

Inspection of a good school: St John's C of E Primary School

Redfield Road, Midsomer Norton, Radstock, Somerset BA3 2JN

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 March 2023

Outcome

St John's C of E Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this friendly, welcoming school. The relationships between adults and pupils are respectful. Pupils are kind and caring to one another. They feel safe and know that if they have any problems an adult will listen to them.

Leaders have high expectations. They are determined that pupils learn well. Pupils feel valued and appreciate the variety of experiences they have in the classroom and beyond. They enjoy learning and are enthusiastic about the opportunities they have to develop their knowledge.

Staff use the school's values and curriculum to teach pupils about caring for others. Pupils help to develop the school's motto of being 'ready, respectful and caring'. They recognise that everyone has unique gifts and talents.

Pupils are spirited and engaging. They are confident to strike up a conversation with school visitors and are eager to find out about the lives of others.

Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to develop roles and responsibilities. Pupils talk with excitement about receiving 'citizenship and character' awards. Staff support them to participate in experiences and build their skills beyond the taught curriculum.

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

Pupils follow an ambitious curriculum. This begins in Nursery and prepares children well for Reception. Pupils say that their teachers make learning enjoyable. For example, leaders have planned visits to local areas of interest to support pupils' learning.

In most subjects, leaders have carefully identified the important knowledge that they want pupils to learn. The curriculum is organised so that pupils' learning builds over time. However, in some foundation subjects, leaders are still refining their thinking. As a result, some pupils do not apply the breadth and knowledge of skills they need in all subjects.

Pupils develop their thinking skills as their learning progresses. They use previous learning to help them solve problems. For example, in mathematics, older pupils use their knowledge of multiplication to help them find the answers to more complex questions, such as calculating the area of a shape.

Teachers check pupils' understanding through careful questioning. Where pupils require additional support or practice to recall knowledge, this is provided promptly. However, in some subjects, staff do not always develop an accurate picture of what pupils have securely learned.

Teachers read carefully selected, high-quality texts to pupils. These inspire pupils to read widely. Children in Nursery are prepared well for learning to read. They enjoy singing rhymes and listening to stories. Staff support them to say and practise reading tricky words.

When children join the school in Reception Year, leaders have carefully considered how best to support them to learn letters and corresponding sounds. The reading books that children use for practice support this. As a result, children learn to read rapidly. Those who have fallen behind in their reading are supported to catch up quickly. Pupils in key stage 1 talk proudly about receiving certificates in assembly for the effort they make in reading.

Leaders have created an inclusive environment. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) provides staff with additional advice when needed. The SENCo works with a range of external agencies to provide well-planned support for pupils.

Pupils behave well in school. Staff deal with any low-level disruption quickly. This means that pupils learn without interruption. Classrooms are calm and pupils work hard. In the playground, pupils socialise happily together. Leaders have provided zones dedicated to types of play. For example, pupils in the 'creative zone' are provided with dressing-up clothes to support them in role play. In the wooded area, they investigate nature.

Pupils are taught a well-considered curriculum to support their broader development. This is a particular strength of the school. In Nursery, children learn about sharing and taking turns. Older pupils have a clear understanding of equality and fairness. Pupils in the mini-police team share powerful insights with others from their visits to local training centres. Pupils enjoy learning about a range of cultures that differ from their own. They appreciate periods of reflection in the school day, such as during collective worship.

Staff are proud to be part of the school. They say that there is a sense of 'team spirit' among them. They appreciate the consideration that leaders take to support their well-being and assist them to manage their workload. Leaders prioritise pupils' and staff's mental well-being. Governors and trustees share this commitment. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and what areas to focus on next.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that all staff are knowledgeable about how to keep pupils safe. Staff have received relevant and rigorous training. Leaders engage with external agencies to secure appropriate support for pupils and their families.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum helps pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online and in the wider world. Pupils understand the dangers of alcohol and drug misuse.

Appropriate checks are completed before staff begin working at the school. Leaders regularly check recruitment records and the single central record to assure themselves that these are accurate.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, leaders have not identified closely enough the knowledge they want pupils to learn. As a result, not all pupils gain the breadth of knowledge and skills that they need. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum sets out the knowledge that pupils require with precision.
- In some subjects, teachers' approaches to assessment are not fully developed. This means teachers do not always form an accurate picture of how successfully pupils have learned the curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that the use of assessment identifies exactly what pupils have learned.

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 September 2016.

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	140452
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Inspection number	10200005
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	423
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stewart Warrener
Headteacher	Danielle West-Gaul
Website	www.stjohnsmsn.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 September 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St John's Church of England Primary School is part of the Midsomer Norton Schools' Partnership multi-academy trust.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in May 2022.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school includes provision for two- and three-year-old children.
- There is a governor-run breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, subject leaders, those responsible for governance, trust leaders, those responsible for safeguarding and other leaders.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. The inspector held discussions with teachers, pupils and subject leaders, including leaders of geography and science. She visited a sample of lessons and reviewed pupils' work. The inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including records of safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school.
- The inspector considered how well the designated safeguarding lead acts on concerns about pupils' welfare and safety. The inspector talked to staff, pupils and governors about the culture of safeguarding in the school.
- The inspector considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text responses. She also reviewed the responses to the online pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Liz Geller, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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