

St John's Church of England Primary School, Tisbury

Weaveland Road, Tisbury, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP3 6HJ

Inspection dates

4–5 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has done an excellent job since her arrival in the school. She has the very strong support of staff and the large majority of parents and carers.
- The headteacher, other leaders and governors have had a strong impact, improving attendance, as well as teaching and progress.
- Progress has particularly risen in literacy and mathematics since the last inspection through improvements to teaching and the curriculum.
- Teachers have a strong subject knowledge. Teachers and teaching assistants ask effective questions that probe pupils' understanding and make sure that they learn well.
- Pupils get an excellent start in learning to read. In Reception and Year 1, teaching and learning of sounds and letters are very strong.
- Teachers follow the school's marking policy with great commitment. In mathematics, pupils try questions again that they have answered wrongly but do not consistently improve their answers.
- Pupils are courteous and keen to learn, and they behave very well in lessons. They are proud of their work and it is presented well.
- Pupils are happy at the school. They feel very safe and are taught how to stay safe. They are confident that any adult on the staff will help them if needed.
- The school environment is striking and imaginatively decorated. There are a wide range of outdoor facilities.
- Children in the Reception class are secure and well looked after. They make good progress.
- The imaginative topics in the school's creatively designed curriculum enthuse children. Leaders now intend to refine the order in which material is taught in order to maximise progress.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are nurtured and supported well and make good progress. Staff are knowledgeable about their needs and how to help. Plans are effective but are not consistently organised in an efficient way.
- A small proportion of parents are unhappy with communication about specific concerns.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Monitor the recording of the formal plans for pupils with SEND, making sure that they are useful summaries and have consistently sharp targets.
- Make sure that the feedback adults give pupils in mathematics has a more consistently strong impact.
- Improve communication with parents in order to reassure the few parents who have concerns.
- Build on the strengths of the school's creative approach to the curriculum by clarifying and refining the order in which concepts are introduced in areas other than mathematics and English.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has continued to provide dedicated and very effective leadership since the last inspection. At the same time, she has improved the leadership of other staff. For example, the leadership of literacy, numeracy and early years is strong. She has nurtured a very strong commitment to improvement among staff, while herself maintaining the great 'passion and conviction' identified in the last report.
- Staff are very positive about the support and challenge that they receive. They value the headteacher's leadership style. They say they are treated fairly and with respect but are also driven to improve. As a result, all of the many staff who responded to the questionnaire said they are happy and proud to work at the school. The system of 'aspect leadership' involves staff working together, for example observing each other teaching and sharing good practice.
- Leaders acted quickly to improve mathematics and writing following the last inspection. Improving mathematics took longer because the school identified the need for major changes and was not content to make 'quick fixes' just for Year 6. Mathematics is now consistently strong throughout the school. Achievement is now good in writing and mathematics, and remains strong in reading.
- The school has rightly focused on mathematics and English in order to respond to the issues from the last inspection but has maintained a creative, exploratory curriculum in other subjects. Pupils like the way the subjects are linked together and the way they have linked trips out. Whole-school topics create a valuable focus on issues around the world, for example 'Reduce, reuse and recycle' (concerning the environment). Leaders plan to develop the curriculum further next term to refine the order of the way concepts are developed through the different year groups.
- Additional funding is used to good effect. Disadvantaged pupils are given extra support in and outside lessons and are helped to take part in trips. Spending and its impact are carefully analysed. The additional physical education and sport funding has had a strong impact on improving swimming and engaging children in activities that are new.
- Leaders have drawn on external advice to improve provision for pupils with SEND. Recognising that significant numbers of pupils have emotional problems and difficulties focusing, the school now employs support assistants with particular expertise in emotional learning (ELSAs) and has set up an extra classroom to nurture pupils. Many of the parents greatly appreciate this provision. One parent wrote that the ELSA 'has turned my son's life around'. Another wrote of her son that 'The school and staff are dedicated to assisting him and listen to my concerns, providing well-thought-out personalised plans to help him move forward.'
- In practice, the SEND provision is very effective in addressing pupils' particular special needs. The special educational needs coordinator is very knowledgeable about the individual pupils. Pupils with SEND are making good progress academically. Some plans are very sharp and useful. However, sometimes, a pupil has several plans to support different needs, kept in different places. The targets on the main plan vary in quality and some are not precise enough to be useful. In these cases, teachers and teaching

assistants do know what they are specifically aiming for but it is not centrally recorded. This could lead to problems in the event of staff changes.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and the areas it needs to improve. They monitor the development plan closely and make sure that they know what is happening in the school. For example, the system of 'aspect leadership' leads to feedback to staff, and a governor is present to listen.
- Governors pay particular attention to safeguarding. For example, they go through the local authority audits and walk around the school checking for hazards. In order to check whether pupils would feel confident to report concerns, a governor familiar to pupils interviewed groups, making sure that they knew that it is 'OK to tell'.
- Governors provide a strong challenge to the school. For example, when mathematics teaching was being reviewed, they asked detailed questions about the time of day when mathematics was taught and the length of lessons. They also provide a strong strategic direction. For example, they discuss the values of the school and greatly appreciate the way it includes all pupils. They give attention to making sure that pupils are treated equally and they have equalities objectives.
- Finance is closely monitored. This includes both additional funding and yearly planning, and governors can describe their long-term budgeting. The school fulfils almost all statutory requirements but the website gives little detail on the curriculum.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding procedures are robust. The school's single central record meets requirements and training is up to date. Staff at all levels know what they should do in case of any concerns. Forms are fully completed when concerns arise. Social services are involved when necessary.
- The safeguarding lead is diligent in ensuring that she is aware of the destinations of pupils who leave during the year and, if there have been concerns, this information is passed on appropriately.
- Pupils who responded to the school's questionnaire and those interviewed say they feel safe. They also say that they would know who to talk to if they needed to.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The links between sounds and letters are taught particularly well. Teachers and teaching assistants pronounce sounds with care and pupils sound out words accurately. They have been taught how to split sounds out and then blend them together to say a word. Teachers teach words that do not follow the usual rules with care, for example 'give', where having the 'i' and the 'e' in that arrangement would normally produce a different sound.

- Teachers use imaginative contexts to hold pupils' attention. For example, Year 1 pupils were writing enthusiastically to 'Fred', a frozen pea in Tesco, about some beings called 'supertatoes'. They each had a supertatoe in front of them, all different. Parents appreciate the teachers' approach. One commented, 'A school that can make learning magical and not business-like is a rare find.'
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers give strong attention to developing fluency of calculations, as well as reasoning and problem-solving. Books show that pupils are encouraged to test themselves with challenging work. Teachers are careful to help pupils understand the underlying mathematics, as well as a way of doing something. They ask 'why?' as well as 'how?' For example, when the Year 3 and 4 pupils were estimating and measuring capacity, the teacher discussed with them the best technique for reading scales and why a particular size of measuring jug would be useful.
- Teachers know their classes well and take steps to make learning easy. For example, the teacher gave the Year 2 and 3 class a short break for a fun physical activity because she had found this helped them to focus. Later, when the class was estimating and measuring length, the teacher was careful to make sure that they concentrated on their estimations before any actual measurement to make sure that they thought carefully about the estimations.
- In mathematics, teachers make sure that pupils know which answers are correct and which need to be tried again, giving verbal or written feedback. Many pupils get the answers right when they try again. Sometimes, others make mistakes again when they try to correct the work. This suggests that they have not fully understood the feedback.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Across the school, pupils have a very good understanding of how to stay safe. Key stage 2 pupils of various ages can explain some of the hazards of using the internet and the steps they should take to avoid giving any personal information. Pupils also know about road safety and safety while out shopping in a town.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed well. They learn about the many different faiths that are present in their own country, and show that they value traditions that are different from their own. Assemblies give attention to both moral and spiritual aspects. Pupils take on a range of responsibilities. For example, Year 6 pupils act as 'buddies' to Reception children and say they seek the younger ones out to check that all is well and to talk.
- Pupils are proud of their work and want to show it to visitors. Work is well presented in books. They are also proud of their school, both the way it looks and the ethos. One said, 'All the walls are bright and colourful – you really want to look at them.' Another commented, 'Everybody is accepted – you can be yourself.'
- The large majority of parents who gave their views were extremely positive, making comments like 'such a creative and nurturing school'. Several wrote of transferring their children to the school and of how much better their experience was in St John's than in

previous schools. However, a small group of parents are concerned that the school does not take enough action on bullying. These parents' views on bullying are not reflected by the feelings of pupils interviewed, nor by the views of the staff who look after the pupils. However, school communication has not been successful in reassuring these parents, so the issue may have led to their negative views of the school as a whole.

- Pupils are very clear what bullying is, as opposed to 'falling out', and they stress that, although pupils fall out with each other, teachers quickly sort this out and problems do not continue. All those spoken to said they were happy. In the school's own questionnaire, almost every pupil agreed that the classrooms were friendly places and other children were kind. Records show that bullying is rare but the school takes any incident seriously.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Attendance is currently above the national average. The proportion of persistent absentees has reduced, and most current pupils whose attendance is less than 90% have medical conditions that lead to absences.
- Some of the pupils with SEND have emotional problems or can behave in a challenging way. Staff deal with their particular needs extremely well. Not only do lessons proceed in an orderly manner but any pupil showing stress is handled sensitively and helped to re-engage in the lesson. Pupils' behaviour was excellent in the assembly.
- The school's strategies to promote good behaviour are effective. Pupils behave well outside in the playground, as well as in lessons. They are effectively supervised and enjoy the many attractive facilities. There are areas for talking and resting, as well as for ball games and other activities. Pupils play with others in different classes, which contributes to the feeling of togetherness. Some comments from younger pupils included 'Everyone is kind' and 'There is lots to play with.'

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- At the time of the last inspection, the school's key stage 2 results had indicated weak progress. Reading progress was starting to improve, and this strength has been maintained. Writing progress improved to be broadly average for the Year 6 pupils who left in 2018. Mathematics progress remained too low in 2018 but the current key stage 2 pupils are doing much better. The mathematics work of Year 6 pupils shows that most have made particularly strong progress during Year 6, and good progress over the key stage as a whole.
- Pupils also achieve well in key stage 1. Year groups are small and so the standards at the end of the key stage can vary in keeping with the range of abilities. Progress in learning sounds and letters is excellent.
- The current key stage 1 pupils are making strong progress in mathematics. The proportion of pupils in Year 2 who are working at greater depth is now above average. Pupils are also making good progress in writing, with some individuals doing

particularly well. For example, one pupil entered Reception unable to make any mark that resembled a letter of the alphabet. That pupil is now writing sentences of good length, with well-formed letters that are beginning to be joined up.

- Disadvantaged pupils make progress that is as good as that of their classmates who have similar abilities. The school keeps a close watch on them and provides a range of extra help. Most of the disadvantaged pupils in the school are also pupils with SEND, so they receive specific support in response to these needs as well. Pupils with SEND make good progress.

Early years provision

Good

- The provision in early years is led and managed well. The school draws on external advice to make sure that it is steadily developed. The improvement plan is regularly updated and reviewed. Timely liaison with parents and pre-schools ensures that the children settle quickly.
- Staff have a good understanding of the needs of children of this age, and teaching is effective. The teacher and the teaching assistants question children effectively to lead their learning on. Sometimes, children work in a small group directly with the teacher and, sometimes, they have free movement to choose carefully planned activities for themselves, indoors and outside. Both the indoor and outside areas have a good focus on literacy and numeracy.
- The children enjoy their work. During the inspection, a child had been finding pebbles with numbers on, hidden in the sandpit, and arranging them in order. She was keen to report that she had found them all apart from 17, showing a good understanding of numbers to 20.
- The children's progress is tracked through books called 'learning journeys'. These give detailed information, with a range of work annotated to identify the next step a child should make. Children are challenged effectively to move on in their learning.
- Children of all abilities are making good progress across the curriculum. In writing, for example, one child could write their name when they started in September, and is now writing full sentences, complete with spaced words, a capital letter and a full stop. Another child was not making meaningful marks when they started but can now write words, albeit with letters that vary in quality.
- The atmosphere in the class is very calm, and the children behave well. Children with SEND are supported well. Staff are trained in safeguarding and in first aid.

School details

Unique reference number	126388
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10088308

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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	113
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clare Barham
Headteacher	Lisa Portch
Telephone number	01747 870 675
Website	www.st-johntisbury.wilts.sch.uk
Email address	admin@st-johntisbury.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 March 2017

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than average for a primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well above average.
- The school has five classes, some of which have pupils from more than one year group. For example, Year 3 pupils may be in a Year 2 and 3 class or in a Year 3 and 4 class. All the pupils in the Reception Year are on their own in a single class.
- More pupils join or leave the school during the year than is typical nationally.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector scrutinised a range of school documents before and during the inspection, including the school's own evaluation of how well it is doing and its development plan. She studied safeguarding records and information and the website.
- With the headteacher, the inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes. She looked at pupils' work in their books, including mathematics books for all pupils in Year 6, and spoke to pupils about their learning. She visited an assembly. She also listened to some pupils reading.
- The inspector had discussions with the headteacher and a range of staff. She also held a meeting with governors and discussed the school with the local authority's intensive challenge and support partner. She examined the 15 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Fifty parents gave their opinions about the school on Ofsted's online questionnaire. In addition, 30 current parents and one parent whose children had left gave more detailed views, either through text on the questionnaire or by email or letter. The inspector considered all these responses, and also spoke with parents informally as they dropped their children at school. She also looked at the responses parents had made to an earlier questionnaire carried out by the school.
- The inspector gathered pupils' views through three formal meetings and through informal discussions in the playground. She spoke formally with pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 and informally with other year groups. She also studied the results of the school's recent pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Deborah Zachary, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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