

# Inspection of a good school: St John the Baptist Roman Catholic Primary School, Dartmouth

Milton Lane, Dartmouth, Devon TQ6 9HW

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Inspection date:

28 March 2023

## Outcome

St John the Baptist Roman Catholic Primary School, Dartmouth continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St John the Baptist Roman Catholic School live up to their school's values of 'live, love, learn'. They respect adults and their peers by being kind and considerate to each other. Pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school.

Pupils achieve the high expectations leaders have of their learning. They enjoy learning new knowledge in every subject. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. Pupils strive to be the best that they can be.

Pupils talk with enthusiasm about wider experiences they have. For example, they talk about the importance of life-saving lessons and visits from the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, which is relevant in this coastal school. Older pupils take on leadership roles as school chaplains. They ably lead school assemblies and welcome new pupils to the school.

Pupils behave well. At breaktimes and lunchtimes, they play together and take part in activities, such as reading in the library or basketball in the playground. Bullying is rare. Pupils know that disagreements are quickly sorted out by staff.

Pupils feel safe, and parents and carers agree. Parents are highly positive about the school and appreciate the commitment and support school leaders and staff give to them and their children.

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

Leaders ensure that staff are experts at teaching phonics to pupils who are in the early stages of reading. Children start to learn the sounds that letters represent as soon as they join Reception. Pupils read books that match the sounds they know. This helps them become confident readers. Staff check if pupils are falling behind and ensure they catch up quickly. Pupils love reading and like to get stuck into a book and imagine themselves as the main characters. Older pupils talk knowledgeably about their favourite books and authors. Leaders select ambitious texts to extend pupils' knowledge of the world around them.

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum for all pupils. In most subjects, they consider what pupils need to know and by when. Therefore, pupils develop strong knowledge across a broad range of topics. For example, in mathematics, pupils have a confident understanding of topics such as fractions, 3D shapes and angles.

In most subjects, teachers skilfully use questions to check what pupils have learned. However, in some subjects, leaders have not precisely identified the key knowledge they want pupils to learn. This hampers teachers' ability to make regular checks on what pupils know. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge.

Leaders focus on the spoken language and vocabulary pupils use. This helps pupils to explain their thinking. From the Reception Year, children benefit from staff using ambitious vocabulary to support their learning. For example, children can use the language they have learned about directions to find some treasure in the classroom. Children get off to a good start in Reception.

Leaders provide the support pupils need to learn and behave well. They identify the needs of pupils with SEND quickly. Well-trained staff ensure that pupils with SEND take part in lessons and understand their learning.

Leaders have prioritised pupils' well-being and mental health through a new personal, social and health education curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to talk about their feelings with adults and each other. Pupils deepen their understanding of key issues through discussions and debate.

Staff appreciate the support they receive from leaders. They value the advice and guidance they get from subject leaders to help them improve their practice. This helps them to manage their workload.

Governors offer challenge and support to leaders. They ask pertinent questions to understand the impact of leaders' decisions on how well pupils learn. For example, governors understand the impact the revised mathematics curriculum is having on improving pupils' learning.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a robust culture of safeguarding in this school. Recruitment checks are undertaken thoroughly by leaders. Alongside detailed safeguarding training, leaders provide regular briefings to ensure that staff remember key points. As a result, staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding and child protection and know how to report concerns. Leaders act swiftly to secure the support for vulnerable pupils, including liaising with external agencies.

The curriculum gives pupils the information they need to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils understand the importance of healthy relationship and how to keep safe online. They learn not to share passwords or give out personal information.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In some subjects, leaders have not identified the key knowledge they want pupils to learn. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum in all subjects clearly identifies key knowledge for pupils to learn.

## **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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St John the Baptist Roman Catholic Primary School, Dartmouth, to be good in January 2010.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140761
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10226893
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	84
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Ruth O'Donovan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Liz Hamilton
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-johns-dartmouth.devon.sch.uk">www.st-johns-dartmouth.devon.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	23 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- St John the Baptist Roman Catholic Primary School is part of Plymouth CAST multi-academy trust.
- The last section 48 inspection under the Education Act for schools of a religious character was carried out in May 2022.
- The school does not use any 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, members of staff, parents and representatives from the trust and governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met 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.

- An inspector considered responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- Inspectors checked the procedures for keeping pupils safe, including scrutinising the single central record.
- Inspectors looked at the school's plans for improvement, leaders' self-evaluation, minutes of meetings, monitoring documents and reports from the trust.

### **Inspection team**

Gavin Summerfield, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Martin Greenwood

Ofsted Inspector

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