

# St John's CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106451
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wigan
<b>Inspection number</b>	355953
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 November 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jim Kidd

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	196
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr D Parfitt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Mark Speakman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 April 2008
<b>School address</b>	Church Street Pemberton, Wigan Lancashire WN5 0DT
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 14 lessons and visited all eight teachers in their classrooms at least once. They held meetings with pupils, including members of the school and Eco councils, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work and looked at development planning, internal and external data on pupils' progress, safeguarding documentation, local authority reports and pupils' workbooks. Inspectors also scrutinised 127 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 15 completed by staff and 105 returned by pupils in Key Stage 2.

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

- How and with what impact the school has addressed the decline in attainment and progress in English, suggested by data, since the previous inspection.
- The impact of the school's work on promoting regular attendance.
- Whether teaching in Key Stage 2 promotes good learning and progress.
- Whether assessment and marking are used effectively to facilitate better progress for pupils.
- The accuracy of school self-evaluation, given the significant staff changes over the past two years.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average school. Most pupils are White British and there are very few at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is almost twice the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above that usually found. St John's is a nationally accredited Healthy School, holds the Active Mark for its work in physical education and was re-awarded the Financial Management in Schools Standard in October of this year. There have been several staffing changes since the previous inspection, including the appointment of a new headteacher.

The St John's Pre-School operates from the site. This has received a separate inspection and the latest report is available on the Ofsted website.

**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

This is a good and rapidly-improving school. It provides outstanding care, guidance and support for the pupils in its charge, who respond positively by behaving exceptionally well in lessons and around the school site. Parents and carers speak highly of the caring ethos and of what the school does for their children. They comment: 'St John's helps them grow in confidence and offers them such a wide range of extra-curricular activities to meet their interests.'

Children enter the Reception class with low age-related skills, particularly in communication, language and literacy. All groups make good progress and achieve well in all key stages to reach broadly average standards by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. The school has effectively addressed the 'dip' in attainment in English in 2009 and standards in this subject are rising. However, leaders recognise, that although progress in reading is improving, particularly among boys, it lags behind that in writing. It is aware also that the more-able pupils in both key stages do not always reach the standards in English and mathematics of which they are capable.

Teaching is good across the school and assessment practice has improved since the previous inspection. Senior leaders have ensured that data is now more accessible and that it is evaluated on a half-termly basis. Leaders are now attempting to foster more effective use of data by staff as a tool for promoting greater progress for pupils. They are also considering how more consistent feedback to pupils can make them more aware of how they can improve their work.

Pupils are proud of their school and speak positively of the many opportunities they have to take responsibility and to support not only their peers but also younger children. They support a wide variety of charities and are benefiting from the increasing links with their partner school in South Africa. However, their awareness and understanding of religions and cultures within the United Kingdom are not fully developed.

Although there have been a number of staff changes since the previous inspection, the school continues to know itself well. Staff at all levels of responsibility play an active part in evaluating performance in all areas of school life. Impressive improvement since the previous inspection and pupils' good progress in both their academic and personal development demonstrate that St John's has a good capacity to improve further and that it provides good value for money.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise attainment by:

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- providing pupils, particularly boys, with texts which meet their interests more closely, thus encouraging them to practise their reading skills
  - ensuring that challenge for the more-able pupils is high enough to enable them to reach the higher National Curriculum levels
  - refining teachers' use of data as a tool for accelerating pupils' progress
  - ensuring feedback to pupils informs them consistently of their next steps in learning.
- Develop pupils' awareness and understanding of other cultures and faiths within the United Kingdom.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Each morning, pupils start school with smiles on their faces, eager to learn and to take part in the day's activities. They enjoy their lessons, have a high regard for their teachers and are delighted, too, when their classmates succeed. They are more than willing to support each other and value the many opportunities they have to act as learning resources for their classmates. Following somewhat of a 'dip' in attainment in English in 2009, pupils are again making good progress and achieving well from their starting points. They reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6 and pupils currently in the school are on track to reach and in some cases exceed their challenging targets. In Key Stage 1, for example, pupils' skills in writing are developing apace. However, although it is improving, pupils' progress in reading, particularly boys', is not quite as good. Despite the improving standards throughout the curriculum, below average numbers of pupils reach the higher National Curriculum levels at the end of both key stages. Nonetheless, as a result of outstanding support from the committed team of teaching assistants, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those identified as vulnerable achieve well and make the same good overall progress as their peers.

Pupils grow in confidence, their self-esteem rises and they feel safe in school because, in their words, 'The grown-ups are always there and they always look out for us.' Although broadly average, attendance has improved markedly over the past twelve months as a result of a greater emphasis on encouraging pupils to come to school regularly; strategies include new rewards. Pupils behave outstandingly well and the support they offer to their classmates and to younger children belies their years. The school and Eco councils are never short of ideas about how the school may be improved and about how the environment may be protected. Furthermore, pupils are more than willing to explain to visitors what makes a balanced diet and just why keeping fit is vital for a healthy life. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and pupils demonstrate an enviable social conscience and generosity of spirit, being proactive in their support for such a wide range of charities. They enjoy their trips to art galleries and take part in school productions, such as musicals for example. Their understanding of faiths and cultures in the United Kingdom which are different to their own is, however, comparatively underdeveloped.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<sup>1</sup> 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?

Teaching is consistently good and pupils in all years benefit from teachers' secure subject knowledge, their comprehensive planning and their use of the electronic whiteboard as both a teaching and a learning tool. Teachers' effective questioning encourages pupils to explain their ideas to their classmates. An example was seen in a Year 4 English lesson when considering why older people sometimes appear to be less than happy with their lives. Similarly in a Year 5 mathematics class, progress was fostered when pupils had to explain their calculations to the class. They say, 'When we talk about how we have worked things out, it makes us understand it better!'

Pupils experiencing difficulty receive sensitive yet focused support from teaching assistants. On occasions, the more-able pupils are not challenged effectively enough to aim for the highest standards. Assessment has improved since the previous inspection and senior leaders are now placing greater emphasis on ensuring that teachers become more aware of exactly how it can be used to accelerate pupils' progress further. Marking is good overall but feedback to pupils across the school is sometimes inconsistent in informing them of their next steps in learning.

The curriculum supports pupils' personal and academic progress well. It reflects the ethos of the school and encourages pupils to see the best in others and to care for each individual. As a result, pupils want to learn and are raising their aspirations about what they can achieve. Pupils' skills in writing are improving overall. However, there are

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currently insufficient texts to meet more closely the interests of boys in particular and to encourage them to want to read. There is an excellent range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities, for which take-up is high. Pupils themselves say: 'Do you know, we have at least two school clubs every night and there are even some before school in the morning!'

Pastoral care is of outstanding quality and is complemented by strong relationships with a variety of outside agencies. It is the overriding concern of all adults to ensure that each pupil can take full advantage of everything the school has to offer. Vulnerable pupils are rapidly and accurately identified and, along with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive excellent support from the highly skilled and committed team of teaching assistants. Procedures to facilitate ease of transition into the next stage of learning are planned comprehensively and are based on the needs of each individual. Parents and carers are fulsome in their praise for how the school supports their children and believe, in their words, 'Care for all is what the school is about.'

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The impressive levels of teamwork engendered by the proactive and perceptive headteacher and his talented senior leadership team is reflected by a member of staff who spoke for many with the comment: 'We are proud to be members of staff here because we are well supported, treated equally and share a clear vision for how the school is to develop.' Teachers, teaching assistants and other support staff work well together and have the interests of the children in their charge uppermost in their minds. Members of the governing body, too, are fully supportive of what the school tries to do and have a good understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. They hold the school's leaders to account with increasing rigour.

The school engages well with parents and carers, who believe that they are kept fully informed about the progress their children are making. Similarly, there are good partnerships with other schools and institutions for the benefit of the pupils: both boys and girls are grateful for the many visitors, particularly sports coaches, who spend time with them before, during and after the school day.

Safeguarding procedures and practice are good and fully meet national requirements. Staff have received relevant training in child protection and policies are up to date. The school promotes equality of opportunity well and discrimination in all its forms is not tolerated.

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The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory and there are developing links with a school in South Africa. However, pupils' awareness and understanding of the different cultures and religions which make up the United Kingdom are areas for development.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with low age-related skills, but which are now beginning to improve. They make good progress overall. In literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and personal development they play well both independently and collaboratively. They use their initiative to extend their learning in different activities across the setting and behave very well because of the calm, settled atmosphere and the good relationships they have with the staff who work with them. Although the indoor areas remain better equipped, the outdoor area has improved since the previous inspection, particularly in terms of access and the surface. Systems of observation and assessment of children's learning are good but observation files are not organised as systematically as they could be.

The setting is led and managed well and there are good levels of teamwork between the teacher and support staff. Children are supported very well by staff to ensure their well-being, safety and enjoyment of learning. Self-evaluation of the setting is accurate and there are good links with parents and carers, ensuring that children's needs are met and that they are fully included in all activities. Children have the confidence to greet visitors, to explain what they are doing and to show them the work they have completed.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

There was a large majority of questionnaires returned. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaires are entirely happy with their children's experiences at the school: they believe that the school keeps their children safe, encourages them to follow a healthy lifestyle and that the teaching they receive is good. As they say: 'We are happy with the progress our children are making and they love coming to school.' A very small minority is of the view that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found no evidence to endorse this view. Indeed, they found behaviour management to be a major strength and judge that pupils' conduct in lessons and around school is exemplary.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St John's CofE 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 127 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 196 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	77	61	46	36	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	85	67	41	32	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	66	52	56	44	3	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	73	57	49	39	3	2	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	78	61	47	37	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	69	54	55	43	2	2	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	70	55	57	45	0	0	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)	60	47	63	50	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	65	51	59	46	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	65	51	50	39	5	4	5	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	64	50	55	43	4	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	80	63	46	36	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	85	67	40	31	0	0	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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](http://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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



12 November 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St John's CofE Primary School, Wigan, WN5 0DT**

Thank you for being so kind and polite to us when we came to inspect your school recently. We are particularly grateful to those of you who came to talk to us on Wednesday. We really enjoyed your singing in assembly on Thursday and were very impressed with the older pupils who looked after the younger ones and escorted them back to class. You showed what good Samaritans you are! I promised I would write you a letter to tell you about how the inspection went and here it is.

St John's is a good and rapidly improving school. You receive good teaching and the adults look after you exceptionally well. As a result, you make good progress in your work and the standards you reach are getting higher. Your behaviour is outstanding and you take so much responsibility for helping your teachers and teaching assistants run the school. You are also more than willing to give visitors advice on what makes a balanced diet and why it is important to keep yourselves fit.

Your headteacher and all the other staff are very proud of you too and they are always looking for ways to make the school even better. I would like to support them in this and so I have asked them to help you reach even higher standards in your work by giving you all, but particularly the boys, books which will interest you and encourage you to improve your skills in reading.

I have also asked them to challenge those of you who sometimes find the work easy to aim for the very highest National Curriculum levels. I also think they could make sure that all of you are fully aware of what you need to do to improve your work.

Finally, I think it would be a good idea if they helped you develop your understanding of all the different religions and cultures which make up our country.

Please make sure you keep on looking after each other and trying your hardest.

Yours sincerely

Jim Kidd

Lead inspector

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