

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

Rufford Road, Crossens, Southport, Merseyside PR9 8JH

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 May 2022

Outcome

St John's Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and their parents and carers are warmly greeted by leaders and staff as they arrive at school. Parents appreciate this contact. They said it helps them and their children to feel like valued members of the school community.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils. They have improved the curriculum to help pupils to know and remember more. Pupils know how leaders expect them to behave. Pupils live out the school's values. They respect each other and adults. They are attentive in lessons and are keen to share their learning, including with visitors.

Pupils enjoy their playtimes. They join in organised games, play on the climbing equipment or choose quieter activities. This supports them to keep physically and mentally healthy.

Pupils like to help others. Those who represent their classmates as part of the 'Joy' team are proud of their role. They said that they help to make the school a joyful place to learn and play.

Leaders and staff take good care of pupils. Pupils feel happy and safe at school. Staff provide high-quality emotional support for pupils who need it. Pupils said that bullying occasionally happens but that staff deal well with any incidents so they are seldom repeated.

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

Over time, leaders have brought about many positive changes to the way the curriculum is designed and led. They have developed a well-thought-out curriculum that builds pupils' vocabulary and broadens their experiences. Curriculum leaders are knowledgeable about the subjects they lead. They are ambitious for their subjects and for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Curriculums in some subjects are well-established. Leaders have ensured that staff have the expertise to deliver these curriculums. Teachers check that pupils can remember what leaders want them to know before moving on to new learning. As a result, pupils build their learning securely over time and achieve well in these subjects.

In other subjects, leaders have improved their curriculums but the changes they have made are more recent. Pupils have begun to remember the knowledge that leaders have identified as essential in these subjects better than they did. For instance, pupils confidently use the key vocabulary they have been taught recently. However, pupils struggle to remember some of their previous learning.

Leaders ensure that the early years curriculum builds the most important knowledge that children need. For example, teachers deepen children's keen interest in dinosaurs by exploring the work of fossil hunters. They enrich their vocabulary by introducing words such as palaeontologist. This prepares children well to learn about ancient civilisations and the work of archaeologists in key stage 2.

Children in the early years quickly settle into the routines of learning. They are keen and inquisitive learners. Leaders make sure that staff know how to identify pupils or children in the early years who may have SEND. Staff provide effective support for these pupils in class. This helps pupils with SEND, and their classmates, to learn without interruption.

Leaders are determined that all pupils learn to read well. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted pupils' learning. Some children in the early years and pupils in Year 1 therefore have missing phonics knowledge. Leaders have taken effective action to address these gaps and help pupils to read fluently. They have improved the way that phonics is taught by introducing a new phonics curriculum. Leaders have made sure that most staff are well trained to deliver this curriculum. Pupils read books that match the sounds that they are learning. Leaders ensure that extra support is in place for pupils who start to fall behind. However, not all staff deliver the phonics curriculum equally well. This hinders how well some pupils build secure phonics knowledge.

Leaders carefully consider pupils' wider development. Leaders anchor their plans in the ethos of the school. Pupils think of others. They engage in regular fundraising and charity work. This includes supporting local charities such as the lifeboat appeal. Pupils enjoy learning about other faiths and cultures. They understand that both men and women have made significant contributions to the country's heritage. Pupils are well prepared to be responsible citizens.

Leaders and governors are a strong team. Staff appreciate their supportive approach. They recognise that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being. Staff enjoy working at the school and, like the pupils and their parents, are proud to belong to the St John's School family.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the safeguarding needs of pupils. They ensure staff are well trained and know how to identify and report any concerns about pupils' safety. Leaders are tenacious in following up these concerns. They provide vulnerable pupils with timely support, including from the school's learning mentor.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. Other professionals visit the school and teach pupils about personal safety. They help pupils to recognise and manage potential risks they face while in their local community. Pupils also learn how to keep themselves safe when working or playing online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' revised subject curriculums are at varying stages of implementation. In a small number of subjects, leaders have only recently begun to put these plans in place. As a result, pupils' knowledge in different aspects of their learning is not equally secure. Leaders need to ensure that recently revised plans are fully implemented so that pupils benefit from a consistently high-quality curriculum across different subjects in key stages 1 and 2.
- Some aspects of the curriculum are not delivered consistently well by all staff. This is particularly true for pupils receiving extra support to build their phonics knowledge. These pupils do not build up secure reading knowledge as quickly as they could as a result. Leaders should make sure that staff get the support they need to deliver the reading curriculum equally well.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2016.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	104894
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10193949
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	194
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Robert Corbett
Headteacher	Phil Thomson
Website	www.stjohnsprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 and 23 March 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new deputy headteacher has been appointed since the school was last inspected. A new chair of the governing body has also been appointed.
- This school belongs to the Diocese of Liverpool. Its last section 48 inspection took place in May 2017.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.
- The inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. The inspector also spoke to representatives of the local authority and the Diocese of Liverpool.

- The inspector checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. She looked at a range of safeguarding documentation and spoke to leaders and staff. The inspector also spoke to pupils about whether they feel safe in school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work, and talked with staff and pupils. The inspector also spoke to pupils about the curriculum in other subjects and looked at samples of their work.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at social times. She spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. The inspector also considered the views of pupils shared through Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. The inspector also considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- The inspector spoke with parents and carers as they dropped their children off at school. She considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included free-text responses.
- The inspector considered a range of documentation shared by school leaders, including the school development plan, minutes from meetings of the governing body and leaders' self-evaluation document.

Inspection team

Jackie Stillings, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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