

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St John's CofE Primary Academy

Weston Road, Stafford ST16 3RZ

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Inspection dates:

22 and 23 October 2024

## Outcome

St John's CofE Primary Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The principal of this school is Victoria Evans. The school is part of St Chad's Academies Trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Sarah Cockshott, and is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Anthony Orlik.

## What is it like to attend this school?

This is a multicultural school where everyone is accepted and celebrated. Pupils understand the school's 'respect' values and put them into practice. This helps pupils to feel happy and safe.

The school sets high expectations for how pupils should behave. Pupils are polite and well-mannered. Staff encourage pupils to work hard during lessons. Pupils behave well.

Some pupils join the school at different times during the school year and partway through key stages. The school makes sure that pupils are supported so that they experience a smooth transition. Typically, parental views about the school are positive; they value the support pupils receive when they join.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. As a result, they achieve well. The school ensures that pupils have varied opportunities in which to learn. Pupils enjoy playtimes, where they take part in a range of activities from football to creative role play. They learn about the rich history in their local community, including the importance of Remembrance Day commemorations. Pupils enjoy 'space camp sleepover' and residential visits, where they take part in water sports and outdoor activities. They regularly take part in outdoor woodland activities, including orienteering, which helps to develop pupils' resilience and independence.

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

The curriculum has been carefully designed in most subjects. The school has generally set out the most important knowledge and vocabulary that staff are expected to teach. However, in some subjects, the school has not identified the explicit knowledge pupils should learn at each stage of the curriculum. In these subjects, while staff possess the expertise they need to teach the curriculum, some do not teach concepts and knowledge clearly enough. This is because they are unclear about precisely what to teach and when. Where this happens, the things pupils learn do not always build on the things they already know. This hinders learning. In most cases, learning is revisited to check how well pupils remember key concepts and knowledge, but this practice is inconsistent, and pupils do not always remember everything they ought to. Pupils follow instructions and work hard.

Children in Reception get off to a good start. They settle into school life quickly and make rapid progress in their learning. The early years curriculum has been carefully constructed. High-quality social and emotional learning opportunities sit at the heart of this work. Children enjoy taking part in outdoor activities, where they recently learned about hedgehogs and natural habitats. Activities such as these enhance the curriculum well. Staff have identified that physical development is a priority. Children are taught to make big and small body movements with increasing control in preparation for early writing. Children grip pencils with increasing control. Most children achieve well in early years.

Reading is taught well from the very beginning of Reception. Staff are skilled at checking children's understanding and making sure that learning builds successfully. Pupils develop their phonics and reading knowledge and understanding through key stage 1. Staff quickly identify if pupils need to catch up in phonics. Pupils receive timely and appropriate support to make sure that gaps in learning are addressed. They enjoy whole-class reading each day and regular opportunities to read in small groups. Pupils quickly gain the knowledge and skills they need to become confident, fluent readers.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Staff are ambitious for pupils with SEND. The school works with external agencies to make sure that pupils with SEND receive specialist support when it is needed. However, in some lessons, staff do not adapt the curriculum sufficiently well to meet the needs of all pupils with SEND. This affects how well some pupils with SEND achieve.

Attendance is prioritised. The school has set high expectations for pupils' attendance. Staff successfully support families in improving pupils' attendance. As a result, pupils attend school regularly.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves physically healthy. They take part in a wide range of inclusive extra-curricular activities, such as football, dance, Anglo-Saxon craft, and choir. Pupils learn to play the flute, clarinet and ukulele. They value the annual choir and dance performances at a local theatre. Pupils aspire to take on the many leadership roles available, such as junior leadership team members, eco-warriors, prefects and playground

buddies. This broad range of opportunities supports pupils to develop a sound understanding of their social and moral responsibilities. Staff plan visits to enrich the curriculum. Pupils have visited Chester, Stafford Castle and a local fire station.

Trustees and the local academy committee are fully committed to the school. They know what the school does well and what it needs to improve on. They make decisions in the best interests of pupils and regularly check on the well-being of staff. Staff report that their workload is well managed and their well-being is supported so that they can carry out their roles successfully.

## **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 curriculum does not set out the most important knowledge that pupils are expected to know and remember. Pupils do not always remember important knowledge in these subjects. The school should ensure that the whole curriculum has the most important knowledge set out and that staff teach the most important components of learning clearly, so that pupils remember important knowledge over time.
- The school has not fully ensured that the curriculum for some pupils with SEND is appropriately adapted. This means that the needs of these pupils are not being fully met. The school should ensure that the curriculum is successfully adapted for all pupils with SEND so that they can access the curriculum and achieve well.

## **Background**

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding,

behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in June 2019.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	143348
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10344101
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	407
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Anthony Orlik
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Sarah Cockshott
<b>Principal</b>	Victoria Evans
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-johns-stafford.staffs.sch.uk">www.st-johns-stafford.staffs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	25 and 26 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of St Chad's Academies Trust, which comprises 19 academies.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Church of England Diocese of Lichfield.
- The school's last section 48 inspection was in October 2023. The school's next inspection will be within eight years of the previous section 48 inspection.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the principal, the vice principal, the assistant principal and other leaders. The inspector held a meeting with members of the trust board and local academy committee. The inspector met with a representative from the Diocese of Lichfield, the CEO and other leaders from the trust. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour and interactions during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes and spoke to many pupils during the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.
- The inspector considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. This included free-text comments. The inspector spoke to parents. The inspector also reviewed responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Emma Titchener, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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