

Inspection of St John's C of E Primary School and Nursery

Laund Nook, Belper, Derbyshire DE56 1GY

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 February 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Early years provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this caring school. They enjoy their learning and being with their friends. The positive relationships between pupils and staff help pupils to feel safe. Pupils know that bullying is not allowed. They like that staff are quick to sort out concerns for them. One pupil told inspectors, 'We are a happy school. People treat you well here.'

Leaders ensure that the school's Christian ethos and values thread through all aspects of school life. Staff have high expectations of pupils. These are set out from the moment they join the Nursery. Pupils enjoy making a positive contribution to the life of the school. They like being school councillors and playground pals.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal and academic development. Pupils have positive attitudes to their work. Pupils want to do their best. Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Pupils behave well. They understand the expectations leaders have of their behaviour. Pupils are well mannered. They care for each other.

Most parents and carers are happy with the school. One parent, whose views were typical of many, said, 'St John's is a fantastic school with fantastic staff. I cannot recommend this school highly enough.' Most parents feel well informed about their children's learning.

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

Leaders have developed a strong curriculum. They have set out the knowledge that pupils should learn in each subject, in small steps. Many pupils remember what they have learned. For example, pupils recall learning about plate tectonics in geography. Other pupils confidently explain how to pass a ball using a shoulder pass, when discussing their learning in physical education (PE). Children in the early years explain the difference between nocturnal and diurnal animals. However, there are inconsistencies in what some pupils can remember about their learning. Some pupils are not always clear on what they have learned about British values and different world faiths and beliefs.

Reading is a priority in the school. Leaders have recently introduced a new approach to teaching phonics. Phonics teaching starts promptly in the early years. Most staff are quickly learning the new approach. Leaders ensure that they provide training for staff. Teachers regularly check how successfully pupils learn new sounds. Teachers make sure that the books pupils read match the sounds they have learned. They are quick to provide support if pupils fall behind. Leaders promote a love of reading throughout the school. However, there is inconsistency in the ways that some staff teach phonics. This means that some pupils are not becoming fluent readers as quickly as they should.

Pupils say that they enjoy their learning in mathematics. The mathematics curriculum is well planned. Leaders provide regular opportunities for pupils to recap their

knowledge. Pupils build their understanding gradually. They confidently articulate what they have learned. For example, some pupils can convert hours to minutes. Other pupils instantly recognize quantity in a set without counting. Children in the early years compare the length of play dough 'worms' using mathematical vocabulary. Teachers frequently check pupils' learning in mathematics. They are quick to address misconceptions.

Leaders regularly seek advice from external agencies, to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) thrive at school. Teachers identify the needs of pupils with SEND accurately. They adapt their teaching so that these pupils can access the curriculum. Leaders regularly check how successfully pupils with SEND access the curriculum.

Pupils are a credit to the school. They focus during lessons. Pupils respond well to routines. Staff manage the rare instances of off-task behaviour effectively. Pupils work well together in class. They are kind and respectful towards each other and adults. Pupils say that they feel safe. Teachers quickly establish the routines in the early years.

Pupils' personal development is at the heart of the school's work. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils that extend their learning beyond the academic curriculum. Pupils say that they enjoy the extra-curricular clubs. Staff help pupils to develop resilience and to express their emotions. Pupils know how to eat healthily. They receive age-appropriate information that helps them to make wise choices. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to carry out leadership roles. Pupils say that they enjoy these positions of responsibility.

Leaders and governors share an ambitious vision for the school. Governors and representatives of the local authority offer support and robust challenge to leaders and staff. Leaders are very effective. They have a clear understanding of what is working well and what needs to be improved next. Leaders work hard to ensure that staff's workload is manageable. Staff say that they feel valued by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a very strong culture of safeguarding at this school. Staff have a secure understanding of what to look for and how to report concerns. Leaders make sure that staff have regular training. Record-keeping is comprehensive. Leaders take prompt actions to follow up any concerns. Staff know pupils and their families well. Leaders make sure that vulnerable pupils, and their families, receive the help they need to stay safe.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They know that if they are worried, or concerned, that trusted adults in school are there to help.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Changes to the phonics curriculum are at an early stage of implementation. This means that some staff are still developing their understanding of the requirements of the new phonics curriculum. Leaders should further embed the planned curriculum to ensure that even more pupils successfully develop the phonics knowledge and skills that leaders expect of them.
- Some pupils' knowledge of British values and different faiths is fragile. Although they know to respect difference, some pupils are not as aware as they should be of what these differences may be. Leaders should ensure that pupils have the necessary knowledge and understanding of British values and different faiths.

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](#)' 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	112875
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10254834
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	419
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Charlotte Mather
Headteacher	Roger Averis
Website	www.stjohnsbelper.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 December 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The last section 48 inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools took place in June 2019. This is an inspection of the school's religious character.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, curriculum leaders, the leader with responsibility for the provision for pupils with SEND and teaching and support staff.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science, PE and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils

about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans and documentation relating to attendance and behaviour.
- One inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. He considered the safeguarding policy, training records and examples of safeguarding concerns.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the responses to Ofsted's free-text service. They also considered the responses to the survey for staff and the survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Damien Turrell, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Julian Scholefield	Ofsted Inspector
Martyn Skinner	Ofsted Inspector
Janis Warren	Ofsted Inspector

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