

Inspection of St John's Church of England Primary School

Poplar Street, Heaton Mersey, Stockport, Cheshire SK4 3DG

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, parents and carers, and staff said that St John's Church of England (CofE) Primary School is 'the heart and soul of the community'. It is a happy and vibrant place for pupils to learn and thrive.

Pupils feel safe in a highly supportive environment. They know that staff care about them. Pupils trust staff to help them when they need support. Pupils value this.

Staff have high expectations of all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They expect every pupil to achieve well and are successful at making this happen. Pupils have a thirst for learning. They said that they love to learn new things.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils know how to spot bullying. They said that any type of bullying is very unusual. If it ever does occur, adults act to stop it straight away. Parents agree that bullying is dealt with effectively.

The school's strong Christian values, and leaders' commitment to nurture and celebrate the talents of all pupils, are central to the success of St John's CofE Primary School. Staff actively seek out opportunities for every pupil to shine. For example, pupils take part in an impressive and extensive range of activities that promote their wider personal development.

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

Leaders have created an effective curriculum from early years through to the end of key stage 2. The curriculum gives pupils the knowledge, skills and understanding to be confident learners in a wide range of subjects. Leaders have thought carefully about what they want to teach pupils and the order in which they want to teach new knowledge. Leaders' approach to the curriculum ensures that pupils are well prepared for the next stages in their education and for life in modern Britain.

Teachers' enthusiasm for the curriculum motivates pupils. Pupils said that they love the way teachers make learning interesting. Teachers explain things clearly. They help pupils to remember important information and to make connections between different concepts and topics. Teachers are knowledgeable about most of the subjects that they teach. They provide pupils with regular opportunities to revisit and recap important learning. However, in a very small number of subjects, teachers' subject knowledge is not quite as strong. Even so, children in early years, and pupils across the school, achieve well.

Reading is extremely important in this school. The school has a rich and varied supply of appropriate books. Pupils of all ages told inspectors that they love the books that they read and the stories that teachers read to them. Some pupils said that reading 'transports you to another world,' and, 'the more you read, the better you write and spell.'

As soon as they start in the Reception class, children learn letters and sounds well through thoughtfully planned listening activities. Adults in early years and in key stage 1 use their specialist knowledge of the teaching of early reading to great effect. Most pupils can read with fluency, accuracy and confidence by the time they leave Year 2.

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils. They want everyone to achieve their very best. Teachers are quick to notice and help if a pupil is struggling. From the youngest children attending the Reception class, to pupils in key stage 2, adults know these pupils very well and give them the right support to achieve well. Pupils who are disadvantaged and/or with SEND have their needs met successfully.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Pupils are very polite and always ready with a warm smile for adults and their peers. They go out of their way to look after each other. For example, they are quick to spot and to help those pupils who are playing on their own or who may need some reassurance in the playground. Bullying is extremely rare. It is dealt with effectively by adults if ever it does occur.

Pupils of all ages talked enthusiastically about the importance of having positive attitudes to learning. They are keen learners, and they are very hardworking. Many pupils agreed that adults and children 'work together to make learning exciting and fun, which makes this school very special.'

Leaders offer pupils opportunities of excellent quality to develop personally. As well as the many trips and visits on offer, all pupils learn to play an instrument. Pupils also organise their own charity events and they arrange events in their local community, such as litter picking, without being prompted. They model what it is to be excellent citizens. They are ambassadors for the local area.

The leadership team is passionate and committed. Governors are experienced and are adept at holding leaders to account for school improvement. Staff are extremely proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders and staff prioritise the safeguarding and protection of all pupils. Leaders make sure that all policies and procedures are in place and that everyone knows how to put them into practice.

Staff are quick to act if they are concerned about a pupil. Pupils are supported well in school. Leaders work well with professionals outside school to keep pupils safe. Leaders are strong advocates for vulnerable families and pupils.

Adults teach pupils how to stay safe and behave responsibly in different situations. This includes when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, teachers are not as confident as they could be in their subject knowledge. Sometimes, this prevents teachers from delivering subject content as effectively as they should. As a result, some pupils do not make as much progress as they could in these subjects. Leaders need to ensure that all teachers have the subject-specific training, and the subject knowledge, that they require to help pupils to achieve highly in every subject.

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	106105
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10200793
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	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andrew Moore
Headteacher	Patrick Rayner
Website	www.st-johns.stockport.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This CofE school is voluntary controlled. It last had a religious education inspection, carried out under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, in July 2016. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place by the end of July 2022.
- Since the previous section 8 inspection, the school has moved into a new purpose-built school building. It is situated within the original school grounds and it opened to pupils in January 2020.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection that the school had received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- During the inspection, inspectors spoke with pupils, both formally and informally, about their work and school life. Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher and the SEND coordinator. They also held discussions with staff that focused on well-being and safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. They also spoke with a representative of the local authority and a local diocesan officer. They reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to school improvement, safeguarding and the checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- Inspectors considered the 85 responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, and its free-text facility. They also considered the 20 responses to Ofsted’s staff survey and the 70 responses to Ofsted’s pupil survey.
- Inspectors talked with pupils about the books that they like to read. They also heard pupils read.
- Inspectors looked in detail at reading, mathematics, history, and art and design. For each of these subjects, inspectors held discussions with curriculum leaders and teachers, visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils’ work and talked with pupils. They also considered other subjects across the curriculum.

Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Michael Platt

Ofsted Inspector

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