Inspection of St John's CofE Primary School

Stratford Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham, West Midlands B11 4EA

Inspection dates:	3 and 4 June 2025
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Early years provision	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Naomi Hedges. This school is a standalone academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Naomi Hedges, and overseen by a board of Governors, chaired by Des Ricketts.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are enthusiastic about their lessons and the wide range of trips and activities that bring their learning to life. These include visits to a farm, castle, theme park and local chocolate factory in Bournville. Older pupils are excited to develop their independence on a camping trip.

The school wants pupils to do as well as they can and be fully involved in every aspect of school life. This includes pupils who find learning difficult and those new to learning English. The school is determined that 'no child is left behind'. It puts effective help in place for pupils who need it. This ensures that pupils achieve well.

The school's values are based on its ethos, 'all different, all equal, all growing together.' Pupils learn to respect others, including those with different backgrounds and beliefs. They are concerned to help others. For example, they support victims of the Turkey earthquake and make donations to food banks. Pupils maturely take on leadership responsibilities, for example as house captains, 'happiness heroes' or reading buddies. The school provides a wide range of clubs for pupils to develop their talents and interests. These include art, French and a large number of sports.

Pupils behave well most of the time and have positive attitudes to their learning. They feel safe and are confident to talk with trusted adults.

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

The school has put in place ambitious plans for its curriculum. This sets out what pupils are to learn in a logical, sequential order. This begins from the building blocks established in early years, where key learning is clearly set out. The curriculum takes account of the interests and needs of pupils effectively. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps.

Children get off to a rapid start learning to read in early years. The school has made changes to the content and delivery of the phonics reading scheme. This has led to improvements in outcomes for pupils, who now rapidly learn to read well. Adults teach the scheme effectively. The school closely tracks pupils' progress. It ensures that children at risk of falling behind are quickly identified for additional support. Those at an early stage of reading, or those who are new to English, get the right help to develop the strategies they need to become confident fluent readers.

The school adapts the curriculum carefully to ensure that pupils can access their learning, including pupils with special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND). Staff promptly identify pupils' needs. The school ensures that pupils get the provision and support they need to achieve well. Adults are skilled at modifying activities so that pupils learn what leaders intend.

Teaching includes regular checks of how well pupils are faring in lessons. In some subjects, staff make clear links to previous learning. This helps pupils to recall in detail what they have previously learned. They use this knowledge to tackle and understand

new ideas. However, this is not consistent. Sometimes pupils have not secured key ideas and teachers do not spot or address the gaps and misconceptions. When this happens, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Levels of absence and persistent absence are falling as a consequence of the school's efforts to promote regular attendance. Pupils behave well in lessons, assemblies and around school.

Pupils are proud of the diversity in the school. The school's ambition is realised to establish 'a level playing field with the same opportunities planned and provided for all pupils'. In sporting activities, for example, boys and girls are equally well represented and there is a high take-up of pupils with SEND.

Pupils have a strong understanding of fundamental British values, which underpin the school's values. Children in the early years learn about democracy when they vote to choose which story to read. Pupils respect those who may have different views to their own and have a good understanding of healthy relationships. Pupils are very clear that inappropriate 'banter' is not tolerated by them or by the school.

As a standalone academy, the school is outward-looking for challenge. It draws well on a number of external partners, for example to make improvements in phonics, safeguarding and the wider curriculum. Leaders value the support of the diocese and governors, who also hold them closely to account.

Staff are appreciative of the steps leaders have taken to reduce their workload. Those with leadership responsibilities get the right support to develop their roles. Starting from early years, relationships between the school and parents are strong.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Strategies for assessment are not well established or used effectively in some subjects. As a result, there are occasions when teachers do not address misconceptions and pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that teachers have the expertise to use their checks in each subject to identify next steps in learning and adjust provision.

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	139173
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10343997
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	452
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Des Ricketts
CEO of the trust	Naomi Hedges
Headteacher	Naomi Hedges
Website	www.st-johns-pri.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 November 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher was appointed two years ago.
- The chair of governors was appointed since the last inspection.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- The school has a Christian ethos. The school's last section 48 inspection took place in March 2018.

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 held meetings with the headteacher, assistant headteachers, other leaders and staff.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils to learn their views about the school.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body, including the chair and vice-chair.
- The lead inspector held a telephone discussion with a representative from the diocese.
- The inspector spoke by telephone to three external partners.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments. They also considered additional feedback from parents. There were no responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors considered information on pupils' behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, science, computing and history. For each deep dive, they held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors heard pupils read to adults in the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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

Mark Sims, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Richards	Ofsted Inspector
Nina Sangha	Ofsted Inspector

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