

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

Goodwyns Road, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 2LR

Inspection dates:

30 November and 1 December 2021

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school with a big heart. The school's Christian ethos allows each child the chance to shine. Pupils are happy, show a good sense of humour and share their pleasure in being part of the school and local community. Older pupils take on responsibilities within the local community, including growing vegetables in the school farm to share with others.

Pupils are encouraged to enjoy the vibrant life of the school. Pupils consistently model the school values such as love, respect and cooperation. Positive relationships between adults and pupils mean that pupils learn in a calm environment. Pupils who need extra help to manage their behaviour are supported extremely well.

All staff are committed to ensuring that pupils achieve academically. Improvements to the curriculum over the last few years have enabled pupils to do this. Pupils' confidence and social skills are developed well through activities, such as working with a well-known composer to create and publish a song about children's mental health.

All parents spoken with were overwhelmingly positive about the school. They described the school, and the school leaders, as welcoming and warm. One parent commented, 'There is such a warm and caring ethos. My children are always excited to go to school each and every day.'

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

Staff support pupils effectively when they are learning to read. They know pupils well, spotting quickly when a pupil does not understand. Staff keep a watchful eye as young children learn to communicate. Where needed, children have access to speech and language therapy. Staff use a range of strategies that help pupils to engage with books and to help them practise their phonics and accurately read the letters and sounds. The phonics programme is well sequenced, and books match the sounds that pupils know. This means that many pupils learn to read quickly. Pupils enjoy reading a range of texts,

authors and genres. For example, Year 5 pupils spoke animatedly and in detail about the twists and turns in their class novel.

The mathematics curriculum is a strength. Leaders have planned clear sequences of learning from Reception to Year 6. Younger children get a good foundation in number. This helps in key stage 1, where pupils start to learn more complex concepts. Staff give detailed attention to fluency, reasoning and problem-solving in mathematics. They regularly revisit mathematical content to help pupils secure their understanding. For example, Year 4 pupils spoke confidently about efficient methods of calculation and their learning in Year 3.

Elsewhere in the school's curriculum, leaders have ensured that there is breadth and quality in what pupils learn. In science, plans outline what pupils need to know and how they will build their scientific knowledge. In history, pupils develop a clear view of chronology and sources of evidence. Pupils benefit from rich and meaningful learning experiences across all national curriculum subjects. These are drawn together through the 'harmony' principles which enable pupils to understand how their learning experiences interconnect. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities access the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders have implemented useful pre-teaching sessions to support identified pupils in readiness for future learning.

Under the guidance of the headteacher and the senior leadership team, teachers' understanding of the revised curriculum has developed rapidly. Teachers appreciate the support they have received. They now know what needs to be taught and in what order.

Currently senior leaders check that all teachers focus on the most important knowledge or concepts pupils need to know. Senior leaders are supporting new subject leaders to check in detail what is going well, what additional improvements could be made to curriculum planning and what support teachers need to teach subjects outside of their main area of expertise. While the current curriculum planning is helping pupils to make good progress, subject leaders are still learning to identify how they can make each subject even more effective for all pupils.

During the pandemic, governors have focused particularly on how well English and mathematics is being delivered. Governors understand the strengths of the school. They work closely with leaders to provide the support and challenge needed to improve the school further and enable leaders to work in partnership with schools across the education trust.

All staff are proud to work as members of both the school and the education trust, because everyone supports one another and works as a team. They say that leaders consider their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know their pupils very well and are quick to pick up on any concerns. They receive

regular training and know the risks their pupils face. Staff work closely with families and other agencies to ensure that the right support is provided. Record-keeping is well organised and reviewed regularly. Governors diligently monitor safeguarding processes in the school.

Pupils feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe. They confidently discuss developing the tools to manage their own safety and recall well their learning in personal, social and health education. Older pupils understand the importance of using social media with care and consideration for others. They know what to do if something inappropriate happens, and they are rightly confident that staff will deal with any problems if they happen.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- New subject leaders are developing their curriculum leadership skills, but they are not yet identifying accurately what is going well and what improvements are needed. As a result, the learning needs of all pupils, including the most able, are not always being met as well as they could be. Senior leaders should continue to support and train all staff to ensure that they develop subject expertise to enable them to provide pupils with consistently demanding work across all subjects as set out in the aims of the school's curriculum framework.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2016.

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	139721
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10200069
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	231
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	The Very Revd Dianna Lynn Gwilliams
Headteacher	Jacky Fyson
Website	www.stjohnsdorking.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 – 21 September 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2020.

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 the school, and has taken that into account in the evaluation.
- The inspector met with senior leaders, staff, pupils and members of the governing body, a trustee and a representative from The Good Shepherd Trust.
- The inspector undertook deep dives in three subjects: reading, mathematics and history. This included meetings with subject leaders, lesson visits, looking at pupils' work, listening to pupils read and meeting with teachers and pupils.
- The inspector looked at the curriculum plans for science and spoke with leaders about curriculum plans for art, history, music and modern foreign languages.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector viewed the school's website and policies, met with designated safeguarding leaders, spoke with pupils, staff and governors, checked relevant documentation and safeguarding records.

- The inspector took account of the 32 responses to the Ofsted survey, Parent View, and 13 written comments from parents. The survey responses from 33 staff and 95 pupils were considered.

Inspection team

Jo Lakey, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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