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

Markfield Road, Caterham, Surrey CR3 6RN

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 November 2022

Outcome

St John's CofE Aided Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The mantra 'be ready, be respectful, be safe' is fully embedded in daily school life. Pupils, staff and parents know the expression well and how it links to the Christian values of the school. As one parent said, 'this school is a real gem – inclusive, respectful, embedded in the community and interested in the whole child and their development as a citizen'.

Leaders' recent changes to the way they manage behaviour have resulted in a positive culture. Pupils behave well because staff consistently model their high expectations. Staff give regular and specific praise to pupils, who then respond with visible pride. Lessons are rarely disrupted and, as a result, pupils engage fully with their learning and achieve well. Pupils are confident to report any concerns they have about bullying. They know that while incidents are rare, leaders will address them quickly and successfully.

Pupils enjoy attending school and feel safe and well cared for. In particular, pupils love their forest school activities. They know how these sessions link with their science and geography learning and how they also develop skills like teamwork. Pupils talk with excitement about their growing knowledge of nature and their local environment.

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

Leaders have made sure that reading is at the heart of the whole curriculum. Staff are well trained in teaching pupils how to read and do so with a consistent approach. Pupils read with confidence and fluency, using their phonic strategies. From the start of school, in early years, children read books which match the sounds they are learning. Older pupils who need extra help with their reading are well supported through catch-up sessions. Leaders are keen to further develop pupils' love for reading with daily story sessions in every class.

Since the last inspection, leaders have successfully addressed the improvements needed in mathematics teaching. The key knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn are clearly laid out, starting from early years. Teachers use a consistent approach which

includes steps relating to mathematical fluency, reasoning and problem-solving. Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons and achieve well. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and are highly effective at checking what pupils know and remember. They recap and revisit prior learning to ensure that pupils are prepared for their next steps.

However, across the wider curriculum, subjects are at varying stages of development. For example, teachers have recently taken over the teaching of all physical education lessons from sports coaches. They are being well supported by leaders in developing their subject knowledge and choice of activities. In many other subjects, teachers are new to their leadership roles. Subject leaders have a clear curriculum in place but are still developing their subject expertise and skills to support staff.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to succeed with their learning and have an unwavering belief in inclusion which permeates the school's work. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are accurately identified and provided with the support they need to achieve well. Teachers make appropriate adaptations to help these pupils learn. The staff in the 'sunshine room' provide a calm and nurturing atmosphere for those pupils who need emotional support.

The wider development of pupils is a strength of the school. Staff actively encourage pupils to express their views and opinions. As a result, they are considerate and respectful when engaging in discussion. Pupils have a strong voice through their opportunities to take on leadership roles. For example, the school council meets regularly with leaders and presents its views about how the school could be further improved from a pupil's perspective. Pupils show empathy and tolerance towards others, firmly rooted in the school's Christian values. They have an understanding about difference in terms of culture, faith, race and life choices.

Pupils benefit from the wide range of clubs on offer, including a young carers' club which provides a sense of belonging and shared experience. The whole school community is proud of the choir, with its 60 pupils. There is considerable excitement about their annual participation in the Young Voices concert at the O2 Arena in London.

Governors are knowledgeable about the school and highly reflective in their practice. Alongside school leaders, they support staff by considering their well-being and workload. Governors and leaders are receptive to feedback. They are concerned that some parents are not happy about the quality and timeliness of some of the communications from the school. They are determined to improve how the school engages with their parental community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders' actions ensure that safeguarding is a strong thread running through all school activity. Regular training means that staff are confident at being able to identify and report any concerns. Leaders show tenacity in following up these concerns and are willing to challenge other agencies in the best interest of families. This means that families

receive the support they need. Pupils know that staff keep them safe and that they can talk to them if they have any worries. Governors routinely review the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding procedures, including the checks conducted in relation to staff recruitment procedures.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Many of the leaders of foundation subjects lack experience in their roles. They are at the early stages of their work to further improve the curriculum, and therefore pupils' learning. Senior leaders should continue to develop subject leaders' knowledge of how pupils learn in their subject and their skills to lead and support staff to improve the curriculum.

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 March 2013.

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' 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	125164
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10241941
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	459
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kate Gordon
Headteacher	Robert Veale
Website	www.stjohns-primary.surrey.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 July 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Southwark.
- The religious character of the school was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in November 2018.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection 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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers and pupils. She met with the members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors. The inspector held telephone conversations with a representative of the Diocese of Southwark and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with

subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector held meetings with safeguarding leaders, governors, teachers and pupils. She scrutinised the single central record and minutes of meetings about safeguarding, and checked safeguarding records.
- The inspector took account of a wide range of other information, including the school's development plans, school policies and governors' minutes. She spoke with pupils about their experiences in the school. She took account of parents' views expressed in the 74 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and free-text responses. The inspector also considered the 44 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 20 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Kate Fripp, lead inspector	His Majesty's 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.

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/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: 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
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022