

Inspection of St John's Church of England Primary School, Sevenoaks

Bayham Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 3XD

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 April 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They talk with pride about the fact they know everyone's name and get on well together. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and choices. As a result, they demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. Bullying happens rarely. Pupils say this is because it is not tolerated.

Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities and experiences throughout their school days. With great enthusiasm, Year 6 pupils were extremely excited to share that they had recently been on a residential to Seville and practised the Spanish they had been learning in lessons.

Pupils feel safe in school. They are happy, friendly, curious, and keen to chat about their school. Pupils trust the adults in school, saying they would help them if they had any worries or concerns.

Leaders have created a strong staff team. Everyone works together well and cares deeply for each and every pupil at the school. Parents and carers are positive about the school. In the words of one who responded to the inspection survey, 'St John's is an excellent school and the whole family feels part of a lovely community.'

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

Leaders have been 'bold and brave' in redesigning and strengthening their curriculum offer. Each subject area has been looked at in detail and, in most, learning has been carefully planned from early years through to Year 6. Where this curriculum thinking is complete, pupils learn well. In most subjects, this is secure and matched well to the needs of pupils.

Teachers are confident in the subjects they teach. They ask questions to check pupils' understanding and address any misconceptions as they arise. Teachers know their pupils well and identify quickly when additional support is needed. For those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the curriculum is adapted well and learning is broken down into small steps. This enables them to be fully included in lessons and make progress in their learning. Leaders have included a wide range of activities and visits to help teachers deliver the curriculum. However, while pupils enjoy these and remember each event, they do not join it up with their learning and so do not get the full intended benefit.

Leaders have made reading a priority and books can be seen everywhere in the school. This includes the new, well-resourced library and the outdoor reading wigwam in the early years. Leaders train staff to deliver the phonics programme with consistency. Pupils learn to read with confidence through a structured programme that starts in Reception. Any gaps are quickly identified, and highly skilled adults provide support so pupils can catch up quickly if they fall behind. As pupils progress through the school, they continue to develop their fluency and

comprehension skills and read well with understanding. Leaders promote a love of reading. For example, older pupils read regularly with younger pupils across the school and take delight in being a 'reading buddy.' Pupils enjoy daily story times and talk about their favourite stories with interest.

Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Right from the start, in the early years, staff establish routines that are followed consistently. Throughout the school, pupils behave well, are kind to each other and are polite. Pupils concentrate well in lessons, allowing learning to continue without disruption. At playtimes and lunchtimes, they play happily together.

Leaders support pupils' personal development effectively. They make sure that the school motto of 'All different, all equal, all learning together in God's world' underpins the daily life of the school. A pupil commented, 'We welcome everyone, no matter who they are.' Pupils have a secure understanding of fundamental British values and how these link with the school's values. They enjoy the many opportunities they have to develop their leadership responsibilities. These include as peer mediators and librarians. From the early years, pupils are taught the importance of sharing and how to make friends. They learn how to recognise and manage their feelings. Pupils are encouraged to work together and do so well, as seen when Reception children planted seeds in the garden.

Leaders have successfully brought stability to the school following a period of change. All staff say that leaders are mindful of their well-being and workload. Governors understand and carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively. They hold leaders to account well. Staff and governors are proud to be part of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that everyone in the school understands their responsibility for safeguarding. They make sure that all adults receive regular training to help them fulfil this responsibility.

Staff use the clear systems to report concerns. Leaders act on these quickly. They work well with families and external agencies to ensure that pupils get the help they need as soon as they need it. Leaders complete all the appropriate checks on adults who work at, or visit, the school.

Governors monitor safeguarding arrangements closely. Pupils learn about how to keep safe through the taught curriculum and regular assemblies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some of the foundation subjects are not yet fully developed. This means that pupils' experiences are variable, and they are not yet achieving in line with leaders' high ambitions in all subjects. Leaders need to complete their curriculum review and ensure that all staff understand what pupils need to learn in each subject.
- Occasionally, pupils remember their learning experiences rather than the knowledge that experience was trying to secure. This hinders their learning. Leaders should ensure that staff understand what knowledge pupils are intended to learn and how best to help them remember that knowledge.

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	118606
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10256271
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Fr Robin Jones
Headteacher	Therese Pullan
Website	www.stjohnssevenoaks.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 and 10 February 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- As a Church of England school, St John's is part of the Diocese of Rochester. Its most recent section 48 inspection was in April 2017.
- The school manages its own breakfast club and after-school club.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator.
- Discussions were held with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The inspector also met with a representative of the local authority.

- An inspector spoke to a member of staff from the alternative provider currently used by the school leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: reading, science, history and physical education (PE). For each deep dive, inspectors 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. They also spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector also met with the art leader and sampled pupils' work.
- As part of the inspection of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding arrangements. Inspectors scrutinised the school's single central record and the systems in place for recruitment. They also spoke to staff about their training and understanding, and to pupils about their learning in relation to how to identify risk and keep themselves safe.
- In order to gather the views of parents and carers, inspectors considered responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and free-text comments. An inspector spoke to some parents at the start of the first day of the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed various documents provided by the school. These included the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, the pupil premium statement, information about the use of PE and sports premium, external reviews of the school, and minutes of the governing body's meetings.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's confidential staff survey and met with staff during the inspection.
- Inspectors met with and spoke to a range of pupils throughout the inspection to gather their views of the school. They also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at playtimes and at lunchtime.

Inspection team

Kirstine Boon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

James Everett

Ofsted Inspector

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