

St James' CofE Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112818
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	357198
Inspection dates	2–3 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Jeremy Spencer HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	292
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vincent Burston
Headteacher	Christopher Jones
Date of previous school inspection	10 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 18 lessons taught by 12 teachers and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a variety of documents, including policies, minutes of governing body meetings and the school's improvement plan. The inspection team also analysed questionnaires from nine staff, 92 pupils, and 85 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How accurate and reliable are the school's assessment and tracking systems? Is the leadership team analysing tracking information effectively enough in order to identify key issues?
- Is ongoing assessment effective in ensuring that planning meets the needs of all groups of pupils?
- How well are teachers supported in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning?

Information about the school

This primary school is larger than average. Most pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also below the national average. The school has achieved a number of national awards including Investors in People, Artsmark, Healthy Schools and a Basic Skills Award. The school also holds the local authority 'ABC Excellence Plus in Anti Bullying' award.

'The CATCH' is a privately run before- and after-school club based on the school site, which is inspected, and reported upon, separately.

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

The school provides pupils with a good education. Many improvements to provision since the previous inspection have resulted in the good achievement of nearly all groups of pupils. The school is well respected in the community because of the success of school leaders in developing outstanding partnerships with others. The care, guidance and support that pupils benefit from are good overall. However, there are some important aspects that are outstanding, such as the extremely caring attitude of staff evident throughout the school and the school's highly effective support for pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. As one parent reported, representing the views of others, 'St James provides pupils with a caring environment where they are encouraged and made to feel special. My child has made considerable progress this year.' Pupils feel very safe in school and are able to fully focus their attention upon learning.

Pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Children enter Nursery with skill development slightly below national expectations. They then make good progress during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage and throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 due to good teaching. Due to the good progress made by different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the attainment of pupils at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics is above average.

Teaching and the use of assessment are good overall. However, there are examples of both satisfactory and outstanding teaching. Consistently strong features include teachers' skilful planning of lessons in order to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities, very productive relationships between adults and pupils, and high-quality support from teaching assistants. There are a small minority of lessons where teaching is satisfactory. In these lessons, teachers do not assess pupils' learning frequently enough in order to ensure that pupils understand the next steps they need to take in order to improve. Opportunities for pupils to reflect upon their own learning are also less frequent than would be expected. Consequently, the progress they make is slower than in other lessons. Although there are examples of very good marking of work in pupils' exercise books, this is inconsistent across the school.

A very enriching curriculum is ensuring that nearly all aspects of pupils' personal development and well-being are good. For example, pupils are knowledgeable about factors that contribute towards establishing a healthy lifestyle and take part in a broad range of extra-curricular sports clubs. Their appreciation of spirituality, particularly through music, is also good and a whole class of pupils were observed playing stringed instruments together to a high standard. The preparation for pupils' future economic well-being is good because the outcomes for the large majority of pupils are good. However, the overall pupil attendance rate remains at an average level.

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Strong leadership at all levels, including the governing body, has resulted in the good overall effectiveness of the school. Procedures for evaluating the work of the school have become increasingly sophisticated since the last inspection, and a well-developed system to track the progress made by all groups of pupils ensures increased accountability. This is combined with frequent observations of teaching by senior leaders and well-planned and focused professional development opportunities for all staff. As a result of these improvements, better-quality teaching has led to pupils making increased levels of progress, particularly in writing. Due to the considerable improvements made since the last inspection and well-informed current action plans, the school demonstrates good capacity to continue to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' level of attainment and increase their rates of progress by:
 - ensuring that marking in pupils' exercise books and verbal feedback consistently and clearly outline the next steps of learning
 - developing systems to ensure that pupils are given more frequent opportunities to evaluate their own learning and progress and in doing so become more engaged in the learning process.
- Work together as a whole school community to improve attendance levels.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils', parents' and carers' questionnaires demonstrate that almost all pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. Their behaviour is good in the classroom, around the school buildings and on the playground, as they have good social skills and a well-developed moral understanding. Inspectors were very impressed with the very polite welcome they received from pupils when they arrived at the school. In the large majority of lessons, pupils demonstrate good levels of independence and cooperation which have a very positive influence on the good quality of their learning. For example, in a Key Stage 1 class pupils worked and learned well independently for a sustained period, while their teacher focused upon teaching a group of higher-ability pupils to investigate number pairs. Concerted effort by the school to increase the progress made by pupils in writing has paid off and pupils' writing, particularly in Key Stage 2, is now above the standards normally seen for their age group. Assessment information shows that the attainment of pupils as they leave the school continues to rise and is above national averages.

Many pupils relish the opportunity to take responsibility in school. For example, they make a strong contribution to the welfare of their peers through the school's 'buddy system'. Buddies are easily identifiable in the playground through their special bibs and badges and pupils report that if they need help or do not have anybody to play with, they go to a buddy. Pupils also contribute to an active school council, which has made a positive impact upon improving the school environment. An elected 'head boy' and 'head girl' play an important role in the life of the school. Pupils also make a good contribution to the local community.

Pupils demonstrate an increasing appreciation of cultural awareness and have undertaken a study to investigate the cultural make-up of different families within the school community. However, their first-hand experiences of meeting and working with

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representatives from different cultures is more limited. An overwhelming majority of parents and carers believe that the school keeps their children safe, and all pupils spoken to feel very safe in school. One pupil said, 'The special locks on the gate and the cameras around the school make the school a very safe place.' Pupils demonstrated a very well developed understanding of what might constitute an 'unsafe situation', and older pupils explained clearly the dangers they could face if computers and the internet were not used with care.

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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	2

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?

Lessons are interesting and stimulating, as they successfully engage and motivate all pupils to work hard. In the good or better lessons, teachers tailor work that challenges and stimulates pupils and deliver lessons imaginatively and at a good pace, incorporating good-quality questioning. Occasionally, where lessons are merely satisfactory, pupils spend too long sitting on the carpet listening to the teacher, and instructions are not sufficiently clear. When this happens, a few pupils become bored and distracted. Opportunities to use information and communication technology to enhance learning are also missed.

The pupils benefit from a greatly enriched curriculum, which incorporates frequent school visits and residential trips, including a visit to France. The curriculum is also enhanced by a broad range of extra-curricular activities, with high take-up rates. Pupils spoke

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passionately about the street-dance and tag-rugby clubs. The provision for modern foreign languages is another strong feature of the curriculum and pupils are given the opportunity to learn four languages as they move through the school. Pupils were observed learning to speak Italian during the inspection and clearly enjoyed doing so.

The school provides a secure, nurturing environment where dedicated staff demonstrate a passion for the well-being of the pupils in their care. This has been particularly beneficial for some vulnerable pupils, who have made outstanding progress as a result. Leaders and staff are particularly effective at tailoring provision to meet the needs of individuals and work closely with families and partner agencies in order to do so very well.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Information from staff questionnaires shows that there is a very strong team spirit. Staff are very well led by the headteacher who has successfully equipped senior and middle leaders to drive forward school improvements. The school development plan is a useful instrument for coordinating these improvements, and the document is well informed by a systematic monitoring programme and good self-evaluation. The governing body demonstrates that it is very knowledgeable about the work of the school and provides a good balance of challenge and support to school leaders. It oversees the school's strategic development well and governors also contribute effectively to the school's self-evaluation process.

Procedures to safeguard pupils are secure and well established. For example, the procedures for supporting vulnerable pupils are good and the site is managed effectively in order to keep pupils safe. The staff are very successful in ensuring equality for all pupils in this inclusive school because of the great attention they pay to the needs of each individual. Partnerships with others have made an outstanding contribution to the improvements made by the school since the last inspection. The school has increased opportunities for pupils through working very effectively with the local church, local industry and other schools. The school successfully led a project for local schools to develop improved provision for modern foreign language teaching. Work with the on-site extended day-care provider 'the CATCH' has also considerably enhanced provision for pupils and families.

Community cohesion and the engagement with parents and carers are strong features of leadership. School leaders have carried out a thorough audit of the school's religious, ethnic and socio-economic characteristics. School leaders demonstrate a clear commitment to preparing children to live and work flexibly in a multi-cultural society. The school

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operates in an environment of tolerance and respect for others and parents and carers speak positively about their engagement with the school.

Pupils achieve good outcomes at the school, and resources are well deployed in order to achieve value for money. However, the school recognises that some computers in the school are in need of replacement, as they have become unreliable. Occasionally, this has a negative impact upon the pace of teaching. The potential for innovative use of information and communication technology to further enhance teaching and learning is also restricted.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

School information shows that children enter the Nursery with skill development, particularly in communication, language and literacy, that is slightly below expectations. They then make good progress throughout their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that the majority enter Year 1 exceeding the expected learning goals.

Children are happy, confident and independent learners. They thoroughly enjoy taking part in the stimulating and interesting activities inside and outside the classroom. However, opportunities for children to make the best use of the natural environment are more limited. Teachers and teaching assistants have good observation and assessment procedures that ensure activities are tailored to meet the needs of individuals. Leadership is strong and this is reflected particularly well in the arrangements to provide flexibility of provision, allowing children to engage in a broad range of activities and learning experiences across both Nursery and Reception classes. Transition into Key Stage 1 classes is also well managed, for example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 continue to have access to play-based provision in order to ensure continuity of practice and support good development of language and social skills.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
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

The views of parents and carers were very positive. One parent commented, 'Both my children have attended this school and have excelled. The staff have been very supportive.' A number of other parents and carers made similar comments.

A very small minority of parents and carers brought up individual concerns and all of these were carefully considered during the inspection by the team and discussed with the headteacher.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St James' CofE Controlled 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 85 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 292 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	63	74	22	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	69	81	15	18	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	48	56	33	39	3	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	54	35	41	3	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	54	64	30	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	49	58	32	38	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	58	35	41	1	1	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)	39	46	39	46	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	54	35	41	4	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	54	32	38	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	45	40	47	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	55	65	29	34	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	60	71	24	28	1	1	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



4 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St James' CofE Controlled Primary School, Derbyshire, SK13◆8EF

My colleagues and I thoroughly enjoyed meeting you when we came to inspect your school. Thank you for coming to talk to us and completing the questionnaire. We have listened to your views and read every response. We would like to share with you what we have learned about your school.

St James is a good school and there are some things about your school that are very good. Here are some of the best things about your school.

In lessons, you make good progress because the teachers make sure that the work you do is at just the right level. It is usually not too easy or too hard for you.

Your headteacher and other leaders work very hard and make sure that your school works very well with other schools and other partners, so that you can take part in lots of exciting activities.

Everybody in school makes each person feel welcome and a part of the school.

You know very well how to keep yourselves safe and feel very safe when you are in school.

We have asked your teachers to clearly explain the next steps in your learning when they mark your work. We have also asked them to give you more time to think for yourselves about your learning in each lesson. This will help you to learn even faster. Finally, we have asked that everybody works together to improve attendance levels in your school.

You all have a part to play by working hard, thinking carefully about your learning and making sure that you come to school as often as possible to benefit from the good teaching available to you. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Spencer

Her Majesty's Inspector

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