

# Inspection of St Nicolas C.E. Junior School

Link Road, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 7LU

---

Inspection dates:	8 and 9 October 2024
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are proud of their diverse school. The school's vision, 'For the good of all' is well understood. Pupils are friendly and welcome new pupils to the school with warmth and kindness. There is a happy feel to this school. Pupils develop strong, positive relationships with the teaching staff. They know that their trusted adults will help them if they have any worries.

Pupils achieve well across most of the curriculum and therefore are prepared for their next steps in education. There are high expectations set for pupils' behaviour. As a result, most pupils are attentive in their lessons and are keen to learn. At breaktimes, pupils enjoy participating in a wide range of activities with their friends.

Pupils benefit from many meaningful opportunities which nurture and build on their talents and interests. They include many music events and opportunities to play musical instruments. Pupils are proud to represent the school as part of the choir at a national event. The school encourages pupils to be physically active through the offer of many sporting competitions and extra-curricular clubs, including fencing, archery and dance. Pupils recognise the benefits of completing their 'daily mile'.

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

The school has high ambition for all pupils. In every subject, there is a clear learning journey meaning that teachers know what to teach and when. This includes a highly effective and individualised approach for supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils who need extra help with their learning or behaviour gain benefit from their time in the school's nurture group.

The school has acted decisively to strengthen the curriculum. In the past, some pupils did not achieve as well as they should with their writing. Pupils' written work shows that this recent improvement has a positive impact. Pupils have opportunities to build their writing stamina and participate in the school's 'writer of the week' challenge. However, although pupils have a secure understanding of a range of sentence structure, grammar, and punctuation it is not always evident in their written work.

The school ensures that pupils learn to read well. Pupils are adept at interrogating texts and examining authors' use of language. Staff support pupils who need extra help with their reading, using a phonics-based approach. This means that these pupils catch up with their reading and read with increasing fluency. Pupils enjoy their class reads and visiting the school's library. They benefit from additional events such as poetry week and visits from authors.

Pupils remember their learning well. This is because teachers routinely recap previous learning so that pupils build on it. In mathematics lessons, pupils practise their number skills and calculation methods. This means that they have the skills to successfully solve

mathematical problems. In science, pupils make strong links between their areas of learning.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and the school supports them well. They ensure that pupils have access to the resources they need to support their learning. Pupils enjoy the activities in their lessons. However, there are a few times when activities do not have a clear learning focus. In these lessons, pupils do not learn as well as they could.

The school embraces its increasingly diverse school community. Pupils learn about a wide range of faiths and cultures. They are accepting of difference and show empathy and understanding towards others. Families are included in school events such as 'The International Evening' where a diverse range of culture and traditions are celebrated by all.

Pupils' attendance is high. This is because the school actively promotes good attendance and supports families well. In addition, pupils want to come to school as they enjoy their learning and social times. Families value the support the school gives them.

The governing body are well informed about the work of the school, including its strengths and next steps. The school engage well with the local authority and the diocese and value the support they receive from them.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In English lessons, teachers do not make the links between reading analysis and pupils' own writing explicit. This means that some pupils do not produce written work which reflects the depth of their understanding about language, grammar and punctuation. The school should continue with its work to support the teaching of English so that pupils' writing outcomes improve.
- In some lessons, the chosen activities do not have a clear learning focus. This means that sometimes pupils do not learn the intended curriculum. The school should ensure that teachers are supported in designing activities which develop pupils' knowledge and skills.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110013
<b>Local authority</b>	West Berkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10341259
<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	258
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Mike Burroughs
<b>Headteacher</b>	Keith Harvey
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stjohnandstnicolasschools.org.uk">www.stjohnandstnicolasschools.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25 June 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school currently uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school is a voluntary aided Church of England primary school within the Diocese of Oxford. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in June 2019. The next section 48 inspection is due in 2024.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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 inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, the 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.
- 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 lead inspector had meetings with senior school leaders, representatives from the governing body, diocese and the local authority.
- The inspectors analysed responses to the staff survey and spoke to staff about their views of the school.
- The inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted online parent survey, Ofsted Parent View and the additional free-text responses. An inspector also spoke with parents at the end of the first day of the inspection.
- The inspectors evaluated responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Kate Fripp, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alison Robb-Webb

Ofsted Inspector

Ian Howie

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2024