

Inspection of St John's Church of England Primary School

Brook Lane, Walsall Wood, Walsall, West Midlands WS9 9NA

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 October 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 12 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act.

What is it like to attend this school?

All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), flourish here. From the moment they set foot in Nursery, they feel safe and become caring young people. Pupils rightly have confidence that there are always adults to talk to. Staff deal with any bullying or unacceptable behaviour right away.

Pupils, staff and many parents and carers value the family feel of the school. The vision of being a 'family of diverse, unique and equal people' is brought alive for everyone in school. All pupils, but especially pupils with SEND, are well supported to be successful. The school's ambitions for pupils' learning and developing life skills are met.

Pupils understand that respect is a two-way process. Staff model the school's values. Pupils follow in their footsteps. Apart from the occasional lapse, pupils grow and develop in managing their own behaviour. They recognise and accept that some pupils need extra help on occasion to do the right things in the right way.

Residential, responsibilities, the right to have your voice heard and to vote are intrinsic to school life. Parents and pupils appreciate these. Both see the school as a nurturing place where memories are made.

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

The school has successfully established a curriculum that builds pupils' knowledge over time. Staff are very clear on what needs teaching, when and how. The school has thought deeply about how to help pupils remember their learning over time. 'Rewind, recap and remember' is the golden thread spun throughout the classrooms.

Staff have exciting and effective ways of looping back and weaving in and out of learning across topics and time. This is working very well. You do not walk many paces without hearing the golden thread being discussed. Children in the early years frequently hear 'remember what, remember when, remember how and remember why'. And they do. They remember the sequence to make a sandcastle. They use what they learn in phonics to write signs. They recall how to twirl a hoop around their hips or balance safely along beams.

Pupils with SEND receive precise and personalised support. This is because their needs are accurately identified. Parents are involved and informed. Staff are well trained in knowing how to make the right changes to resources used. They are in tune with knowing when some pupils with SEND need time to relax and regroup. They do this with skill and success. This starts right from the early years. Individual programmes allow children in the early years to learn and develop successfully. Children with SEND share time between navigating their own pathway and joining in with their friends.

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. They build upwards and onwards from the strong foundations of the early years. By the end of Reception, many have everything they need to be ready for the learning ahead of them in Year 1. By Year 6, pupils achieve very well in English and mathematics. However, across curriculum subjects, expectations are not consistently high enough for the most able pupils. The work they are given does not always deepen their knowledge. Nor does it provide enough opportunities for them to show what they know in their own way. For all pupils, there are occasions when teachers do not address errors.

Sharing stories is intrinsic to school life. Learning to read is given clear priority. This journey starts in Nursery where songs are sung with joy, regularity and spontaneity. It grows in Reception where pupils start to link sounds to letters in phonics. It builds over time through the successful teaching of phonics. Pupils learn to read with accuracy and fluency. Any faltering along the way is noted and addressed. Older pupils enjoy discussing texts that they are reading. They recall poems that link to significant historical events.

Pupils' learning and understanding are enriched by a range of visits, visitors and workshops. The 'oohs and aahs' heard from the hall during the inspection as pupils learned about the human digestive system showed memories were in the making. The school involves parents in school life in many ways. This includes promoting a return to their school days by joining a science workshop in the evening.

A strength of the school is how well looked after staff feel. As one, all staff spoke of the support and training they receive. They spoke of the difference it makes to feeling and being successful in their job. This has been especially important as the needs of pupils and behaviours they manage have become more complex and challenging since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school is not expecting enough of the most able pupils. This means these pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure staff have the knowledge and skills to adapt learning activities in a way that fully extends the most able pupils and allows them to meet their full potential.
- The school does not ensure that staff consistently address basic errors in spelling and punctuation well enough. This means pupils are sometimes unaware of when they have got something wrong. The school should continue to build on its current systems to tighten up how staff make sure pupils know what is wrong and what to do about it.

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	104228
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10267957
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	346
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jane Clark
Headteacher	Andrew Mills
Website	www.stjohnscewalsallwood.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 October 2011, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school provides a breakfast club.
- This is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Lichfield. Its most recent section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, was in 2016.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, curriculum leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.

- The lead inspector spoke with three members of the governing body, including the chair.
- During the inspection, the inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects, including English, geography, and personal, social and health education.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons at different times of the day and at playtimes and lunchtimes. They spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school. Inspectors considered behaviour and bullying records.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: 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 inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. They also considered the online staff surveys.
- An inspector talked to parents at the school gate.

Inspection team

Kirsty Foulkes, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mary Maybank

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