

Kingsley St John's CofE (VA) Primary School

Hollow Lane, Kingsley, Frodsham, Cheshire WA6 8EF

Inspection dates

27–28 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders' admirable drive and determination have ensured that Kingsley St John's continues to provide its pupils with a good standard of education.
- Leaders, including governors, have created a school whose nurturing, Christian ethos shines through all of its work. Pupils learn to treat each other with kindness and to accept and value their individual differences.
- Behaviour in the school is good. Pupils get on well together on the playground, move around school sensibly and show good manners. They have positive attitudes to learning. Attendance is good and few pupils regularly miss school.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and happy in school. Parents and carers who completed Ofsted's Parent View survey overwhelmingly agreed.
- Teaching across the school is effective. This is particularly the case in mathematics and reading, where teachers plan well to meet pupils' learning needs and use questions skilfully to check what pupils have learned.
- Pupils successfully learn to use their knowledge of phonics to help them read unfamiliar words. However, teachers are not as adept at linking phonics and spelling, and so pupils are prone to making mistakes spelling relatively simple, phonetically-plausible words.
- The school's curriculum is rich and well thought out. Pupils enjoy the many practical activities that they are given, including science experiments and using source materials in history. The curriculum is further enhanced through educational visits.
- Children in early years settle in quickly and get off to a good start because they are well taught and looked after.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are very well supported. They make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Small cohort sizes mean that there are great fluctuations in published data. Overall, progress and attainment in mathematics and reading are good, as are outcomes across the wider curriculum.
- Leaders have secured improvements in pupils' written work, but there is more to be done. Teachers do not consistently insist that work is free from the basic errors that detract from the overall quality of pupils' writing. The most able pupils in particular have limited opportunities to write at length and for different purposes.
- While leaders and staff undoubtedly want the best for pupils, staff do not have a clear picture of how good the very best work needs to be.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of the teaching of writing across the school in order to raise standards, by:
 - ensuring that staff enforce expectations of pupils' spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting more consistently so that basic errors do not detract from the overall quality of pupils' written work
 - making sure that staff more effectively link pupils' learning in phonics with the development of greater accuracy in spelling
 - ensuring that teachers increase further the opportunities that they give pupils, particularly the most able, to write at length and for different purposes, such as to record their learning in science.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on pupils' outcomes by ensuring that there is a clear, shared understanding in school of what the highest-quality outcomes look like.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders have successfully steered the school through what has been, at times, a challenging period since the last inspection. The number of pupils on roll has almost doubled; the proportion of pupils who join the school midway through an academic year and key stage has also increased, as has the proportion of pupils with SEND. The school has also integrated Nursery-age pupils into its early years provision. It is testament to the skill and dedication of senior leaders that these challenges have not blown the school off course, and the good standard of education seen at the last inspection has been maintained.
- The headteacher leads the school with a clear and unwavering moral drive. Her commitment to providing pupils with the best education the school can deliver, whatever their individual needs, is unquestionable. She is well supported in her endeavours by a knowledgeable assistant headteacher, well-informed governors and a dedicated staff team. However, while leaders' ambitions are high, not all staff currently have as clear a picture of the very highest standards that pupils should be aiming for.
- Leaders have not shied away from taking difficult decisions, such as in challenging ineffective teaching. They have also sought to make the best use of the school's limited inside space so that the needs of each year group are met as well as possible. Leaders' plans for the future include trying to secure further improvements in this area so that the school can cope better with further increases in pupil numbers.
- Staff and parents are highly supportive of the school's senior leaders. Staff morale is high and staff are proud to work at Kingsley St John's. Virtually every parent who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, would recommend the school to others. High levels of praise for the school's leaders and its nurturing, inclusive ethos were common in parents' comments. One parent simply said: 'Kingsley St John's isn't just a primary school, it's a family.'
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, and ensures that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils speak confidently about the importance of recognising, understanding and celebrating people's differences. The school's strong Christian ethos shines through.
- The school's curriculum is broad and well-balanced. Leaders have ensured that it engages pupils by allowing them to take part in a wide variety of practical activities, which they say that they particularly enjoy. For example, pupils dissect plants to find out about their different parts, and use photographs and first-hand accounts to learn more about soldiers' lives in the Great War. Educational visits further enhance pupils' learning, including taking part in history workshops at Weaver Hall or outdoor activities on a residential visit.
- Leaders use additional funding to good effect. The physical education (PE) and sport premium for primary schools is used to provide pupils with access to a wide range of sporting activities both in school and as extra-curricular activities. The small amount of pupil premium funding the school receives is used to provide targeted support for disadvantaged pupils' academic needs and to continue to promote good attendance.

- Provision for pupils with SEND is very well led and managed. Leaders ensure that additional funding is secured wherever possible, meaning that pupils with SEND receive high levels of adult support. Leaders regularly check on how well pupils with SEND are progressing towards their agreed targets and put additional help in place where it is needed to ensure that their progress is good.
- The school also works very effectively with other local schools, sharing best practice and organising joint events. The local authority also provides an appropriate balance of support and challenge for school leaders.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school extremely well. They are understandably proud of its many strengths but are equally aware that there are areas in which further improvements can be made. They are ambitious for the school's future development and are pro-actively looking for ways in which they can help leaders secure this vision, such as in exploring possibilities to improve the teaching space in early years.
- Governors ensure that they hold school leaders rigorously to account for the school's performance. They use their wide range of skills and experience, including in business and education, to pose searching questions of leaders and to ensure that they fulfil their statutory duties efficiently and effectively. For example, governors ensure that additional funding, such as for PE and sport, is used well.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for in school, and virtually every parent who responded to the Parent View survey agreed with this view.
- The headteacher makes sure that careful checks are made on staff, governors and regular visitors to the school to ensure that they are suitable people to work with children. The school maintains detailed records of these checks.
- School leaders ensure that staff and governors maintain an up-to-date knowledge and understanding of safeguarding policies and procedures. Staff know what to do if they are worried about a pupil's welfare and robust systems are in place to ensure that any concerns are carefully recorded and quickly acted upon. Leaders work well with external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families receive the support they need.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have worked successfully to eliminate pockets of weaker teaching and to ensure that teaching across the school is now consistently effective. Teachers' subject knowledge is typically good, and they use questions well to check pupils' understanding.
- Leaders and teachers have identified that many pupils respond well when a practical approach to teaching and learning is adopted. The success of this approach is evident

in subjects such as science and mathematics in particular. In science, pupils confidently talk about their learning and the practical activities that they have completed. They are developing a good depth of understanding and use appropriate scientific vocabulary. In mathematics, pupils become fluent in using number and apply their knowledge to solving real-life problems. Teachers also provide pupils with good opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge in other subjects, such as by drawing graphs in science or by calculating amounts of ingredients to use in historical recipes.

- The teaching of phonics has improved and is now having a positive impact on pupils' use of phonics to help them to read unfamiliar words. Teachers and teaching assistants have a good knowledge of phonics and model correct pronunciation of sounds. However, they are less successful at highlighting the link between phonics and spelling, and so pupils spell too many phonetically-plausible words inaccurately.
- Teachers make sure pupils learn to read and appreciate different genres of text, and to start to understand the effect an author is trying to create through word choice or sentence structure. Pupils' comprehension skills are improving because teachers make sure that they are reading texts that provide them with the right amount of challenge.
- Leaders have brought about improvements in the teaching of writing since this was identified as an area for development in the previous inspection. Pupils now write more willingly, showing a good vocabulary and often using descriptive phrases to good effect. However, while their writing fluency and language choices have developed, there are still significant weaknesses in pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation that detract from the overall quality of their writing. In their efforts to encourage pupils to write, teachers have not established consistent expectations for grammar and punctuation, spelling or handwriting.
- Across the school, the support for pupils with SEND is very good. Teachers and support staff have a typically good understanding of pupils' learning needs and make careful checks on the progress that they are making from their different starting points. Additional help for those who most need it is put in place and so pupils with SEND are able to achieve academic and social success.
- Support for the most able pupils in the school is having a positive impact on their progress in reading and mathematics, where a growing proportion are reaching the higher standards or working at greater depth at the end of key stages 1 and 2. However, the attainment and progress in writing of the most able pupils are less secure because they sometimes do not have enough chances to practise writing at length and in different contexts, or to eliminate unnecessary mistakes from their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- There are highly effective strategies in place to develop pupils' confidence and raise their self-esteem. This is particularly important for those potentially vulnerable pupils who join the school part-way through the academic year, some of whom have experienced challenges in their previous schools.

- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when using the internet. They understand that different types of bullying exist, including bullying based on physical differences or home circumstances, but are confident that this does not happen in their school. This is because pupils wholeheartedly support the highly inclusive ethos that exists at Kingsley St John's.
- Pupils throughout the school learn about how to eat healthily and recognise, at an appropriate level, what constitute healthy and unhealthy dietary choices.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct around school and in class is typically good. Pupils are very supportive of one another and get along well together. They clearly enjoy using the attractive and extensive school grounds at breaktimes and ensure that all those who want to take part are included in their games. Pupils say that they like the clear systems that are in place to promote and reward good behaviour.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Many say that they particularly enjoy the practical activities that are provided for them, such as in science. Only occasionally, when there is a lull in learning, do pupils become chatty and drift off task.
- There is very strong and effective support available for those pupils who have difficulty managing their own behaviour. Skilled teaching assistants use a range of strategies to provide pupils with the space that they need to refocus on their learning, so that little time is lost and other pupils' learning is not disturbed.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Fluctuations in cohort size and significant differences in the composition of each class mean that there are wide variations in published data from one year to the next. Leaders recognise that published data alone fails to paint a wholly accurate picture of the school, and so take great care to track the progress and attainment of individual pupils. This is particularly useful when considering outcomes for pupils who have joined the school at some point during key stages 1 or 2, and for those with SEND.
- Inspection evidence, including the school's own assessment information and pupils' work, shows that standards are rising in reading and mathematics.
- Outcomes in reading are strong overall. Year 2 pupils typically use their phonic knowledge well to help them to read unfamiliar words, and happily talk about the books they are reading. Older pupils show a good understanding of language and are able to discuss the effect of different words or phrases on the reader.
- In mathematics, pupils are making good progress in developing their understanding of number and fluency in carrying out calculations. They then apply this knowledge well when tackling problem-solving questions, and are able to explain the thinking they used in arriving at an answer. Pupils are typically confident mathematically and are successfully tackling work at an age-appropriate level.

- An increasing proportion of pupils are achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check, and those who do not reach that level in Year 1 typically catch up well in Year 2 and so meet the standard at the second attempt. Pupils use their phonic knowledge well when reading, but do not do so in their writing. As a result, pupils' spelling across the school is erratic, with common words and words that can be written phonetically too often spelled incorrectly.
- There has been some improvement in the quality of pupils' writing over the past two years, but this is less secure than the improvements in reading and mathematics. Pupils are willing to write and show a broad vocabulary and some creativity in their writing. However, weaknesses in grammar and punctuation and inconsistencies in handwriting detract from the overall quality of pupils' writing.
- Pupils make good progress across a range of subjects other than English and mathematics. In history, for example, younger pupils use photographs to identify differences between the past and the present, while older pupils confidently talk about where historical information comes from, such as 'being passed down through the generations'.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress from their widely varying starting points. This is evident in the school's assessment information, which, for example, shows that many pupils with SEND make rapid gains in their reading ages. Strong progress can also be seen in the detailed tracking of pupils' progress against their own personal targets, including ones set by external specialists such as speech and language therapists. A number of parents of pupils with SEND contacted the inspector to say how pleased they were with their children's progress and development.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years provision at Kingsley St John's is highly inclusive. Children join either in the recently established Nursery or Reception class with varying levels of knowledge and understanding. By the time they reach the end of the Reception Year, most children have achieved a good level of development, and those who do not reach that level have still caught up well from their lower starting points. As such, children are well prepared to move into Year 1.
- The early years team has made the best possible use of the limited and awkwardly shaped inside space so that children are able to freely access a good range of learning activities. The outdoor area, which is a good size, is also well set up to provide children with an engaging range of opportunities to explore and learn.
- High-quality language development is a key strength of the provision. Staff model language well and use questions effectively to encourage children to speak and articulate their ideas. Phonics is taught effectively so that children learn to listen to and distinguish sounds and then use them to blend and segment the sounds in words. Children are given plenty of opportunities to write.
- Behaviour in early years is good. Children get on well together, happily sharing equipment and talking to each other about what they are doing.
- The leader responsible for early years is a skilled and knowledgeable practitioner. He knows the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and has a clear picture of what

he hopes to achieve in both the short- and longer-term. For example, he is keen to involve parents more in learning and assessment in early years and has therefore begun strengthening links between home and school.

School details

Unique reference number	111317
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10045868

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	77
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kira Fayle
Headteacher	Rachel Jones
Telephone number	01244 976181
Website	www.kingsley-st-johns.cheshire.sch.uk
Email address	head@kingsley-st-johns.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 May 2014

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school. The number of pupils in each year group ranges from five to 13. All pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- Since the previous inspection the school has begun to admit Nursery-age children.
- The number of pupils in school has almost doubled since the previous inspection.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of pupils who join the school during the school year and within key stages 1 and 2 is well above average.
- The school is a voluntary aided Church of England primary school. As it is a school with a religious character it is also inspected under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The school's last such inspection was in May 2014.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning across the school. He also looked at pupils' work in books, records of children's learning in the early years and other information about pupils' attainment and progress.
- The inspector met two groups of pupils and talked informally with pupils around the school. He took into account 31 responses to the Parent View survey and met parents informally in school.
- The inspector met a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. He had discussions with staff, including the leaders responsible for the provision for pupils with SEND, early years, safeguarding and phonics. The inspector also met a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector examined a wide range of documents. These included information about pupils' attainment and progress, the school's reviews of its own performance and records of meetings of the governing body. He also examined safeguarding documentation and various records of pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Neil Dixon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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