personal development is well planned. Pupils celebrate diversity and explain how they value differences and their own uniqueness. They take part in projects to help them to develop an understanding of different communities. Pupils follow the school values. They understand how these values help them consider right from wrong. This helps the school to be a calm and safe environment. Pupils enjoy attending the clubs on offer, such as cricket club and multi-skills club. They understand how to stay fit and healthy.

Governors understand how to carry out their roles and responsibilities well. They are supportive of leaders and check on the effectiveness of leaders' school development plan. However, leaders' plans for improving the school's curriculum are not precise enough. They have not identified the specific actions that curriculum leaders must take to improve each subject.

All staff say they enjoy working at the school. They say that leaders do their utmost to make their workload more manageable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Regular safeguarding training has made all staff vigilant of the risks that pupils face. Staff know how to report and record any concerns about pupils who are at risk.

Leaders are thorough in following up on concerns. They liaise with other agencies when they need to. Leaders make sure they keep in regular contact with families and offer support when needed. They make thorough checks to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with pupils. Pupils are taught about safeguarding risks. They know how to get help by asking trusted adults.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The teaching of phonics is not consistent. Some staff do not correctly pronounce the sounds that pupils need to be able to read words. As a result, some pupils are not able to read as well as they should, because they are unable to decode and blend words well enough. Leaders must ensure that they implement an improved and consistent approach to early reading and synthetic phonics.
- The curriculum for the foundation subjects does not set out in enough detail the essential knowledge that must be taught and in what order. Staff do not always know the key knowledge that pupils need to learn. Pupils do not build well enough on what they already know. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum for foundation subjects is well planned.
- The subject knowledge of some curriculum subject leaders is underdeveloped. As a result, these leaders are unable to fully support and train teachers to deliver the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that all subject leaders and teachers are well trained to deliver the curriculum.
- Leaders' plans for improvement sometimes lack precision and detail. Therefore, improvement planning does not always have the necessary impact as targets are not clear or precise enough. Leaders need to ensure that governors are provided with the necessary information to be able to check on how well leaders are improving the quality of the curriculum.

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	107701
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10227245
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	143
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Vicki Nordoff
Headteacher	Aidan Blackburn
Website	www.stjohnsceinfantschool.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	30 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher was appointed in April 2019 and a new chair of governors was appointed in September 2020.
- The class structure has changed since the previous inspection due to reducing pupil numbers.
- The school is a voluntary controlled Church of England school within the Diocese of Leeds. The last section 48 statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools took place in January 2017.
- There is a breakfast club and an after-school club run by the school.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) 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 held meetings with the headteacher and the senior leadership team, including the special educational needs coordinator and early years leader. Inspectors also held meetings with subject leaders, three governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the Diocese of Leeds.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and music.
- For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also observed pupils read to familiar adults.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead, checked the single central record of adults working in the school and looked at safeguarding records.
- A range of school documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation of the school, improvement plans and documentation relating to governance, was examined.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in class, around school and at break times.
- Inspectors gathered the views of parents by considering responses to Ofsted's Parent View, free-text responses and talking with parents before and after school.
- Inspectors gathered the views of pupils through informal and formal discussions. There were no responses to the Ofsted pupil survey.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and considered responses to the Ofsted staff survey.

Inspection team

Kathryn McDonald, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Annali Crawford	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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