

Inspection of St John's Church of England First School, Wimborne

St John's Hill, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 1BX

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 January 2023

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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Ofsted has not previously inspected St John's Church of England First School, Wimborne under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged St John's Church of England First School, Wimborne to be outstanding, before it opened as St John's Church of England First School, Wimborne as a result of conversion to academy status.

What is it like to attend this school?

St John's is a school where 'love, friendship and forgiveness' are at the heart of daily life. Pupils know these values well. They are proud of the responsibility leaders give them to reward each other for showing these values. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities to play an active role in the local community. Pupil leaders act out stories in assemblies that help others to understand how these, and wider values such as courage, help them to be good learners and citizens.

The school is calm and orderly. Pupils respect one another. They listen carefully to each other in lessons. During breaktimes, they play together harmoniously. Pupils particularly like 'sparkle time' where they can mix together across age groups. This gives them opportunities to learn from one another and model good behaviour.

Pupils consistently meet the high expectations staff have of them. Pupils are positive about their learning. Lessons are not disrupted by low-level behaviour. Bullying is rare. The school council has been proactive in raising awareness of what bullying is and how to report this.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They regard the school as friendly and welcoming.

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

Leaders have identified the knowledge they want pupils to learn in the curriculum. Teachers across the trust have worked together to make sure that knowledge is well sequenced through the year groups, starting from the early years. Teachers value this collaboration. It helps them to tailor teaching well for pupils at St John's.

Where the curriculum is stronger, for example in mathematics and science, pupils recall knowledge well. They use what they already know to help them with new learning. For example, pupils can use subject-specific vocabulary such as predator and prey when describing the food chain in science. In mathematics, children in Reception develop a secure understanding of number which sets them up well for Year 1. Pupils' secure knowledge helps them solve problems and reason about mathematics.

In a few subjects, the curriculum tailoring is less successful. Teaching does not always make accurate use of assessment to match learning to what pupils already know. Subject leadership in these subjects is not as effective. Leaders do not evaluate how well pupils are learning the curriculum. They do not support teachers as closely with their subject knowledge or teaching strategies. In these subjects, pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Leaders have prioritised reading. The recent introduction of a new phonics programme is having a positive impact on pupils' ability to decode words fluently. Children in the early years enjoy learning phonics. They articulate sounds with

increasing accuracy. Pupils in key stage 1 can segment words and blend sounds confidently. However, assessment does not always ensure that the phonics teaching for those pupils who struggle to keep up matches their needs precisely. Older pupils learn a range of reading strategies using interesting texts of increasing complexity.

Leaders ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have their barriers to learning clearly identified. Plans to support these pupils are precise and measurable. In most subjects, learning is adapted to enable pupils to be successful.

Pupils have a good understanding of difference. They know the reasons that some people might be treated differently. They recognise that it is important to respect people with different beliefs or opinions. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of what it means to live in modern Britain.

Trust leaders and the St John's academy committee communicate effectively. They carry out their specific roles of accountability with due diligence, keeping their focus on the quality of education pupils receive. Leaders at all levels are mindful of teachers' well-being and workload. Staff feel supported and listened to by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make safeguarding pupils their highest priority. They know their families and pupils well. Strong, trusting relationships with parents mean that help and support are effective. Leaders work well with a range of agencies to make sure that pupils are safe.

Staff are knowledgeable about signs of abuse. They use the school's systems to record and report concerns in a timely manner. This enables leaders to act swiftly where necessary.

Pupils feel safe. They learn how to stay safe in different situations, including when using the internet. They are confident that they would tell an adult if they had a worry.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment is not always used effectively within the curriculum. This means that sometimes pupils are given work that does not build well on what they already know and can do. Teaching needs to ensure that learning is more precisely matched to the needs of pupils, so they learn well.
- Subject leadership is at various stages of development. In a few subjects, subject leadership is not clear about how each subject is being implemented.

Consequently, teaching is not always ensuring that pupils learn as well as they could. Leaders need to develop subject leadership so it can support teachers to develop their subject knowledge and expertise across 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.

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	141821
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10256645
Type of school	First
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	153
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Kingston OBE
Headteacher	Caroline Reeves-Smith
Website	www.stjohnswimborne.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St John's Church of England First School, Wimborne converted to become an academy school in March 2015. When its predecessor school, St John's Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School, Wimborne, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school is part of the Wimborne Academy Trust.
- The school currently has an acting headteacher who is a member of the school improvement team within the trust.
- The most recent section 48 inspection was in June 2019.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the 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 inspectors held meetings with the acting headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the early years leader, the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders and teaching and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local academy committee, including the chair of the committee. She also met with trustees and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leads to discuss how pupils are kept safe in school. Inspectors considered the school's recruitment procedures, staff induction and training, records of concerns and their engagement with external agencies. The inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to an adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. In addition, they met with pupils informally and formally to hear their views.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. Inspectors also took into consideration responses to the staff and pupil questionnaires.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including documentation relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Angela Folland, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Caroline Musty

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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