Inspection of St John's Church of England Primary School

School Lane, St John's, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 1SD

Inspection dates:	25 and 26 March 2025
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?

Pupils develop a deep sense of belonging here. Children in Reception are welcomed into the school community by their Year 6 'buddies'. The friendships that pupils develop with others of all ages provide them with an enduring sense of safety and security. Year 6 pupils feel more confident about their upcoming transition to secondary school because they know their former buddies will be looking out for them.

Pupils are expected to work hard, achieve well and play an active role in school life. They meet these high expectations. Pupils consistently behave kindly towards each other. Older pupils are attentive in lessons and responsive to staff. Sometimes younger pupils need more reminders about how to behave well in lessons.

Character development is a strength. Over time, pupils develop their understanding of the school's vision for pupils to learn to 'live life in all its fullness'. For pupils, this means not only embracing opportunities, but also learning to manage the ups and downs of life and persevere through difficulty. Older pupils enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, such as individual music lessons and choir, on offer to them. The school ensures that a wide range of pupils have an opportunity to represent the school at inter-school competitions.

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

All pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum. The school has considered what children will need to learn in early years to be prepared for key stage 1 and beyond. Staff think carefully about how to bring the curriculum to life for pupils. For example, the geography curriculum is enriched through a range of local field trips. This helps pupils to develop their fieldwork skills and also provides a context for their map work.

Generally, teachers explain learning clearly and check pupils' understanding carefully. In a small number of subjects, the school has identified parts of the curriculum that need further refinement to ensure that teachers understand how to teach the small steps of learning effectively. This work is ongoing.

In some subjects, including mathematics, teachers have a strong understanding of how to adapt and scaffold learning to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve the same ambitious outcomes as their peers. In other subjects, some teachers are less confident in how to adapt the curriculum. In these lessons, pupils with SEND are more reliant on adult support to access their learning. Occasionally, this lack of adaptation hinders how well some pupils with SEND learn the intended curriculum. The school has started work to address this but recognises there is more to do.

Since the last inspection, the school has further strengthened its early reading provision. All staff are trained to teach early reading, and the school ensures that all pupils at an early stage of learning to read have ongoing opportunities to read and reread books that match the sounds they know. There is a timely response to support any pupil who is not

yet a fluent reader. The school ensures that pupils hear a range of high-quality stories and texts from the start of Reception. Older pupils read widely and have positive views of reading.

The school introduced a new writing curriculum for older pupils to address gaps in their writing skills after the COVID-19 pandemic. This has had a positive impact on pupils' writing, and older pupils are now achieving stronger outcomes in writing. The school recognises, however, that the writing curriculum for younger pupils needs attention. This is because younger pupils do not get enough teaching and practice in the foundational knowledge and skills, such as handwriting and composing simple sentences. This slows the progress some pupils make in developing their writing.

The school ensures that pupils receive a comprehensive personal, social and health education. Pupils learn to stay physically and mentally healthy and to keep themselves safe. The school ensures that all pupils learn about the diversity of modern Britain. Pupils develop a strong sense of community responsibility. Older pupils are proactive in identifying ways to contribute within and beyond the school. For example, pupils have recently collected books to donate to a local charity. Pupils' individual talents and interests are carefully nurtured and celebrated. Consequently, pupils develop a strong sense of inner confidence.

Behaviour at the school is positive. Older pupils are trusted with a range of leadership roles and responsibilities. They look out for younger pupils and are quick to step in if anyone needs help. The school is working on ensuring that in classrooms all staff have equally high expectations for pupils' attentiveness within lessons.

Leaders and governors share a clear and ambitious vision for the education they want to provide. They are mindful of staff workload when making decisions. Governors know the school, its pupils and community extremely well. Leaders encourage an open culture and ensure that governors have all the information they need to carry out their roles effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The writing curriculum does not ensure younger pupils get enough teaching and practice in the foundational knowledge and skills, such as handwriting and composing simple sentences. As a result, some pupils do not have the age-appropriate fluency in their writing. The school should ensure that the writing curriculum enables pupils to learn and apply the important foundational skills they need.

- The curriculum is not consistently well adapted to meet the individual needs of pupils with SEND. As a result, some pupils with SEND sometimes find it harder to learn successfully. The school should ensure that teachers are supported to know how to adapt learning appropriately and consistently for pupils with SEND across the curriculum.

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	114549
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10341341
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Philip Morris
Headteacher	Laura Cooper
Website	www.stjohnsprimary.org
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 September 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The chair of governors was appointed in September 2022.
- The school is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Chichester. The school's last section 48 inspection was in February 2017.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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 and deputy headteacher. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector discussed the school with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and design and geography. 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. For the early reading deep dive, the lead inspector listened to a group of pupils reading. Inspectors discussed the curriculum for early years with leaders. They also reviewed the curriculum in other subjects and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered pupils' behaviour and attitudes throughout the inspection. They discussed the school's analysis of records relating to behaviour and attendance with leaders.
- Inspectors considered personal development through all deep dives. They met with leaders to discuss the school's personal development programme. Inspectors talked to pupils about the school's personal development programme.
- 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.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the gate and considered the views of parents who responded to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Alice Roberts, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Fisher-Pink	Ofsted Inspector

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