

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

Mortimer Road, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 1FS

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very proud of their school. They enjoy coming to school and attend well. Pupils are keen to be involved in school life, for instance, as junior, digital or sports leaders. They know how to keep themselves safe. All spoken to were unanimous that they would speak to a trusted adult if worried or upset. Pupils behave well and have a positive attitude towards their learning. They reflect the school values of 'safe, responsible and ambitious' every day. The school deals with any rare instances of bullying effectively.

The school has set high expectations for all pupils. Pupils live up to these expectations. For instance, pupils do very well in their reading and mathematics. Those who find learning difficult progress rapidly because of the support they receive.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities that bring learning to life, such as a trip to Kenilworth Castle or studying a real piece of moon rock from NASA. Pupils happily show their work to parents and carers through regular after-school art exhibitions.

The school celebrates its diverse and inclusive community. It promotes this through the wide range of artists, historians and scientists that pupils study. Leaders ensure that there are opportunities for all in the wider range of activities on offer, which include the well-attended choir, indoor rowing, athletics and environment clubs.

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

The school has put in place an ambitious curriculum that ensures that by the time pupils leave school a high proportion of them are exceeding national expectations, particularly in reading and mathematics.

At the same time, the school ensures that the curriculum is well suited and adapted to the pupils' specific needs. This includes disadvantaged pupils, those with special

educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and asylum seekers who are new to English.

The school prioritises learning to read. This starts as soon as children join Nursery or Reception. The school has made changes to the phonics programme, which have helped ensure a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics. Teachers check that books are well matched to the sounds and letters that pupils know. Those who find reading difficult, or are at an early stage of reading, get the support they need. This helps them to quickly gain the knowledge and skills they need in order to become confident and fluent readers.

The school has put in place a wider curriculum that has been carefully designed to help pupils build on their previous learning. In history, for instance, pupils gain a greater depth of knowledge about themes such as monarchs and rulers as they move on to different periods in history. This includes learning about King Charles I, the Great Fire of London and Queen Mary. Furthermore, there is flexibility for teachers to revisit work that pupils have missed or revise concepts they have not yet fully grasped. In Reception, children develop their knowledge early on, with adults exposing them to the technical vocabulary they will need for learning in subsequent years.

Teachers check how well pupils are learning through regular tests and quizzes, as well as questioning and checking pupils' work during lessons. This helps them identify any misconceptions pupils may have.

There have been changes in some leadership and teaching posts at the start of this term. As a result, some staff are new to their roles, and still developing their knowledge and understanding to embed the wider curriculum further.

Two years ago, pupils' attendance was low and significantly below the national average for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. The school has taken great strides to address this through their close working relationships with parents and carers. Consequently, attendance has rapidly improved.

Pupils get on very well with each other. The school tackles any rare incidents of falling out or misbehaviour successfully through its 'restorative justice' programme. Suspensions and other consequences are very rare. The school promotes pupils' personal development very well. Pupils understand and demonstrate what it means to respect others who are different to them. The pupil leadership team has actively challenged industries and local councillors on environmental issues. St John's is designated as a bee-friendly and plastic-free school.

Senior leadership is very strong. The team is very mindful of staff workload. Leaders engage effectively with parental concerns. As a result, staff and parents enjoy working at, and sending their children to, the school. Governors know the school very well and are actively involved, for example by attending pupil progress meetings.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A number of staff are new in subject leadership and teaching positions. As result, aspects of their knowledge and understanding of the wider curriculum are not yet fully embedded. Leaders should ensure that staff have further opportunities to develop their leadership and teaching experience and knowledge of the wider curriculum.

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 April 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	130870
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10290575
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gill Naylor
Headteacher	Adam Lee
Website	www.stjohnsprimarykenilworth.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 April 2018

Information about this school

- None of the current senior leadership team were in post at the last inspection. One assistant headteacher has been in post since 1 September 2023.
- The chair of the governing body has been in post since 1 September 2023. The previous long-standing chair is now vice-chair.
- This is a one-form entry school (apart from Year 4).
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, assistant headteachers and other leaders and staff.
- The inspector spoke to several groups of pupils.
- The inspector met six members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair.
- The inspector spoke by telephone to a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses, and the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey. He also spoke to a number of parents in the playground at the end of the school day.
- The inspector considered information on pupils' behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector 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. The inspector also listened to pupils reading.
- 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.

Inspection team

Mark Sims, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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