

St John's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106105
Local Authority	Stockport
Inspection number	355886
Inspection dates	6–7 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Denise Shields

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	194
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Marcus Maxwell
Headteacher	Mrs Jacqui Ames
Date of previous school inspection	15 April 2008
School address	Poplar Street Heaton Hersey, Stockport Cheshire SK4 3DG
Telephone number	0161 4427424
Fax number	0161 4427424
Email address	headteacher@st-johns.stockport.sch.uk

Age group	5–11
Inspection dates	6–7 December 2010
Inspection number	355886

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 1234 234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons or part lessons and these included the observation of seven teachers. Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of documentation, including pupils' past and present work, assessment and tracking information, monitoring and evaluation records, and additional evidence of the support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Inspectors also looked at whether the school meets statutory requirements with regard to safeguarding. A representative sample of questionnaires returned by pupils and staff, and 55 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Whether pupils' attainment is high enough in mathematics.
- The extent to which all pupils are challenged in English and mathematics, especially in Years 3 to 6.
- The rigour of the school's arrangements to monitor and secure improved attendance.
- How effectively leaders and managers at all levels, monitor and evaluate the school's work in order to secure improvement.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Around one-third of pupils are from a wide range of ethnic minority heritages and about half of these speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. An above-average proportion of pupils are assessed as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has achieved a wide range of awards including, Healthy School status, the Inclusion Quality Mark, Eco School Silver, Activemark and the International Schools award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St John's is a good school. It is a very inclusive school where relationships are extremely strong. Pupils have an excellent awareness that they should respect people's differences. As a result, the school is a harmonious community in which to work and learn. All pupils take on responsibility willingly. They make an exceptional contribution to the school, church, immediate and wider community. Outstanding care, guidance and support ensure pupils feel safe, behave well and have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles. Those pupils whose circumstances make them the most vulnerable receive extremely effective help and encouragement, as do their families. Exceptional partnerships with schools locally, nationally and around the world, help to raise pupils' aspirations and the quality of their learning. As a result, their understanding of cultural diversity within society is outstanding. Excellent partnerships with external agencies also have a marked impact on improving pupils' behaviour, their confidence and self-esteem.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong and determined leadership. They both carry heavy work loads but this has not hampered the pace with which improvements have been put into practice. Since the previous inspection, they have consolidated and improved management systems. For example, additional robust systems to improve attendance have been implemented. This has paid dividends and the school has secured a reduction in the number of parents and carers who take their children on extended holidays during term-time; as a result, attendance is broadly average, but improving. The curriculum has been enhanced successfully into exciting themes which promote pupils' enjoyment of learning well. Overall progress is good. By the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly above average in English and mathematics. Pupils' attainment has risen recently because the quality of teaching and learning has been strengthened and is now good. Outstanding practice was observed during the inspection. The effective use of well-targeted strategies has improved the basic literacy skills for all groups of pupils. Although attainment in mathematics is rising, pupils' progress in the subject is not as fast as in English because pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and improve their mathematical skills in a range of contexts.

Among all staff, team work is strong and there is a shared vision for the future. Most middle leaders and managers have recently taken on revised roles and responsibilities. They have started a detailed audit of provision in their areas of responsibility. However, leaders have varying levels of expertise and so their ability to check on pupils' progress and contribute to improvement planning is not yet fully effective. Nevertheless, self-evaluation is thorough and accurate and, as a consequence, the correct priorities for improvement are identified and carefully pursued. The good governing body holds the school to account and they monitor well the quality of provision. Areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. As a result, the school demonstrates a good capacity for sustained improvement.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of progress made by pupils in mathematics by ensuring that:
 - work is precisely tailored to pupils' needs and abilities, especially the more able
 - pupils have plenty of opportunities to use their mathematical skills in a range of contexts
 - there is a consistent whole-school approach to the teaching of calculation
 - marking makes clear to pupils how to improve their work.
 - Enhance the leadership skills of middle managers, so that they can take a more effective role in checking on pupils' progress and in planning improvements within their areas of responsibility.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The large majority of pupils say they like school that their lessons are fun and they enjoy learning. The majority of pupils work enthusiastically with a partner or in groups and this is helping them to become confident and mature learners. Most try their best at all times and say they learn a lot in lessons, but a minority comment that their mathematics work is not hard enough. Behaviour is good and, when teaching is inspiring, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Most pupils, even the very youngest, are keen to help and support each other. This has a positive impact on their good learning and progress.

Taking account of children's typically average starting points on entry to the Reception class, the range of pupils' differing needs and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, overall achievement is good. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above average, this includes the proportion of pupils who attain the higher level. Attainment in reading and writing is a strength because in all classes literacy skills are taught well. Pupils' mathematical skills are not as strong because tasks are not always sufficiently challenging and they do not have enough opportunities to extend their skills in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress and enjoy learning because of the sensitive guidance they receive from all of the adults who help them.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. Pupils state very confidently that their views are listened to and acted upon and that they contribute to the school's improvement. Most pupils are polite and friendly, and when thanked for holding the door open for an adult, always respond 'you're welcome'. Pupils have an excellent understanding of environmental issues, different communities within the United Kingdom and global issues. They demonstrate an exceptional awareness of how to lead healthy lifestyles and this extends through all year groups. Almost all respond very positively to the school's healthy initiatives, for example, by bringing healthy packed lunches and snacks to eat. Pupils' above average standards in English and mathematics, their very strong personal and social skills and average attendance give them a good basis for their future learning.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Nearly all lessons are lively and interesting. Revisions to the curriculum have enhanced links between subjects and this makes learning more purposeful. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to work in pairs and small groups; this successfully promotes speaking, listening and cooperation. In the very best lessons, teachers capture pupils' attention through the imaginative use of very well chosen resources and practical tasks. Unanimously, pupils comment that these help them to learn more rapidly. Carefully tailored questioning is extremely effective and makes pupils think more deeply about their learning. These features, however, are not consistent in every class. Although the interactive whiteboard is often used, for instance, to display new concepts, it is not always used to its full potential to involve pupils and promote their learning. In the main, mathematical activities are not varied enough to meet the precise needs of pupils' different levels of attainment in each class, especially the more able. In all classes, marking is helpful and provides constructive comments to help pupils improve their writing skills, but it is less informative in mathematics. For the most part, pupils comment that their learning targets, especially in literacy, help them to improve their work.

The curriculum is organised into meaningful themes which pupils very much enjoy. Reading and writing skills are consistently taught well, but there is no whole school approach to the teaching of calculation in mathematics. The curriculum is carefully adjusted to meet the requirements of pupils with special educational needs and/or

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Excellent provision is made for the personal, social, emotional and health education of pupils. The good range of activities beyond lessons is greatly enjoyed by pupils.

Pupils benefit from high quality care, guidance and support. Adults know pupils exceptionally well. The many positive views expressed by parents and carers confirm this. Without exception, pupils say there is an adult to turn to for help if they are sad or troubled. The school has rigorous procedures to monitor attendance and the majority of pupils attend punctually and regularly. However, despite the school's very robust efforts to discourage them, a few parents and carers take their children on extended holidays during term-time. This brings down the school's attendance rate, which although rising, remains broadly average. There is effective support and guidance to help pupils catch up with their learning when they return. Arrangements to help pupils move from year group to year group and then onto secondary school are effective.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and the deputy headteacher bring different but valuable strengths to the leadership and management of the school. They have resolutely focused on securing improved attainment following the last inspection and on improving the quality of provision for pupils. They are supported well in their efforts by all staff and the high return of questionnaires indicates that they feel valued members of the school community. Staff appreciate their relevant training and development, which is securely linked to the school's plans for improvement and to their own interests. The revised roles of middle leaders and managers are developing, but they are not yet all fully involved in the schools' rigorous monitoring and evaluating arrangements. As a result, their contribution to improvement planning is not yet completely effective. Nonetheless, good plans to bring about improvement are securely in place and priorities for development are accurate. The effective governing body is fully involved in shaping the future direction of the school. It is not afraid to ask challenging questions and works closely with senior leaders to ensure that the challenging targets set are achieved. The school complies with statutory requirements for safeguarding, health and safety, and child protection, and all staff understand what is expected of them. Any concerns are swiftly acted upon and very well-targeted support and guidance put in place for individuals.

Good arrangements promote equal opportunity and help the school to tackle any discrimination. The school is well aware of the need to bring the progress in mathematics in line with English. A notable strength is the full inclusion of those pupils who speak

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

English as an additional language, who learn happily alongside their peers. Relationships with the large majority of parents and carers are good. Many parents and carers are active partners in their children's learning and in the life of the school. The school promotes community cohesion extremely well. Opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of global issues, to forge links with the immediate local area as well wider national communities are excellent.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Effective induction arrangements ensure that children settle quickly and follow routines. Children are safe and cared for exceptionally well. They form extremely good relationships with adults. Children behave well, play happily together and enjoy learning. As a result of good teaching and learning children make good progress. By the time they enter Year 1, most children are working within the expected levels for their age and a minority are securely above. This lays a secure foundation for the development of children's future learning. Planned activities, both indoors and outside, have a good balance between those children can choose for themselves and those led by an adult. This enables children to become more independent learners. However, sometimes when children initiate their own leaning, adults do not always seize the opportunity to take learning forward. Consequently, on these occasions, children's progress slows. Adults carefully record their regular and accurate assessments of children's achievements. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. All adults work together enthusiastically and effectively as a team. Leaders have an accurate view of what to do next and clear plans to develop the phase further.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Inspectors received a below-average response to the inspection questionnaire. Most of the parents and carers indicate a positive view about all aspects of the school's work. Inspection findings support these positive views. A few parents and carers consider that the school fails to deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour and does not ensure that their children are well prepared for their future learning. Through their extensive observations and discussions with pupils and staff, the inspectors found the school has effective procedures for managing pupils' behaviour and that pupils are well prepared for their next stage of learning. A few parents and carers expressed the view that their children do not make enough progress. Inspectors found that although pupils make good progress in reading and writing, in mathematics, work is not always closely tailored to individual's needs and, as a result, the quality of pupils' learning and progress is not as strong.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St John's Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 55 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 194 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	73	13	24	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	67	14	25	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	28	51	25	45	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	47	25	45	3	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	34	62	19	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	55	23	42	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	64	16	29	2	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	33	60	18	33	3	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	58	20	36	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	40	25	45	4	7	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	49	25	45	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	36	65	16	29	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	67	15	27	2	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



8 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's Church of England Primary School, Stockport, SK4 3DG

I am writing to thank you all for being so helpful and friendly when we came to inspect your school. St John's is a good school and some aspects are outstanding. These are some of the things we found out.

- Your behaviour is good and you all get along with each other, even though you could not go out to play because of the snow and icy weather. Adults take extremely good care of you and help you to learn how to stay safe. You all have an impressive understanding how to live healthy lifestyles.
- We were very impressed with your knowledge of the different ways people live, and their different beliefs, in other parts of the United Kingdom and the wider world.
- Children get a good start to their education in the Reception class and learn lots of new things.
- You all try hard with your work and make good progress, especially in reading and writing. Your progress is not as strong in mathematics and we have asked your teachers to give you lots of chances to practise your mathematical skills.
- Nearly all of you told us that staff teach you well and lessons are fun and you enjoy learning, especially when activities are practical. We agree. To help you learn more quickly in mathematics, we have asked your teachers to ensure work is always just at the right level and to ensure that more difficult work is given to those of you who learn more quickly.
- Most of your teachers have recently taken on lots of different jobs, and so we have asked your headteacher to find ways to help them check how well you are all doing, so that they can help her carefully plan what needs to be improved.

I know you are all very proud of your school, so please keep working hard and always try your very best at all times.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Denise Shields

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.