

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

Church Street, Pemberton, Wigan, Lancashire WN5 0DT

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Inspection dates:

11 and 12 May 2023

## **Outcome**

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

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils and children benefit from the clear routines and structures that leaders have put in place. As a result, pupils feel safe in school. Pupils trust that staff will help them when needed.

Staff know pupils and their families well. Leaders have ensured that strong, positive relationships exist between pupils, staff, parents and carers. Pupils are friendly and confident. They are happy to attend each day, and they are proud of their school.

Leaders and staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and achievement. This, in turn, instils self-belief in pupils. Pupils behave well, and they expect the best of their peers. By the end of their time in primary school, most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

Pupils care for one another. For example, they look out for anyone who may be on their own and check that they are not lonely. Pupils learn about how to tackle and resolve any fallings out with their friends. Leaders deal with any incidents of bullying swiftly and effectively.

Many pupils relish taking part in musical theatre club and performing in front of large audiences. Pupils are proud of their drawings and paintings, which were exhibited in the St John's art festival. Pupils in Year 4 begin learning to play the clarinet or flute. Pupils benefit from a range of extra-curricular sporting activities.

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

Leaders are ambitious for what they want pupils, including those with SEND, to achieve. They have designed a curriculum that prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education.

In most subjects, leaders have identified the key knowledge that pupils need to learn, and teachers know when to deliver learning to pupils. Leaders ensure that teachers receive high-quality training. This helps staff to become knowledgeable about the subjects they teach. In the main, teachers explain learning clearly to pupils, and they make appropriate use of resources and activities. This helps pupils, including children in the early years, to learn the curriculum successfully.

On the whole, teachers are adept at using assessment strategies to check on pupils' earlier learning. For example, in mathematics, teachers regularly check that pupils remember important facts and number methods. In most subjects, teachers rectify pupils' misconceptions in a timely manner. However, in a small number of subjects, teachers are not as well equipped to use assessment methods to check on what pupils have remembered. This hinders some pupils in building up a secure body of knowledge over time in these subjects.

Leaders have trained staff to deliver the phonics programme consistently well. Children begin learning phonics from the start of the Reception class. The books they take home to practise reading are matched accurately to the sounds they have learned. Staff provide appropriate support to those pupils who find reading difficult. For the most part, this helps these pupils to catch up quickly. However, there is a small number of staff who are still honing their expertise in providing support for a very small number of pupils. Older pupils in key stage 2 enjoy reading widely for pleasure.

Staff manage pupils' behaviour fairly and consistently. Pupils move sensibly and considerately around the building. They are keen to learn, and they take pride in their work. Disruption to pupils' learning is extremely rare.

Leaders accurately identify the needs of pupils with SEND in a timely manner. These pupils learn the same ambitious curriculum alongside their peers. Staff are equipped well to provide high-quality support. This helps pupils with SEND to successfully learn the curriculum. Pupils with SEND are included fully in all aspects of school life.

Leaders have thoughtfully considered pupils' development outside of the academic curriculum. Pupils are active citizens, contributing positively to their school community. Leaders organise various school trips to strengthen pupils' knowledge of the world and to broaden their horizons. For example, in Reception, children learn about other countries and how to greet each other in different languages. Pupils develop a rich understanding of other cultures and traditions. Pupils are keen to learn about current affairs and British values.

Governors work closely with leaders to support them to drive their priorities forward. They use their expertise to challenge leaders effectively when needed. For instance, governors have ensured that middle leaders are well trained and supported to carry out their roles effectively.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about working at St John's. They feel supported by leaders, who take staff workload into consideration when making decisions. For example,

staff told the inspector that the changes that leaders have made to the school marking policy have helped to reduce their workload and have improved their well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that staff know that keeping pupils safe is everybody's responsibility. To this end, staff are trained well. For example, they know how to spot potential signs of harm in pupils. They report any concerns diligently, and leaders follow these up quickly.

Leaders and staff are suitably aware of the local context. They secure help from outside agencies when pupils need it. Furthermore, they support parents and carers well.

Pupils and children learn about keeping themselves safe. They are reminded regularly about how to keep safe on the roads. Pupils learn about online safety and understand that they should not share their passwords with anyone.

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

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

- A small number of staff are still honing their expertise to deliver some aspects of the early reading curriculum. This means that a very small number of pupils are not supported as well as they should be to catch up quickly and read fluently. Leaders should ensure that there is a consistent approach to the teaching of reading fluency so that pupils become confident readers as quickly as possible.
- In a small number of subjects, some teachers are not as well equipped to use assessment methods to check on what pupils have learned and remembered. This hinders some pupils in building up a secure body of knowledge over time. Leaders should ensure that staff are supported to use assessment methods so that teachers can identify and address swiftly any gaps in pupils' knowledge.

## **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 school to be good in May 2014.

## **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>	106451
<b>Local authority</b>	Wigan
<b>Inspection number</b>	10286234
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	205
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	David Parfitt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Speakman
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.saintjohns.wigan.sch.uk">www.saintjohns.wigan.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.
- The school is a voluntary-aided Church of England school. The last section 48 inspection under the Education Act for schools of a religious character was carried out in May 2016.

## 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.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders and other staff.
- The inspector had telephone conversations with representatives of the local authority and the diocese.
- The inspector spoke to pupils about their views of the school, bullying and behaviour. She also observed behaviour at break and lunchtimes.

- The inspector reviewed documentation, including minutes from meetings of the governing body, leaders' self-evaluation form and school development plans.
- The inspector met with leaders, staff and pupils to evaluate the culture of safeguarding. She also checked the safeguarding procedures.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector 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 inspector also spoke to leaders in other subjects about the curriculum.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. The inspector also spoke to parents before the start of the day to gather their views.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Jenny Jones, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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