

Inspection of St John’s Church of England Primary School

St John’s Place, Northgate, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1BD

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 January 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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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's is a diverse school where pupils feel valued and respected. This is evident through the strong, caring relationships between staff and pupils. The school has created a culture of mutual respect through its Christian ethos and values.

Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy engaging in discussions about learning and visits to the local community. These include visits to the university and a local independent school, as well as nature walks. Pupils feel safe at school and have adults they trust to talk to about any worries. Pupils understand what bullying is and how to report any concerns should they arise.

Pupils reflect on their behaviour and the behaviour of others. They talk with confidence about how to identify and manage their emotions. For pupils who find this difficult, skilled staff help and support them. Pupils happily work in an engaging, well-resourced learning environment. The introduction of new books and reading awards has been positively received by pupils.

The school is on a journey to ensure that its increased ambition is fully reflected in pupils' achievements. Pupils are learning increasingly well, but some variability remains. The school is determinedly focused on continuing to support all pupils so they achieve strongly across the curriculum.

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

The school's curriculum is aspirational for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils study and enjoy a broad range of subjects. The school provides well for the increasing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and some who start school with very little or no understanding of English. The school has rightly focused on improving pupils' outcomes. The most recent published results do not reflect the improvements in pupils' achievements across the curriculum.

The school is determined for all pupils to succeed in this fully inclusive school. The needs of pupils with SEND or those who speak EAL are identified swiftly. Within the provision for pupils with SEND, staff follow a carefully adapted curriculum to support pupils to learn well. Some pupils have been out of education prior to joining school. New starters are helped to integrate quickly. They receive sensitive support from adults and a helping hand from prospective friends.

The school identifies pupils' needs by analysing the challenges that they experience. Staff recognise pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, who need help with language development. Impressive support for speech and vocabulary begins in Nursery. Staff across the school teach and model the technical words needed for pupils to access their learning successfully.

Staff carefully check pupils' understanding. There is variation in the effectiveness of how well gaps in learning are identified. In some subjects, teachers sharply monitor pupils' understanding and their recall of important concepts. Teachers use this information to inform their teaching and recap the key content. However, in other subjects, this is less well developed. This hinders how well pupils know and remember more over time.

The school prioritises phonics and early reading. Phonics teaching begins early in Reception. In phonics lessons, staff precisely check pupils' understanding and provide support to those who have fallen behind. This is helping more pupils to learn to read accurately, and the school is resolute in its focus to continue this improvement. Reading books that pupils take home match closely to the sounds that they have learned. In early years, staff focus on developing communication and language effectively. They use stories and rhymes to help children develop their speaking and listening skills.

Pupils' personal development is prioritised. The school has focused on developing pupils' mental health and well-being. Everyone feels valued and cared for. The school promotes pupils to learn about how to keep safe online and in the community. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and know what action to take if they are concerned. Pupils benefit from a broad range of opportunities to develop their understanding of the world around them. This includes theatre visits and travelling by train.

Attendance is a priority for the school. Efforts by leaders have ensured that pupils attend more regularly. Disadvantaged pupils benefit from extra support, such as a popular breakfast initiative. Pupils' behaviour is mostly positive, and they behave well in lessons. Staff manage minor distractions swiftly and calmly, so learning is not disrupted. The school emphasizes the values of honesty and kindness to help pupils to develop mature and respectful attitudes.

External advice has been sought by the school to develop the curriculum further. Governors offer support and challenge to leaders, to ensure that the provision is accessible and improving for all pupils. The school is considerate of staff's workload and well-being. Consequently, staff feel valued and supported to improve their teaching for the benefit of pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, staff do not identify pupils' gaps in understanding or routinely revisit earlier learning. This means that some pupils do not remember important knowledge over time. The school needs to support staff to use the information

from checks on pupils' learning to inform future teaching and support pupils to achieve highly across the curriculum.

- Not all pupils have previously learned to read quickly enough. This means that some pupils have not developed into fluent and accurate readers as reflected in the most recent published outcomes. The school should continue its work to prioritise the teaching of reading so that all pupils swiftly learn to read accurately and with confidence.
- School attendance is low for some pupils. Low attendance means that pupils are missing out on important learning for their future. The school should continue to work with families so that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, attend school regularly.

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	137071
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10296364
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	419
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Robyn Dye
Headteacher	Jo Williamson
Website	www.stjohns-canterbury.kent.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	18 and 19 September 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Canterbury. Its last section 48 inspection took place in June 2019.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school has a higher-than-average proportion of pupils who speak EAL.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND and the number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is well above the national average.

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 is the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher and senior leaders. The inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority and a representative from the Diocese.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, music, art and design, and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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.
- The views of parents and carers were considered through their responses to Ofsted Parent View. Further views of pupils and staff were gathered through surveys, interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documents, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance records and behaviour incident logs.

Inspection team

Baljit Bhabra, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Andrea Carter	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Eggleton	Ofsted Inspector

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