

Inspection of Penistone St John's Voluntary Aided Primary School

High Street, Penistone, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S36 6BS

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 July 2024

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

The school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 11 years ago and was judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. 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 graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The Christian ethos of this school is at the heart of it. The value of kindness is particularly important. Pupils say that bullying does not happen in school because people are kind.

All staff share high expectations for pupils' behaviour. This starts in early years where behaviour is exceptional. Across school, lessons are calm and orderly. Pupils are awarded beads if they enact the school's values. These are highly valued. One pupil spoke for many when they said that achieving beads 'makes us proud'.

Personal development is exceptional. There are extensive opportunities for pupils to develop talents and interests right from early years. Pupils can attend clubs such as singing, arts and crafts, baking and 'rock steady' music club. Older pupils have leadership opportunities. For example, they can be part of one of the many 'ministries' that take a lead on areas such as sport, well-being and health and safety. Pupils learn resilience and they are ambitious for themselves.

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils. This starts in the early years where children receive an exceptional quality of education.

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

Leaders have put in place ambitious curriculum plans. In mathematics, pupils achieve well and develop a love of the subject. Learning is broken down into small steps. This means pupils develop a deep understanding of important mathematical facts. As a result, they are able to complete challenging work with resilience. In early years, there is a highly ambitious curriculum. Careful planning ensures that children thrive, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Curriculum plans in other subjects are beginning to have an impact. These carefully considered plans ensure pupils learn important subject-specific knowledge. 'Project weeks' enable pupils to make links between subjects. This is beginning to help pupils remember and apply their knowledge to new learning. Leaders know that this work needs to continue to help pupils produce their best work.

Teachers have very strong subject knowledge. They benefit from high-quality professional development. This includes teachers new to the profession. Staff in the early years are highly skilled. They make meaningful interactions with children, enabling each child to thrive. A stimulating environment enables children to focus on learning for sustained periods. They are resilient to setbacks. New approaches to writing are highly impactful. This includes pupils practising their writing through discussion. Information for parents helps families know what children are learning and how they can help at home.

All adults who deliver early reading are highly skilled. No stone is left unturned in ensuring pupils learn to read. If pupils fall behind, precise interventions are put in place. This enables pupils to catch up quickly.

Adults use assessment effectively to check what pupils know. Adaptations are made for pupils who have SEND to help them access the same curriculum as their peers. For a small number of pupils with complex needs, alternative plans are in place. Adults check carefully the small steps in progress these pupils make to ensure everyone achieves well.

All staff have high expectations of behaviour. In classrooms, there is no low-level disruption. Relationships between adults and pupils are respectful and kind. In early years, pupils are taught the expected behaviours, including how to sit comfortably to write and focus. Attendance at school is above average and continues to improve. Leaders work proactively with families to support the highest levels of attendance.

The personal development of pupils is exceptional. Pupils understand how to be respectful, responsible and active citizens. Each pupil's uniqueness is recognised and celebrated right from Nursery. Pupils have a 'passport' of opportunities to help them to be the best version of themselves. They have a clear understanding of equality, democracy and other British values. They understand how to stay safe online and outside of school. What is most striking is their shared commitment to enact the school's values, for example kindness and forgiveness.

Governors know the school well. They are ambitious and have a clear vision. They undertake regular checks. The support and challenge they offer have helped the school to improve. Recent changes have been unsettling for some staff. However, most staff feel well supported and are proud to work at the school.

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 has been reviewed and is still developing. The previous curriculum has left some pupils with gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Leaders should continue with their plans to develop and embed the improved curriculum to maximise outcomes for pupils.

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	136941
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	10315564
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	549
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing	David Hopkins
Headteacher	Susie Arnold
Website	www.penistonestjohns.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 February 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provisions.
- The headteacher started in post in September 2022.
- The school is voluntary aided. The last Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools was February 2020.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They spoke with representatives from the local authority and diocese and a group of governors.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, history and art. For each deep dive, 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.
- Inspectors also reviewed wider curriculum documentation and spoke with pupils about their learning across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses to Ofsted's surveys from parents and staff. They spoke with a range of staff during the course of the inspection and met parents at the gate before school.
- Inspectors met with pupils, including single-sex boys' and girls' groups. They spoke with pupils around school and on the playground at social times. They observed movement around school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation provided by the school, including improvement plans and minutes of the meetings of the governing body.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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

Natasha Greenough, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Higginbottom	Ofsted Inspector
Stephanie Ngenda	Ofsted Inspector

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