

# Inspection of St John's CofE School

Boreham Road, Warminster, Wiltshire, BA12 9JY

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Inspection dates: 5 to 6 October 2021

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils usually get along well together and look out for one another. Everyone is included. Classrooms and corridors are calm and orderly. Lessons are rarely interrupted. Pupils try hard. They demonstrate positive attitudes in class. Pupils are safe, most enjoy school and attend well. They say that if they have a worry or concern, staff listen and help. If bullying happens, pupils say staff sort it out. At lunchtime there is a wide range of activities, for example tennis.

There is a sharp focus on reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils enjoy these. Over time, pupils experience every curriculum subject they should. In previous years, the curriculum did not include everything pupils needed to know and remember in each subject. Much work is being done to upgrade teaching plans to put this right. Pupils are now learning much more and remembering more. Nonetheless, leaders recognise that some pupils have deeper knowledge in some subjects than others.

Many parents and carers recognise improvements in the quality of education pupils receive. The vast majority would recommend the school to others. However, a small number say they would like to be better informed about school events and how well their children are progressing.

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

School leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness. They know what is going well and what needs further work. There is a strong focus on providing a rich and ambitious curriculum right from the start. The youngest children are well prepared for Year 1.

The curriculum is providing pupils with the basic building blocks they need. In reading, English, mathematics and some other subjects, like history, the curriculum builds firmly on what pupils already know. This helps pupils to grow their knowledge well. For example, leaders and teachers select important content and order it effectively, so that pupils get enough practice in mathematics. Pupils including those in Reception, develop their mathematical understanding well. Staff prioritise developing pupils' vocabulary and grammar. Pupils' writing is getting increasingly complex and technically accurate. For example, pupils' essay writing on globalisation and the kingdom of Benin is well organised and informative.

In Reception, and in Years 1 and 2, staff apply their secure subject knowledge of phonics particularly effectively. Pupils learn to read words and sentences correctly. A few pupils have fallen behind with reading in Years 3 and 4. They are catching up. Pupils spell words accurately because they draw on their phonic knowledge well.

Staff ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the right support. As such, the curriculum meets pupils needs.

Pupils study a full range of subjects each year. In a few subjects it can be some time before they revisit or deepen their understanding of key ideas. Sometimes, sequences of work skim across key knowledge too quickly. This makes it harder for pupils to remember all the essential knowledge they need.

The roll-out of better, upgraded curriculum plans in some subjects stalled during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. Most plans now outline the knowledge pupils need to know, by when, and in what order. However, some teachers are only just starting to implement them, for example in design and technology.

Subject leaders understand their roles and responsibilities. Subject leaders, who are well versed in the full subject content from early years to Years 6, carry out their roles well. These leaders make checks on how well pupils know and remember the content in their subject. Where there are gaps in pupils' knowledge these leaders usually ensure that teachers modify, or revisit curriculum plans to tackle this head on. However, some leaders have not sought such assurances well enough, so gaps in pupils' knowledge, in some subjects, remain.

There is a suitable focus on pupils', physical, mental health and well-being, and their personal development. Additional therapies support those who need them. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, there were a wide range of clubs and visits to broaden pupils' horizons. Leaders are now introducing these back into school life.

Trustees and executive leaders work closely with the school. However, they do not assure themselves well enough that senior leaders have a deep understanding of how well teachers are implementing the curriculum in every subject.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There are clear systems in place to check that adults in school are suitable to work with pupils. Staff understand their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. In the last year, systems and processes to safeguard pupils have been strengthened. Leaders responsible for safeguarding work closely with external agencies to make sure that pupils who are at risk get the support they need.

The curriculum teaches pupils how to stay safe. For example, it teaches them about keeping safe online, using mobile phones safely and healthy relationships.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, better curriculum plans with appropriate content are only just starting to be implemented. Pupils have gaps in knowledge in these subjects. Leaders need to ensure that all curriculum plans are implemented well so that any gaps in pupils' knowledge are addressed and pupils know and remember everything they should.
- Teaching in some subjects, beyond English and mathematics, does not always prioritise the specific knowledge pupils need to deepen their understanding. Pupils learn more in some subjects than others. Leaders need to ensure that the way the curriculum is delivered over time prepares pupils well for their next stage in every subject area.
- Some senior and middle leaders do not assure themselves of how well the curriculum is implemented in every subject. This can mean pupils do not always learn all the essential knowledge they should. Executive leaders and trustees must assure themselves that senior and subject leaders gain a full appreciation of the quality of education pupils receive.
- Leaders do not always communicate well with parents and carers. A small number of parents and carers do not feel well informed. Leaders should ensure they improve communication, so it is consistently strong and effective.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	144854
<b>Local authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200931
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	98
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	David Middleton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Donna McInnes
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-johns-warminster.wilts.sch.uk">www.st-johns-warminster.wilts.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- This school is a much smaller school than the national average. There are four classes. Reception and Year 1 are taught together, as are Years 3 and 4, and 5 and 6. Year 2 are taught in one class.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is much lower than that seen nationally. The school makes use of the Trust's special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). She works at the school for one day per week.
- There is a large proportion of pupils from service families.
- There have been considerable changes to staffing and governance since the school became an academy. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2019. There is also an executive headteacher who oversees the work of the school who attends every week.
- The school is part of the Acorn Education Trust. This is a group of 10 primary schools and two secondary schools within the local area.
- The school's last section 48 inspection was in July 2017.

- St John's CofE School converted to become an academy in September 2017. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be 'requires improvement' overall.

## 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 the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, the executive headteacher, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, and members of the local academy council and trustees.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning, and considered samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders and pupils about other subjects.
- An inspector met with the SENCo to consider the quality of provision for pupils with SEND.
- An inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to gather evidence on the school's work to safeguard pupils.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils in classrooms and around school, they also visited breakfast- and after-school clubs.
- An inspector also met with leaders to consider the school's work on pupils' personal development.
- An inspector met with an early career teacher and their mentor to consider how leaders support their professional development.
- Inspectors considered 11 responses to the Ofsted staff survey alongside 30 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 21 free-text responses from parents.

## Inspection team

Julie Carrington, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Lovett

Ofsted Inspector

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