

Inspection of St John's Primary Academy

Hobnock Road, Essington, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV11 2RF

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 January 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected St John's Primary Academy as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff and pupils wear the eagle badge of St John's Primary Academy with pride. Staff care deeply about the pupils and families that make up the school community. Parents value greatly, and appreciate, the exceptional care and support provided by staff.

Pupils feel happy and safe at school. The environment is positive and enthusiastic and staff go over and above to make sure pupils have the best start in their education. Pupils' motivation and attitudes to learning is excellent. All staff share leaders' high expectations and pupils achieve well. However, in a very small number of subjects, pupils do not make as much progress as they could.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They show deep consideration for others. Bullying is rare and adults respond quickly to any potential problems. Pupils appreciate this. Pupils show high levels of confidence and maturity when talking with friends and adults. They recognise that everyone is equal, but occasionally some people might need a little more help than others. Staff prepare pupils very well for their next steps.

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

Leaders have created a curriculum which is ambitious for all. In almost all subjects, leaders set out key knowledge and skills that they want pupils to learn. For example, in physical education (PE), teachers break learning down into small steps and pupils link each part of learning from lesson to lesson well. High-quality resources and clear teaching help pupils to remember the knowledge learned. Some pupils link what they remember to activities they have carried out, such as sewing in design technology. However, in a small number of subjects, the key skills and knowledge that pupils are expected to learn are not set out precisely. Therefore, in these subjects, it is not clear what some teachers want pupils to learn and be able to do. As a result, pupils do not make as much progress in these subjects.

Teachers use different ways to check what pupils know. 'Dig deeper' tasks allow pupils to share their learning in subjects such as history and geography. Leaders identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly. These pupils receive support to help them to access the same curriculum as their class. This enables them to achieve well. Younger children receive support quickly and this helps them to settle quickly into school life.

Leaders prioritise phonics and reading. Staff confidently teach pupils to learn to read. Children in the early years enjoy a range of songs and rhymes linked to the sounds that are being taught. Highly skilled adults promote a range of speaking and listening activities across the early years. Pupils who need extra support to read receive it and this helps them to develop into confident and fluent readers. Pupils enjoy reading a range of books with adults.

From the youngest children to pupils in Year 6, pupils' behaviour is exceptional. Pupils show overwhelming kindness towards each other. Highly positive relationships between the pupils and staff create a settled, nurturing and calm environment. Children in the early years play and work confidently alongside their friends. Pupils recognise the importance of friendship. Leaders have high expectations of behaviour, and the pupils understand this and, in turn, have high expectations of themselves. Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning. They understand the importance of working hard, and they enjoy coming to school. Attendance rates are high. Leaders make sure they support families to help their child attend school.

Leaders also support pupils' personal development exceptionally well. They provide many opportunities for pupils to take part in wider school and community life. For example, sharing stories and strawberry teas with other members of the wider community allows pupils to hear about the experiences of others. Pupils speak positively about the range of activities on offer. They take part in a wide range of clubs, including musical theatre, arts and crafts and dance. Pupils have a secure understanding of what it means to be respectful and caring and know how responsible citizens act.

Leadership is outstanding. Leaders continually look for ways to further improve the school. Pupils, parents and staff hold leaders in very high regard and appreciate the help and support offered to them. So do the staff, who value the support from leaders in all aspects of school life. Leaders make sure that they prioritise the well-being and workload of staff. Governors and trustees support the school very well. They understand their roles and carry them out with precision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders create a culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. They ensure that staff are alert to signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. Staff understand how to raise concerns. Leaders respond to concerns quickly and support families who need this well.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, including online and in their local community. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to learn about safety through a well-planned curriculum. Pupils recognise how to stay safe in a range of places, such as near roads and by water.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a very small number of foundation subjects, leaders do not consistently check that the activities provided by some teachers match the intended curriculum. It is not always clear what teachers want pupils to learn when designing lessons in

these subjects. Leaders should ensure that teachers receive the further guidance they need to consistently and precisely identify the key knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn.

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	141822
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10256865
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	636
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Fliss Dale
Headteacher	Jamie McMullan
Website	www.stjohns-eagle.com
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Church of England Diocese of Lichfield. It received its last section 48 inspection in May 2019. The next inspection will be within 8 years of the last section 48 inspection.
- The school is part of the Future Generation Trust.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school received a no formal designation inspection in February 2020.

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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, members of staff and a member of the

central trust team. The lead inspector met with representatives from the local governing body and representatives from the trust, including the chief executive officer.

- Deep dives in early reading, mathematics, PE, computing and geography were carried out. 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 considered the curriculum in other subjects including history, art, music and design and technology.
- The inspectors also listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including leaders' plans to improve the school and the school website. Minutes of governing body and trustee meetings were also reviewed.
- When inspecting safeguarding, the inspector considered the school's procedures for recruiting staff, the quality of staff training and the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe.
- Inspectors spoke to parents on the afternoon on the first day of the inspection. The lead inspector considered responses, including free-text comments, to Ofsted Parent View, the online questionnaire.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Michelle Bishton, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Rob Johnstone	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Hinton	Ofsted Inspector
Allyson Brown	Ofsted Inspector

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