

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

Portland Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2SG

Inspection dates:

27 and 28 September 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 enjoy coming to this school. They said that they look forward to learning new things every day. Pupils are happy because they are surrounded by adults whom they trust. They know that they can speak out if they have any concerns. In the playground, for example, pupils use the 'buddy bench' to let adults know that they need someone to talk to. A digital 'worry box' is also available on the school's website for pupils to raise issues when they need to.

The school wants all its pupils to 'believe, inspire, and achieve'. In most instances, this goal is realised. Pupils achieve highly in subjects such as English and mathematics. Leaders and staff at all levels are working hard to ensure that pupils achieve the same highly positive outcomes across all subjects.

Pupils behave well in and out of lessons. They are polite and they treat each other with kindness and respect. They listen and follow adults' instructions promptly.

Pupils are helped to develop their leadership skills in school in many ways. The work of the school council representatives helps pupils to understand how democracy works. Pupils also plan for and lead assemblies attended by the whole school. Pupils enjoy their roles as eco-warriors, e-safety ambassadors and peer mediators, among others.

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

The school's curriculum is designed with care and ambition. The necessary building blocks to learning well in a subject are carefully identified. This allows pupils to make sense of new learning. In early years, for instance, children learn about the passage of time and ordering events by using visual timetables and putting their birthdays in month order. This knowledge is built up year on year. By the time they reach Year 3, pupils are proficient at constructing more complex timelines of different periods in history.

The school knows its pupils well. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified at the earliest opportunity. Adaptations to how the curriculum is taught are made to address pupils' specific needs. This ensures that pupils with SEND participate fully and are able to benefit from the learning taking place in class.

Pupils often dip into their prior learning when they are studying and talking about new ideas in a subject. They also get plenty of time to recap and practise what they have learned. In mathematics, for example, the curriculum enables pupils to identify, compare and order numbers in a variety of ways. As a result, pupils show a secure understanding of number and use this knowledge to calculate effectively. Occasionally, however, some teaching choices mean that pupils are expected to learn too much information in one go. When this happens, it gets in the way of pupils knowing and remembering more of the subject that they are learning.

Pupils collaborate well in lessons. They often engage in sensible conversations to help them understand what they are learning. They are focused and excited at the prospect of learning new ideas. Disruptions to learning are rare. Leaders maintain strong oversight of attendance to ensure that pupils attend school regularly.

The school prioritises the teaching of early reading. As soon as pupils start, the school checks what phonic knowledge pupils already have. From Reception through to Year 2, pupils receive daily phonics lessons based on an ambitious programme. These lessons are delivered by well-trained staff. Regular assessments ensure that those who are falling behind in their phonic knowledge are identified promptly. These pupils receive additional support and they catch up quickly. Sometimes, however, pupils struggle to read accurately and quickly. This is because they do not have enough practice in reading exception words. These are words that occur commonly in the books that pupils read but have unusual letter–sound correspondences or are ones that have not been taught yet.

Pupils are supported to understand the wider world outside their classroom. They learn about and are encouraged to engage with their immediate vicinity. The school has forged links with the local university, which is on their doorstep. Pupils also visit and support older people in the local community. Staff make full use of the school's outdoor spaces to engage pupils in learning about the environment. Pupils especially enjoy tending the school garden and looking after the school's hens and rabbits. Parents and carers are actively encouraged to get involved in their children's learning, for example by sharing stories and books at home.

Staff are proud to be a part of this school. They appreciate that they are supported with their workload and their well-being. Staff spoke about how they work as a team and how this helps them to overcome any challenges in their roles. They described their workplace as a 'small school with a big heart'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, decisions about what to teach lead to pupils receiving too much new information in one go. When this happens, it reduces the quality of the school's work to make sure that pupils know and remember more of the subject content. The school should ensure that teaching helps pupils to process and retain learning effectively so that, across all areas of the curriculum, their work is consistently of a high quality.
- Pupils sometimes struggle to read common exception words in the books that they read. When this happens, it hampers their reading development. The school should ensure that these pupils receive the teaching and practice that they need to build up the bank of words that they can read automatically.

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 March 2018.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years,

looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	102589
Local authority	Kingston upon Thames
Inspection number	10289851
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lynn Charlton
Headteacher	Lulu Esua
Website	www.stjohns.kingston.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school received its most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character in April 2019.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.

- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. Other subjects were considered as part of this inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector also considered the views of parents through their responses to Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Edison David, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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