

Inspection of St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School

Whitehawk Hill Road, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 0AH

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 September 2024

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel happy and safe at this inclusive and welcoming school. They work hard to meet the high expectations of teachers. Pupils demonstrate this through their positive behaviour and love for learning. As a result, the school is calm and purposeful. Pupils know the school's well-designed routines and follow them carefully. This starts in early years where children show high levels of concentration from the beginning of their school life.

Teachers are ambitious for pupils to achieve well. Pupils enjoy learning and contribute eagerly to lessons. Historically, pupils do not always achieve well in national tests. However, recent refinements to the curriculum mean that most pupils secure the knowledge and skills they require.

Pupils become active citizens in the school and the wider community. All Year 6 pupils have leadership roles that contribute positively to the school. For example, members of the school Eco-Crew lead a range of projects to improve the school environment. Their work has reduced food waste and encourages pupils to cycle and walk to school. Pupils can also join the school council or act as playground buddies. They are proud of these responsibilities. Pupils also make a positive contribution through fundraising for local and international charities.

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

The school has planned an ambitious curriculum that begins in early years. It meets the needs of all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff have considered carefully what pupils should learn and when they should learn it. The school have rightly prioritised English and mathematics as a result of recent low test results. The school knows there is still work to be done. However, pupils receive a strong grounding in the foundational knowledge they need to access the rest of the curriculum.

The school identifies the needs of pupils, including pupils with SEND, precisely. Teachers use this information to adapt and amend activities to enable all pupils to learn well. The school has recognised that some pupils require additional help to meet their needs. As a result, the school has recently opened the NEST provision for a small group of pupils with communication needs. These pupils learn how to communicate their wishes and needs well.

Teachers check pupils' understanding carefully. They identify gaps in learning accurately so that staff can plan interventions to help those pupils catch up quickly. The majority of interventions are led by skilled staff who help pupils to narrow gaps swiftly. However, a small number of interventions have less impact. In these instances, staff do not yet have the appropriate skills, knowledge and training to deliver them as effectively.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and explain learning clearly. In most subjects, teachers design activities that help pupils to learn the skills and knowledge they need.

However, in a small number of subjects these activities are less precisely designed. As a result, pupils do not always learn all the important knowledge the school intends.

The school has prioritised reading. As a result, the vast majority of pupils are fluent readers by key stage 2. This begins in early years where well-trained staff deliver the chosen scheme accurately. Staff ensure that the books that pupils read match the sounds and letters that they know. This helps pupils to practise their reading independently.

The work that pupils produce shows that most pupils, including pupils with SEND, achieve well. They are suitably prepared for their next steps. Pupils are confident readers and have secure mathematical knowledge. They also develop a wide range of skills and knowledge they can apply accurately. For example, year 6 pupils can follow musical notation to play a range of instruments skilfully as part of an ensemble.

The school has made recent changes to its behaviour policy. Leaders have made sure that teachers apply this policy consistently. This helps pupils to follow the rules and behave well. The school works hard to ensure that pupils attend frequently. While the number of pupils who miss too much school remains higher than the school expects, recent interventions have begun to have a positive impact. Governors are knowledgeable and provide effective support and challenge to the school.

The school recognises the need for pupils to develop beyond the classroom. This includes a diverse range of opportunities that are closely aligned with the needs of pupils. The school has identified '100 things to do before you are 11', including flying a kite and visiting the theatre. All pupils have these opportunities. The school also enhances the curriculum through these activities, including a range of trips and visits to local museums and libraries that help to deepen pupils' learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the activities that teachers design do not always reflect the ambition and scope of the curriculum. As a result, pupils do not always deepen the full range of skills and knowledge as well as they could. The school must ensure that teachers have the knowledge to select the most appropriate activities that allow pupils to develop their skills and knowledge in line with the goals of the curriculum.
- Some staff have not been given the expertise and knowledge to implement the interventions necessary to help pupils catch up gaps in their knowledge. As a result, some pupils do not catch up swiftly enough. The school must ensure that all staff carrying out interventions have the skills, knowledge and training that enable them to support pupils in catching up with learning.

- Leaders do not precisely evaluate the impact of their strategies to improve attendance. As a result, they cannot identify which activities have the strongest impact. The school must ensure that it has systems for clearly identifying the impact of its work to better inform the school's improvement priorities.

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	114540
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10341339
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gayle Golland
Headteacher	Carly Carden
Website	www.stjohn.brighton-hove.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 April 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School is a voluntary-aided Catholic school. The most recent inspection of its religious character, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, took place in March 2024. The school's next section 48 inspection will take place within eight school years.
- The school currently uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school manages a wraparound breakfast club for pupils.
- The school's headteacher and senior leadership team have changed since the last inspection.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of the 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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team met with the headteacher as well as with other leaders and staff. The lead inspector also held a telephone conversation with representatives from the local authority and diocese.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, music and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents and carers through their responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspectors spoke to staff and pupils during the inspection and took account of staff responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.

Inspection team

Gavin Thomas, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paul Bateman

Ofsted Inspector

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