

Inspection of St John's CofE Primary School

Mill Lane, Wetley Rocks, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST9 0BN

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Sarah Stone. This school is part of QEGS Multi-Academy Trust (QEGSMAT), which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Anne Martin, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sue Hall.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children get off to a great start at St John's CofE Primary School. They quickly adopt orderly routines and become very keen to learn. The school has high expectations of all its pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils go on to make strong progress through a broad curriculum, so that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Pupils are proud of their school, and in particular the new library. They are well-mannered and treat each other and adults with respect. They love the rewards on offer such as those for reading. At social times, pupils play happily together. Disruption to lessons is rare. The school is a calm and purposeful environment.

The school takes good care of pupils' mental and physical health. Pupils know they can always talk to an adult or use a 'worry box' to report a concern.

From the outset, pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves. They become independent and articulate. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to lead and support others. These opportunities include older pupils reading to younger children or acting as their advocates. Pupils have a real sense of how they contribute to the school's success.

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

The curriculum is ambitious and flows smoothly from one key stage into the next. Pupils study all the subjects in the national curriculum. Leaders at all levels have precisely identified the right knowledge for pupils to learn and the best order for teaching it. In the early years, the curriculum is exceptional, and every activity is a learning opportunity.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They make sure that pupils understand and use the correct vocabulary. For example, in science, Year 3 pupils name the different types of rocks. Across the school, teachers generally choose the right activities and resources to help pupils to learn and to remember key knowledge in the longer term. They check on pupils' understanding. However, on occasions, these checks do not identify pupils' misconceptions accurately enough.

The school prioritises reading. From the early years onwards, pupils follow a programme that teaches them about letters and their sounds in an effective sequence. They practise reading in books that are well-matched to their abilities. Staff are highly skilled and provide effective support for any pupils at risk of falling behind. Across the school, pupils read widely, including non-fiction texts and a range of poetry. They quickly become confident and enthusiastic readers.

The school has effectively identified the needs of pupils with SEND. It makes sure that teachers know how best to meet these additional needs. As a result, pupils with SEND learn the full curriculum and learn well.

There are high expectations for behaviour. Pupils quickly adopt sensible routines. The start of the school day provides a calm and smooth pathway into lessons. In the early years, staff have enacted new lunchtime arrangements. As a result, children have developed excellent social behaviour and learned more about healthy eating. In lessons, pupils are keen to learn and concentrate well. The school provides effective support for those pupils with additional behaviour needs.

Pupils enjoy warm relationships with adults and with their peers. They learn to take responsibility and to care for one another. This starts in the early years. Children can be seen to show acts of kindness such as fetching a pencil for a friend when theirs was broken. Older pupils understand the importance and the satisfaction of listening to younger pupils read. Through the school council, pupils come to understand the importance of respecting differing opinions and something about democracy.

Pupils follow a planned programme of personal, social and health education . This teaches pupils about healthy relationships and how to keep themselves safe. They learn about different cultures in the texts that teachers choose and in religious education. Many pupils enjoy a range of extra-curricular clubs.

This is an inclusive school, with a strong commitment to all its pupils. The school works effectively with parents, for example to involve them in their children's reading. Challenge and practical support for parents have contributed to raising the rate of pupils' attendance, which is now above the national average.

The staff work well together. However, in recent times, there has been little opportunity to ensure that subject leaders have all the skills and time to check on how the curriculum is working in the classroom. Leaders have provided effective support for inexperienced teachers joining the school. Staff are happy and motivated.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Subject leaders have had limited opportunities to monitor their subject. As a result, they have not been able to evaluate it and address any minor inconsistencies in practice. The school should ensure that subject leaders are supported to monitor and evaluate the curriculum in a way that strengthens consistent practice and provides any further guidance to staff that may be required.

- Approaches to checks on what pupils have learned are used inconsistently. Teachers do not identify misconceptions as quickly and accurately as they might do. This means pupils repeat the same mistakes or are left with some misunderstandings. The school should make sure that all staff consistently identify and promptly address pupils' errors and misconceptions.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	147572
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10290668
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	181
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sue Hall
Headteacher	Sarah Stone
Website	www.st-johns-wetleyrocks.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St John's CofE Primary School converted to become an academy in January 2021. When its predecessor school, St John's CofE (C) Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Lichfield. The last section 48 inspection took place in February 2018. Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They restarted in September 2021. The next inspection will be within eight years of the last section 48 inspection.
- The school provides 21 additional pre-school places for children, some of whom attend part-time.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and with curriculum leaders.
- The chair, vice chair and another member of the local governing board met with the lead inspector. The inspector also met with the chair of trustees and a director of education of the MAT.
- The inspectors spoke with pupils at social times and with groups of pupils more formally.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including evaluations and improvement plans, and minutes of the trust and the local governing board. They also reviewed the school's attendance and behaviour records.
- The inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View. An inspector met with parents at the start of the second day of the inspection. The inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's survey for staff and pupils.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 reading to a familiar adult.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ed Leighton

Ofsted Inspector

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