

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

St John's Road, Wallingford, Oxfordshire OX10 9AG

Inspection dates:

11 to 12 July 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff go the extra mile to ensure that pupils are happy, safe and successful. Leaders have high expectations. They continually reflect on how they can improve the experience of pupils in this welcoming and nurturing environment. While there is some occasional unkind behaviour, adults deal with it straightaway.

Pupils are adamant that everyone is treated fairly and valued as an individual. They told the inspector that the much cherished 'St John's Promise' guides them in life beyond the school gates. There is a harmonious and kind atmosphere in the corridors and around school. Pupils relish playing on the newly installed adventure playground. They look forward to catching up with their friends on the ever-popular trim trail, the bridge, the climbing wall, the large interactive chess board, and tunnel.

Leaders ensure that pupils harness their interests and hobbies through the exciting range of clubs, including coding, cricket, choir, arts and crafts. Pupils showcase their creative talents by taking part in the Wallingford Carnival and performing regularly at events in the town. Pupils appreciate having opportunities to take on leadership roles, such as being members of the school and eco-councils.

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

Reading for pleasure is a priority. Staff routinely recommend books for pupils to enjoy and share with their families. Pupils are enthusiastic about visiting their school libraries and cannot wait to dive into the latest reads. At the end of each day, pupils take great delight listening to and discussing the stories staff read with them. Children are introduced to phonics from the moment they join Reception class. Leaders make sure that staff are well trained. Staff skilfully check and make sure that younger readers who find reading difficult receive the additional support they need. However, the books that some of the older

pupils read are too hard. Consequently, some of the weakest readers in key stage 2 do not read as confidently and fluently as they could.

Leaders and teachers identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. They understand how to adapt the curriculum effectively in order to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. This enables these pupils to learn well alongside their peers. Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum from early years to Year 6. Overall, it is well crafted and interesting. In many subjects, leaders have identified exactly what pupils should learn and the order in which it should be taught. However, this is not the case in a few subjects. Where this happens, teachers do not check and make sure pupils embed the essential knowledge because they are not clear about what pupils should learn and remember well. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders are addressing this.

Pupils behave well in lessons and are proud of their work. They are polite and considerate towards each other and staff. Pupils understand the importance of following the school values. Older pupils help and play with the younger ones at breaktimes. Children in early years enthusiastically invite their friends to join them to explore the well organised environment.

The personal development programme is a strength. Pupils learn about beliefs and cultures that are different to their own. They understand diversity and fundamental British values. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. For instance, they hold insightful debates on themes including racism, equality and the right to vote. Pupils talk maturely about their understanding of discrimination and say that everyone is welcome in their school. As one pupil explained, 'We do not judge others for who they are. No one should feel restricted for being themselves.' Leaders' thoughtful choices about trips and visitors broaden pupils' appreciation of the world around them and make learning meaningful.

Staff feel valued and are proud to work at St John's. Leaders are supportive and considerate of staff's workload and well-being. They consult with staff about potential changes and value their contributions. Governors and trustees take an active role. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and know what needs to improve next. This helps them to provide effective support and challenge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of vigilance. Staff receive regular and appropriate training so that they can recognise the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. They report concerns promptly, and leaders respond diligently. Leaders work well with external agencies to support pupils and their families. They are tenacious in obtaining the help they believe is needed. Pupils learn how to stay safe. This includes online safety, road and water safety.

Safer recruitment processes are in place. This ensures that appropriate checks are made on staff and visitors to the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, the books that the weakest readers in key stage 2 read are too hard. As a result, some of the older pupils do not learn to read fluently and confidently. Leaders should ensure that the books these pupils read help them practise the sounds they know and learn in lessons.
- In some foundation subjects, the essential knowledge is not identified precisely enough. Where this happens, the curriculum is not delivered consistently well, and pupils do not learn as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum in all subjects is well structured and coherent.

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 April 2018.

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	139762
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10288037
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Sally Pearmain
Headteacher	Nicola Hughes
Website	www.stjohnswallingford.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	24 and 25 April 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school works collaboratively with four other primary schools. Together, they have formed the OPEN (Oxfordshire Primary Education Network) Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 this evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. She also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors and representatives of the trust.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also considered the

curriculum and looked at samples of pupils' work in physical education and art and design technology.

- During the inspection, the inspector met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to them informally during social times.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector scrutinised a wide range of information, including a selection of the school's records. The inspector spoke to staff and pupils about safeguarding and looked at how pupils learn to keep themselves safe. The inspector spoke to the safeguarding leader about the recording and reporting of safeguarding incidents.
- The inspector reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. The inspector also took account of staff responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Shazia Akram, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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