

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

Teindland Close, Benwell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE4 8HE

Inspection dates:

26 and 27 March 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

St John's Primary School is highly inclusive and welcoming. Pupils love attending here. The school provides a breadth of exceptional curriculum enrichment activities. Pupils' character development is a high priority. The opportunities pupils have to perform, develop oracy skills and hold eloquent discussions prepare them well for the next stage in their education. Pupils thrive here.

The diversity of the school is celebrated. The school has embedded many ways for pupils to understand and appreciate others' heritage, religions and life experiences. Pupils who are newly arrived in the country receive an instant welcome. The multicultural school community is proud to learn from each other and to share its differences and commonalities.

Staff have high expectations for all pupils' achievement. The school has a much higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They are well supported in lessons and are involved in the life of the school. Pupils with SEND, and pupils who are disadvantaged, achieve exceptionally well.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. The school's systems to promote and maintain good attendance are highly effective. The school goes over and above to support families to get to school on time.

The school is the heartbeat of the community. Parents and carers value the exceptional opportunities given to their children. 'The Turf @ St John's' facility, which provides community events, is important to the local area. St John's truly embodies the spirit of a community school, with strong partnerships between staff, pupils and families.

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

The carefully chosen curriculum gives pupils exactly what they need to be successful. The school tailors the curriculum to ensure it is ambitious and finely curated to pupils' needs. The partnerships with local museums and external providers enhance the curriculum offer. These well-planned partnerships bring pupils' learning to life. This contributes to how well they discuss their learning in depth. Riveting lessons and ambitious educational visits are the norm for pupils. The school provides regular opportunities for pupils to apply their learning outside of the classroom. These vary from performing their creative writing in theatres to the school's annual educational visit to Spain to study coral reefs.

Pupils love to read at St John's. The school has created an excellent reading culture. Pupils discuss and compare books with depth and enjoyment. Children learn to read as soon as they start Reception. They learn to read quickly and fluently. The school closely monitors reading progress. This ensures that every child meets the high expectations set for reading, both in and out of school. Staff are expert in teaching phonics. Their knowledge and enthusiasm for early reading is infectious. Parents regularly join engaging reading sessions with their children. Pupils meet the school's high expectations of reading at home. They describe links between their classroom learning and book choices beautifully.

The ambitious and well-taught curriculum means pupils achieve well. Teachers' expertise is well developed. The daily opportunities to revisit prior learning help pupils remember the important knowledge they need. Pupils use subject-specific vocabulary confidently. In music, pupils discuss how knowledge of pentatonic scales helps them with their compositions. Pupils link their learning across the curriculum. For example, they can link mathematics and music with learning about Roman marching formations in history.

Children make an excellent start in the early years. The well-planned curriculum skilfully reflects children's interests. Memorable learning opportunities are the norm, such as examining 'dinosaur poo' to deepen their learning about animals' diets. Staff closely check children's engagement with the different learning areas. Children join in enthusiastically with stories and rhymes from around the world. They play and work together exceptionally well. When creating artwork, children share ideas about colour mixing and appropriate tools to use. The outdoor area is of a huge benefit to children, developing their large-muscle strength by building forts and using balance bikes. Opportunities for early mathematics and communication are well planned, and children make good progress. Children are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

Pupils with SEND are identified quickly. The school partners closely with external agencies and parents to make referrals and to signpost to support groups. The expertise in school means pupils' needs are identified quickly and correctly. Parents benefit from the school's SEND information sessions and support groups.

Pupils are keen to display the school's values. The 'seven stars' awards display in the hall shows the dates pupils have demonstrated them. These are a source of great pride. Pupils relish celebrating each other's achievements. The comradery and competition created by house points help children want to do their best. STEM (science, technology,

engineering and mathematics) clubs, booster sessions and educational visits are well attended by pupils. Older pupils look forward to visits to the Houses of Parliament to deepen their understanding of political processes and democracy.

Pupils at St John's develop a strong sense of identity and pride in their community. They actively contribute to local art installations, and initiatives such as the Year 6 'I come from...' video. The school carefully plans the many ways it can broaden pupils' experiences. Staff members prioritise learning about other cultures so they can model understanding and respect.

There is a high level of expertise across the board of governors. They are deeply committed to the high ambition and exceptional inclusion that makes the school so effective. Staff's well-being is a high priority. Early career teachers thrive in this nurturing environment. St John's is a shining example of what can be achieved when high ambition and exceptional inclusion are at the heart of a school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 February 2014.

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	108476
Local authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	10297250
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Anderson
Headteacher	Tracey Caffrey
Website	www.stjohns.newcastle.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school works in partnership with seven other schools in the West End Schools' Trust.
- The school provides a breakfast club.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.

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 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 spoke to senior leaders, including members of the governing body and the local authority school effectiveness adviser.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and music. 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 listened to a range of pupils from different year groups read.
- 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 spoke to leaders, teachers, governors and pupils about safeguarding.
- The inspector analysed the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and staff survey. They reviewed answers from the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses.

Inspection team

Georgina Chinaka, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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