

Inspection of a good school: St John's Church of England Primary School

Denmark Street, Waterloo, Liverpool, Merseyside L22 9RG

Inspection dates:

9 and 10 February 2023

Outcome

St John's Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and children in the early years are happy at St John's Church of England Primary School. They enjoy coming to school because pupils and staff are kind and friendly.

Staff have high expectations about what pupils can achieve. Pupils enjoy opportunities to find out about a wide range of subjects. They are eager to learn. Pupils achieve well across their subjects.

Pupils enjoy very positive relationships with staff. Staff encourage, support and reward pupils to behave well. Pupils are keen to live up to this in lessons and at social times.

Pupils learn about, and show, respect to others. Staff take any incidents of bullying or other unpleasant behaviours extremely seriously and carefully support pupils when this is needed.

Pupils feel safe and looked after. Pupils said that staff are always there to help them. They trust staff to look after them.

Pupils are encouraged to 'seek life in all its fullness'. They enjoy the wide range of extra opportunities they get to play and learn together. They learn how to get involved and take responsibility. For example, they are keen to make a positive contribution to their school through the school council and the ethos club.

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

Governors, leaders and staff work well together in harmony to ensure that pupils and children in the early years at St Johns' Church of England Primary School benefit from a good quality education. Across the curriculum, pupils and children in the early years achieve well. As a result, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with

special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are well equipped for the next stage of their education.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum provides all pupils, including those with SEND, with a rich set of experiences. These experiences match, and in some places, exceed the expectations of the national curriculum. Across all subjects and areas of learning in the early years, leaders and staff ensure that pupils are taught subject content in a sensible order.

In many subjects, leaders' curriculum thinking provides sharp clarity about the most important knowledge that pupils should learn. In these subjects, staff plan and deliver activities that are suitably demanding for pupils. They design and use assessment strategies that give them a detailed insight into the knowledge that pupils know and remember.

In a small number of foundation subjects, leaders are not as clear about the component knowledge that pupils should learn. In these subjects, staff are not able to ensure that activities or assessment strategies are well focused on the important knowledge that pupils should learn as they are elsewhere. This hinders what some pupils know and remember in these subjects.

Leaders support staff well to deliver most subjects across the curriculum with confidence. Staff have good subject knowledge. In the main, they introduce and deliver subject matter well. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They behave well in lessons.

Leaders place reading at the centre of the curriculum. Pupils and children in the early years benefit from a rigorous and carefully ordered early reading curriculum. Leaders ensure that teaching resources and books match the sounds that pupils are learning. They make careful use of assessment strategies to identify gaps in pupils' phonic knowledge. Staff use assessment information to provide well-matched support so that any pupils who fall behind can quickly catch up with their peers.

Leaders carefully identify pupils' additional needs. Staff use this information to draw up focused plans that guide support for pupils with SEND well. Class teachers and teaching assistants carefully adapt lesson activities for these pupils to help them learn the same knowledge as others. Where necessary, appropriately trained staff ensure that pupils with SEND benefit from additional support that is specifically matched to their individual needs.

Leaders thoughtfully plan the personal development experiences that pupils get through the curriculum and other well-chosen opportunities. Staff deliver age-appropriate personal, health and relationship education programmes that are tailored to local needs. Leaders skilfully ensure that all pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is promoted through carefully selected visits to local cultural and experiences.

Leaders are aware of staff's professional and pastoral needs. They support the development, workload and well-being of staff extremely well. This ensures that all staff feel well supported and confident to undertake their roles effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff have the knowledge and confidence to report any worries about pupils' safety. Staff are vigilant and diligently report concerns when they arise.

Leaders carefully consider any anxieties about pupils' safety. They skilfully utilise in-house and external expertise to support pupils when they need it. Leaders rigorously check that support is helping pupils to feel safer. They deftly adapt support where necessary.

Leaders and staff understand the risks to safety that pupils and children in the early years may encounter. They ensure that pupils learn about staying safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of foundation subjects, leaders are not always clear about what component knowledge pupils should learn. This means that in these subjects, the activities that pupils undertake and the assessment strategies that teachers use are not always as well focused on the key building blocks of knowledge as they should be. As a result, some pupils do not know and remember as much they could in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that there is clarity about what component knowledge pupils should learn in these subjects. They should also ensure that staff know how to use this information to focus activities and assessment on the most important content.

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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2017.

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	104920
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10256152
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jean Forward
Headteacher	Cheryl McManus
Website	www.stjohnscephprimarywaterloo.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 and 2 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St John's Church of England Primary School is a voluntary-aided faith school. It is part of the Anglican Diocese of Liverpool. The school's last section 48 inspection took place in March 2016.
- At the time of the inspection, no pupils or children were being educated at alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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 and other senior leaders. They met with representatives of the governing body, Sefton Local Authority and the Anglican Diocese of Liverpool.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. 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. Inspectors observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.

- Inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's records of safeguarding checks and referrals. They met with leaders who have overall responsibility for safeguarding. Inspectors spoke with staff and pupils about the school's work to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders responsible for SEND and reading. They also looked at information about the support for pupils who have additional needs.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in class and around the school site. They also scrutinised behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from all year groups and considered the responses of the pupils who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including the comments received by Ofsted's free-text facility. Inspectors also considered the views of parents who contacted them during the inspection.

Inspection team

Michael Pennington, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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