

Inspection of St John's Church of England Infant and Nursery School

Gills Hill Lane, Radlett, Hertfordshire WD7 8DD

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 May 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
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 at St John's Church of England Infant and Nursery School live out the school's 'HAPPY' motto. Finding the curriculum interesting, pupils embody the 'Y' in the school's motto: yes to learning. Pupils relish opportunities to talk about what they learn, remembering lots of it.

How staff and parents support pupils' reading helps pupils greatly. Pupils say reading their book repeatedly helps them to 'really know it' and to read with confidence. They also talk excitedly about perusing the well-stocked library, which devoted 'library monitors' maintain, to select a book to read with an adult at home.

Pupils know how to use the colour-based feelings system to recognise and respond to their emotions. This helps them embody the 'P' for positive in 'HAPPY'. It does not take long to spot one of the 'playground pals' at breaktime or lunchtime, keeping an eye on proceedings and stepping in if someone needs a helping hand. Pupils speak happily about their relationships with each other and the staff. They struggle to give examples of bullying or fallings out between friends. Pupils say were it to happen, staff would sort it all out. As a result, they feel happy and safe in school.

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

In recent years, leaders have prioritised curriculum development. Once leaders review a subject, teachers receive clear curriculum plans. These support teachers with planning well-sequenced lessons. Teachers arrange appropriate activities for pupils to complete. Because of this, pupils retain the knowledge they need to know.

Nearly all these curriculum plans link closely to the areas of learning in the Nursery and Reception Years. Where they do not, experienced adults in the early years know how to use the plans to inform what words and ideas they teach children. Clear modelling and careful questioning help children make links to what they already know and can do, to move their learning on.

Although there are plans to change the phonics programme, leaders' careful evaluation ensures it works well in its current form. For example, staff checked that the words in books contain the sounds pupils learn. Where they do not, a simple sticker makes it clear which words an adult must read. This means pupils receive books they can read with increasing fluency.

Leaders recognise the need for assessment to identify what pupils know. Teachers mostly use their observations of pupils well to guide their instruction and support. At the end of topics or units, there are systems teachers use to check what knowledge pupils have acquired. Teachers complete this task carefully to inform their subsequent teaching.

Those overseeing provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do so with attention and care, recognising when aspects could be even better. Plans are reviewed regularly with pupils, parents and professionals. Teachers make appropriate adaptations that allow many pupils with SEND to keep up with the pace of learning. Those pupils requiring more tailored support receive this to help them achieve their targets.

Staff rightly feel proud of how pupils behave. Through careful adult interactions, children in the early years quickly learn how to be resilient, purposeful learners. They happily 'have a go' and bounce back fast from any mistakes, trying again to succeed. Elsewhere, pupils show much self-control and a keenness to learn. They feel enthused by the systems of rewards, particularly getting their name in the coveted 'Cow Book'. Parents recognise staff's work in this area, citing a school rooted in positive relationships that ensures they and their children feel welcome.

How leaders oversee pupils' personal development through the curriculum and wider opportunities works wonderfully. There is careful thought to what is planned and how to ensure all pupils benefit. Recently, staff went above and beyond to involve a vulnerable group of pupils, not yet on the school roll, in school life. There is high uptake of the school's ample extra-curricular offering. All pupils know what roles allow them to effect change in school. Members of the school council reel off how they have improved the school using pupils' ideas. There are well-considered trips and whole-school events that broaden pupils' horizons, for example the remote 'aspirations day' where pupils learned about careers by seeing adults at work, or all pupils learning how to scoot safely as part of a 'walk to school' week.

Leaders, including trustees and governors, evaluate their school accurately. Sometimes, where leaders are new to role, they are not efficient in checking that training or guidance given to staff has resulted in an improvement in teaching. This means pupils' learning is not always maximised.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders train staff to readily recognise and report concerns, no matter how small. Staff recognise that, over time, reports come together to build a clear picture of a pupil's experiences. This sharing of information helps leaders to liaise effectively with external agencies to manage support for vulnerable pupils. Pupils know how to use the 'worry box' or colour-based feelings system to make a worry known to a trusted adult.

Trustees and governors work carefully to check safeguarding systems. Their well-planned visits to school assure them that school leaders are doing what they should to keep pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders can evaluate what is working well and what must improve in their curriculum. However, where some leaders are new to role, they lack the confidence, knowledge and experience to check that their concerns over pedagogical approaches have been addressed. Problems with some teachers' pedagogy and how this affects some pupils' achievement are then not resolved efficiently. Training and systems must be organised that allow leaders at all levels to oversee a clear cycle of monitoring and support for staff, to ensure all pupils achieve their best.

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	147818
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10211873
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nicola Mullett
Headteacher	Alice Aharon
Website	www.stjohnsradlett.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Poppy Academy Trust.
- There is one other school in the Poppy Academy Trust, Fair Field Junior School, and the headteacher of St John's Church of England Infant and Nursery School is the executive headteacher of both schools.
- The school is part of the diocese of St Albans.
- The religious character of the school was inspected under section 48 of the Education Act (2005) in January 2018 and was judged to be outstanding.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors 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 began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with leaders, including the executive headteacher, head of school, inclusion lead and SEND coordinator. The lead inspector also met with four trustees, three governors, a school improvement adviser contracted by the trust and a representative from the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, computing and physical education.
- For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and teaching assistants, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work, where available. The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of other school documentation and policies, including records of meetings.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector spoke to the designated safeguarding lead and a deputy designated safeguarding lead. The lead inspector viewed records relating to safeguarding and reviewed the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. Inspectors also spoke with teachers, support staff and pupils.
- Inspectors spent time observing and speaking to pupils. Inspectors also considered the 36 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors gathered parents' views by reviewing the 48 responses and 33 free-text responses submitted to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. An inspector also spoke to some parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors gathered staff members' views by speaking to several of them. Inspectors also took account of the 34 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Daniel Short, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Damian Loneragan

Her Majesty's Inspector

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