

Inspection of St John the Baptist Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

St John's Way, Ragworth, Stockton-on-Tees TS19 0FB

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 November 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 **Good**

What is it like to attend this school?

St John the Baptist Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a very happy, nurturing and fully inclusive school. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils are confident that bullying is not tolerated. Pupils have a trusted adult whom they can speak to if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and can explain, for example, how to stay safe when online.

Leaders have a clear vision for the school, and everyone lives by their motto of 'everyone different, everyone loved'. Pastoral care and support for pupils and their families are real strengths of this school.

There are high expectations of pupils to behave well and treat one another with respect. Pupils live up to these expectations. They care for one another and support each other well.

All staff want pupils to achieve highly. Pupils' outcomes at the end of the academic year 2023 were poor. This followed a particularly turbulent year for the school. Evidence gathered during this inspection indicates that the school is back on track following changes to the curriculum and leadership roles.

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

Children in early years settle into routines quickly. In Nursery, children take part in foundation phonics, where they play games such as 'What is in the box?'. This helps children to become familiar with sounds and letters. Children are beginning to make more rapid progress than in previous years. Teachers start formal phonics teaching straightaway in Reception. During play activities, teachers and teaching assistants model vocabulary and language well. Children are happy and enthusiastic. They benefit from a well-resourced outdoor area, which includes an impressive balance-bike track.

Phonics is taught consistently across key stage 1 following the introduction of a new scheme in September 2022. The passion for reading across the school is obvious. There is a plethora of opportunities for reading each school day and clear expectations for pupils to read at home. Pupils access books that match the sounds they are learning. Those who fall behind are supported through effective interventions to catch up. Outcomes for pupils in the Year 1 phonics screening check at the end of 2023 show that the school is back on track, with more pupils achieving this standard. Following the 2023 key stage 2 outcomes, new strategies to support older pupils' reading are ensuring that they understand and remember more.

There is a curriculum in place across all subjects and year groups, but it is not mapped out clearly. For example, some documents include Years 1 to 6 but do not refer to early years. All pupils, including those in the enhanced mainstream schools (EMS) provision, follow the same curriculum. Teachers adapt the content and activities effectively to meet the individual needs of pupils. In the EMS classes,

pupils receive enhanced support from teaching assistants, healthcare assistants and specialist teachers from the local authority, as well as their teacher. This helps pupils to learn well.

Pupils really enjoy their physical education (PE) lessons. Pupils use precise vocabulary when talking about what they are learning. Increasingly, they can explain how what they have learned previously is helping them with their learning now. In history, pupils can precisely recall the process of mummification. Pupils say that they enjoy mathematics and computing.

The school has many prizes and incentives for pupils to attend well. It has a range of strategies in place to support and challenge parents and carers to ensure that children are brought to school every day and are on time. These strategies are having an impact, and pupils' attendance is beginning to improve towards pre-pandemic levels.

Most pupils behave extremely well. They are polite and welcoming and very proud of their school. Pupils are passionate and enthusiastic about their school and their learning. Where a minority of pupils struggle with their behaviour, support plans are put in place. These are effective and are reducing in number. The school supports pupils who have been permanently excluded or are at risk of permanent exclusion from other schools exceptionally well.

There is a comprehensive programme for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. Pupils learn about different types of relationships and families. They are respectful of difference. Pupils learn about fundamental British values and protected characteristics, but they struggle to talk with confidence about them. Pupils in the EMS provision and the mainstream school spend social time together. There is a huge range of extra-curricular clubs, such as those for golf and boxing. Pupils benefit from a wide range of therapeutic support when needed, including access to therapy dogs and ponies and therapy through drawing.

Leaders work very well together. There is a comprehensive school improvement plan that shows the ambition for the school. Governors are highly skilled with the right experience, which they use to support and challenge leaders. The school is outward looking and open to learning from others. It takes part in a variety of local authority and diocesan networks and training. This helps the school to reflect on what it does well and where it can improve. Parents who completed the Ofsted Parent View survey spoke highly of the school, with one parent summing it up as a 'brilliant school with lovely staff'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Curriculum documents and guidance are not sufficiently clear. This means that there can be some confusion about curriculum expectations, particularly as some documents do not link fully to the early years curriculum. Leaders should ensure that there is a single, coordinated, systematic and aligned approach to curriculum planning across all year groups.
- Some children do not achieve as highly as they should by the end of early years. Outcomes in 2023 were not as good as they could be. This means that some children were less ready for Year 1 than others. Leaders should continue their strategies of working with parents to support the work of the school to embed children's learning.
- Some pupils struggled to explain aspects of fundamental British values and protected characteristics. This means that they do not have a deep enough understanding of them. Leaders should ensure that pupils' knowledge is further developed so that pupils can confidently articulate their understanding in relation to British society.

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

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| Unique reference number | 111668 |
| Local authority | Stockton-on-Tees |
| Inspection number | 10290006 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 2 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 321 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Sue Symington |
| Headteacher | Kerry Coe |
| Website | www.st-johnthebaptist.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 5 June 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school has two classes of enhanced mainstream provision. These cater for pupils with cognition and learning needs and pupils with sensory and physical needs. Pupils range in age from four to 11 years old. There are 10 places in each provision, but these are currently oversubscribed.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The school does not use any alternative education provision.
- The school has an on-site hub that is accessed by pupils from other schools for therapeutic support. This is organised in conjunction with the Stockton-on-Tees local authority's virtual school.
- The school is a Church of England school and is part of the Diocese of Durham. The school's most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in June 2022.

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 had 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers and other senior leaders and curriculum leaders. The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair and the vice-chair of governors. She also met with the local authority senior school improvement adviser and spoke with the assistant director for education for the Diocese of Durham.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, PE and history. 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 for computing and PSHE education.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.

Inspection team

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Debbie Redshaw, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Rowena Sykes | Ofsted Inspector |
| Suzette Garland-Grimes | Ofsted Inspector |

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