

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

St John's Green, Colchester, Essex CO2 7HE

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 April 2023

Outcome

St John's Green Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils achieve well at St John's Green. They make strong progress in most subjects. Pupils like their teachers because they are kind and helpful. Learning is interesting and fun.

Pupils care deeply about the school and local community. They help make the school a positive place to be. Pupils are extremely well prepared to be citizens of modern Britain.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary across all year groups. In lessons, pupils listen attentively to their teachers. They get on with their work in a quiet and purposeful way. Pupils play well together on the playground. Bullying is rare.

Pupils feel exceptionally safe at school. Pupils speak highly of school leaders who are always on hand to help if there is a problem. If pupils are worried about anything, they are confident to talk to an adult. Friendship issues and any other concerns are rapidly sorted out. Several parents commented on the high-quality support they and their children have received.

Pupils make the most of all the clubs and activities the school offers. Pupils lead school assemblies and raise money for a range of charities. This contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.

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

Leaders are highly ambitious for what pupils can achieve. They have worked hard to review and revise the curriculum. In most subjects, learning is carefully structured. Pupils make strong progress from their starting points. In a few subjects, some learning is too closely connected to other subjects. For example, in design technology pupils were asked to make Viking longships without the technical skills to effectively join materials. Pupils do not always gain the subject-specific skills or technical knowledge they need to achieve their best.

In most subjects, teachers have good subject knowledge. Subject leaders provide effective training. Teachers greatly value the planning time leaders provide. They particularly value the year group planning day at the end of every term. Teamwork is a strong feature of the school. Teachers do not have any concerns about workload.

Reading is of the highest priority to leaders. Pupils learn phonics from the moment they start school. All teachers and learning support assistants are well trained. Curriculum implementation is consistent and effective across all year groups. Pupils rapidly learn to read simple books. Books are well matched to pupils' phonic stage. All pupils read well by the end of Year 3.

Leaders promote reading exceptionally well. Pupils love reading. Older pupils talk with great enthusiasm about their favourite authors. They read lots of different types of books. Pupils enjoy and learn a lot from their visits to the school libraries.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development are strong. All adults have very high expectations for how pupils behave in lessons and on the playground. The UNICEF ambassadors promote the rights of the child in assemblies and in their classes. All pupils contribute ideas to the school council. Pupils confidently explain the positive changes they have made, for example 'meat-free Monday' and their successful campaign against disposable plastic water bottles.

Leaders ensure there is strong provision for all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers value the support and advice they get from leaders. Teachers make beneficial adjustments to their classrooms and to the curriculum for pupils with SEND. Pupils join in with most lessons and behave and achieve well. Leaders ensure pupils get the support they need from external experts. Learning support assistants are well trained to support pupils' specific needs.

Children make a strong start to their education in early years. The curriculum is well-designed, engaging and fun. All staff have high expectations for children's behaviour and learning. They are well trained and know how to support learning. Children settle in quickly and make lots of friends. Children feel safe in the early years. Leaders work closely with parents. They make sure parents know what, and how, their children will be learning. Children are well prepared for Year 1.

Governors know the school well. Governors bring a wide range of skills to challenge and support school leaders. They make frequent visits to check how pupils are doing and to work with leaders. They do not shy away from difficult decisions. Governors have worked with leaders on how best to manage the budget.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There are strong, effective systems in place to ensure pupils are safe. Staff and governors are well trained in safeguarding, safer recruitment and how to deal with allegations against staff. Staff are clear about when and how to make a referral using the school's

electronic recording system. Leaders follow up any concerns. Leaders and staff work highly effectively with families and external agencies. Safeguarding processes and procedures are regularly and stringently scrutinised by governors.

Leaders ensure the curriculum covers all aspects of safety. For example, pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and in the local community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, staff ask pupils to make links between subjects without the knowledge they need to complete their tasks and understand the content. Pupils do not always gain the subject-specific skills or technical knowledge they need to achieve their best. Leaders should ensure that connections made between subjects do not prevent pupils gaining the subject-specific skills and knowledge they need to progress in their learning.

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	114711
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10268532
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	630
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Geoff Beales
Headteacher	Simon Billings
Website	www.st-johns-green.eschools.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 to 8 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is one school on two separate sites about a 10-minute walk apart.
- The school uses a specialist speech and language unit to support pupils when needed.

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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator, the phonics leader, the family support worker, the early years leader, teachers, support staff and groups of pupils.
- The inspectors met with a group of governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, science, history, and art and design. 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 spoke to leaders, and scrutinised curriculum design and pupils' work in design technology, early mathematics, and geography.
- The inspectors focused on other aspects of the school's work, including safeguarding, pupils' wider development, staff's workload, and off-rolling.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and Ofsted's staff survey. The inspectors considered responses to the parent survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text messages.

Inspection team

Julie Winyard, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Craige Brown

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023