

Inspection of St John's Catholic Primary School

Melbourne Street, Tiverton, Devon EX16 5LB

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2023

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this welcoming and inclusive school. They are polite and considerate towards adults and each other. Expectations of behaviour in and around the school are high, including for the early years children. Children get off to a flying start in nursery. Routines are well established and understood by the youngest children. This permeates throughout the school. Adults know the pupils well. As a result, relationships are positive and respectful.

Pupils and staff are proud of their school. Pupils talk confidently about the school's values, which are integral to the day-to-day life of the school. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. They are eager to contribute their ideas in lessons. They use a broad range of appropriate vocabulary when talking about their learning.

Pupils are actively involved in the life of the school and local community. They know that they have a voice and feel valued. The opportunities to develop their interests and talents help them to thrive. Pupils enjoy attending the range of clubs available, including 'Starmakers', arts and crafts and trombone. Parents and carers wholeheartedly agree. They value all that the school has to offer, as well as feeling part of one 'big family'.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have a shared vision that everyone understands and promotes. With support from the trust, leaders have been relentless in their drive to improve the quality of education.

Leaders have prioritised reading. From Nursery Year, children listen to stories. There is a strong focus on developing story language and vocabulary. Children learn to read from the start of their time at the school. There is a systematic and effective approach to teaching children to read. Leaders quickly identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge and address these swiftly so that pupils keep up with their peers. This supports them to become confident and fluent readers. Older pupils continue to read books that match their comprehension level. They talk positively about their favourite author and books they enjoy. Leaders ensure that there is a broad range of books that celebrate diversity.

Leaders have an ambitious and well-designed mathematics curriculum. This begins in Reception Year. There is a strong focus on developing children's mathematical vocabulary from an early age. This supports pupils to explain the methods they use to tackle more complex problems. For example, older pupils can explain how to convert fractions with different denominators to subtract fractions, using accurate vocabulary. As a result, pupils, including those with SEND, build their knowledge well.

Adults are ambitious for every pupil, irrespective of their need. The curriculum is carefully constructed to ensure that all pupils with SEND have their needs met well. Pupils with SEND receive expert support. Individual targets break down the essential knowledge pupils need to know into small achievable steps. This helps them to be successful and have full access to the curriculum alongside their peers. For example, in music, appropriate adaptations to instruments ensure that all pupils can actively participate in lessons and succeed.

Leaders have identified the key knowledge they want pupils to learn across the wider curriculum. They have effective assessment systems in place in mathematics and phonics. This means they know precisely what pupils remember and can rectify any gaps they may have. However, some leaders, including those who are new to the role, are not secure in their understanding of the curriculum design. They do not know how effective the curriculum is implemented in the subject they lead. In some curriculum subjects, assessment is not as effective as in mathematics and phonics. As a result, subject leaders do not know what pupils have remembered or what gaps in knowledge they have. Leaders are aware of this and there are plans in place to address it.

Leaders' work to promote pupils' wider development supports pupils to be tolerant, accepting and kind. Pupils know that everyone is a unique individual. They know how to keep themselves physically active and enjoy the 'golden daily mile'. Pupils say that they enjoy the 'chimes' they listen to, which help them to relax their minds. They know that if they have a worry or concern, they can talk to a trusted adult in school who will help them.

Staff are proud to be part of the 'St John's family'. They feel thoroughly supported by leaders and say that their expectations are realistic and help them to manage their workload. They appreciate the support of leaders in their ongoing professional development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have secured a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are well trained to recognise signs of harm in pupils. The ongoing training ensures that safeguarding is at the forefront of their minds. They report any concerns promptly and leaders follow these up meticulously with appropriate actions. This means that pupils and families get the support they need, when they need it.

Pupils know how to stay safe, including when using the internet. They know that they should never share any personal information with strangers.

The school has suitable policies in place to raise awareness among staff and parents about the dangers of sexual harassment, online abuse and sexual violence.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some wider curriculum subjects, subject leadership needs further development. Subject leaders' understanding of the curriculum design is not secure, and they have not identified that some pupils are not building knowledge as well as they could. Leaders need to ensure that all subject leaders are well equipped to monitor their subject and have a clear oversight of how well pupils learn the intended curriculum.
- In the wider curriculum, assessment is not effective in identifying what pupils know and can do and what gaps they have in their learning. Leaders need to ensure that there is a consistent approach to assessment, so that knowledge builds well and any gaps in pupils' knowledge can be addressed.

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	140762
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10256714
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	122
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Elizabeth O'Donovan
Principal	Robert Meech, Executive Headteacher
Website	www.stjohnstiverton.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 May 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The executive headteacher took up the substantive post in January 2021. The head of school took up their full-time position in September 2022.
- St John's Catholic Primary school has six classes, which includes nursery provision for two- to four-year-olds.
- The school runs a breakfast club and after-school club.
- The school is designated as having a religious character and received its section 48 inspection in September 2022, when the school was graded good.
- The school is part of the Plymouth CAST Academy Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and music. 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 some other subjects, including design and technology and history.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher and the head of school, representatives from the trust and local governors, the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders, and teaching and support staff.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. In addition, they met with pupils to hear their views about the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised information relating to safeguarding, including the single central record of recruitment checks of staff. Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. Inspectors also took into consideration responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Wendy D'Arcy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jack Lacey

Ofsted Inspector

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