

# St John's CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105504
<b>Local Authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	355787
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kathleen McArthur

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 controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	355
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev Ian Gomersall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Isobel Boler
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 May 2008
<b>School address</b>	Clarence Road Longsight Manchester M13 0YE
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<b>Email address</b>	head@st-johns-pri.manchester.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 16 lessons taught by 13 teachers and held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work and its safeguarding procedures; they analysed documents including development plans, policies, and data on pupils' progress; and they scrutinised pupils' books. Questionnaires from staff, pupils and 171 parents and carers were analysed.

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

- The effectiveness of strategies to raise attainment and improve achievement for all pupils.
- The level of challenge provided by teaching throughout the school.
- The way assessment information is used and how well pupils are involved in assessment so they know how to improve their -- The extent to which leaders and managers at all levels are involved in the drive for school improvement.

## Information about the school

St John's is larger than the average-sized primary school, and has several mixed-age classes. The majority of pupils are of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage and most speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Higher-than-average numbers have a statement of special educational needs, including several deaf pupils.

Since the last inspection, the school has experienced considerable turbulence and staffing disruption. There have been seven executive or acting headteachers. The substantive headteacher had been in post for just three weeks at the time of the current inspection.

The school holds several awards, including an Eco-Schools Bronze 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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

St John's is a satisfactory school where pupils learn and play happily and harmoniously together. Good care, guidance and support ensure pupils feel safe and secure. In their words, 'The teachers look after us.' Pupils clearly enjoy school; this is shown by their good behaviour, enthusiasm for all activities, willingness to help the school community and much improved attendance. The very large majority of questionnaires returned by parents and carers were positive, and comments welcomed the appointment of the permanent headteacher after a long period of turbulence.

Achievement is satisfactory. Most children start school with skills well-below those expected for their age, especially in language, personal and social skills. They make a happy start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but limited opportunities to learn independently or work outside mean their progress is satisfactory rather than good. The extended period of leadership and staffing disruption slowed progress as pupils moved through the school and attainment was low. Determined actions have accelerated pupils' progress, including intensive professional support to strengthen the staff team and to make assessment more accurate. Pupils' progress is satisfactory and rapidly improving in most year groups. Current school and national data show that attainment is improving securely and the gap between school and national outcomes has narrowed in recent years. Pupils' limited language skills often hinder their attainment and progress in both English and mathematics. Pupils do not always use a wide vocabulary in their writing and struggle to infer meaning in mathematical problems. Appropriately directed support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those learning English as an additional language, and strong, expert support for deaf pupils ensure they make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities.

Teaching is satisfactory and an increasing proportion is good, despite some inconsistencies. Assessment systems provide a clear picture of pupils' progress. Pupils are fully involved so they know their targets and they say teachers' marking shows them how to improve. Improvements in the use of assessment have contributed to the rise in attainment. Sometimes, however, assessment information is not used effectively to plan activities that challenge all pupils or that closely match some individuals' needs and abilities. The curriculum meets requirements, with good enrichment through visits and additional opportunities, including music and sports, which contribute strongly to pupils' enjoyment.

Major turbulence at the most senior level and staffing changes have slowed improvement since the last inspection. Through this difficult period, actions implemented by senior leaders and managers and the governing body, supported by the local authority and interim leaders, have brought a distinct upward trend in attainment and a rapid rise in attendance. The new headteacher has swiftly evaluated the school's performance,

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accurately identified the areas for improvement and implemented a rigorous action plan. Her clear vision, fully supported by staff, the governing body and pupils, has re-invigorated the drive for improvement so morale is high and there is a sense of optimism throughout the school. The capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Accelerate progress and raise standards throughout the school by:
  - developing pupils' ability to understand the language of mathematical problems so they use and apply their numeracy skills confidently
  - enabling pupils to use a wider vocabulary and more imaginative ideas to enhance their writing
  - extending opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to make independent learning choices and work outdoors.
- Build on the best practice found in the school to raise the overall quality of teaching and learning from satisfactory to at least good by:
  - ensuring assessment information is used in all classes to set targets that are suitably challenging for all pupils to secure more rapid progress
  - ensuring that lessons always include activities carefully matched to pupils' individual needs.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Good relationships and keen attitudes aid learning. Pupils enjoy their lessons, describing them as 'active' and 'fun', so they behave well and work cooperatively with staff and their classmates. Their handwriting is well formed and pupils in all classes are careful to present their work neatly.

The period of disruption adversely slowed progress throughout the school and pupils did not do as well as they should have done. Inspection evidence, including lesson observations, the work in pupils' books and school data show strategies to boost achievement and raise attainment are rapidly becoming effective. Progress is now satisfactory and improving for all groups of pupils. However, the legacy of disruption and weaker teaching left some unevenness throughout the school, particularly for younger pupils, and standards at the end of Key Stage 1 dipped in 2010. Actions to reverse this, including improving the quality of teaching are becoming increasingly effective and pupils are on course to meet their targets. Strong teaching is ensuring pupils currently in Year 6 are well on course to meet challenging targets and attain national standards at both the expected and higher levels. A major focus on improving writing by developing pupils' oral skills is becoming increasingly effective, especially with older pupils, who discuss their ideas confidently. However, many pupils lack the more advanced language skills needed to infer meaning from text in order to understand mathematical problems and their writing often lacks imaginative ideas or vocabulary choices. Focused support for pupils with

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special educational needs and/or disabilities enables them to make satisfactory and often good progress.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils say 'everyone is kind'. They are polite, friendly and considerate towards others. They respect the different religions represented in school and enjoy sharing cultural activities and festivals. Pupils say bullying is rare and that adults or school councillors help with any problems that may arise. They have a good knowledge of health matters, thoroughly enjoy the broad range of physical activities on offer each day and are proud of the school's awards, for example, the 'Golden Boot' for running. Pupils become increasingly responsible and contribute to the school as ambassadors, school councillors or 'Green Team' members, but are less involved with the community beyond school. Their good attitudes, satisfactory attendance and improving basic skills are a sound basis for the future.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</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>3</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?

The school's monitoring shows the proportion of good teaching is increasing. However, inconsistencies remain, so teaching is satisfactory and not yet good overall. Pupils collaborate happily in groups, discussing their ideas with their 'talking partners'. In the best lessons, pupils know what they will learn; skilful questioning extends and challenges their thinking, and staff continually check pupils' understanding and intervene quickly where further guidance is needed. Assessment systems provide accurate information

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about the progress of individuals and groups of pupils, but not all teachers use this information as a basis for planning tasks that challenge all groups of pupils and meet individual needs. Pupils know their targets and levels. Older pupils have opportunities to assess their own work, and all say teachers' marking and comments show them how they can improve their work.

The curriculum emphasises basic skills and includes a good personal and social education programme. Literacy and numeracy skills support learning in other subjects, for example, writing about the Manchester Blitz or calculating the results of science investigations. Visits, for example, to the Imperial War Museum, are used to inspire pupils at the start of a new topic. Teachers plan the curriculum to ensure pupils in mixed-age classes do not repeat work. Adapted activities and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language ensure their progress is satisfactory. Good enrichment activities include themed weeks, French, and specialist sports and music teaching, and pupils enjoy the variety of after-school clubs.

The school is a welcoming learning environment where pupils' well-being is given high priority so they feel very safe and secure. The higher than average number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs and pupils who are vulnerable because of their circumstances, receive strong support. The parent support adviser makes valuable links between home and school. Effective transition arrangements ensure pupils move confidently between all phases of their education. A range of vigorous actions, including rewards and incentives, have successfully raised attendance levels.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's clear focus on raising expectations to reach challenging targets has motivated all leaders and managers and given all of the staff a shared sense of purpose. Staff say the headteacher has made a 'massive impact' after just three weeks in post. The outcomes of monitoring are fed back to staff and included in their performance targets. Consequently, the quality of teaching is improving and achievement and standards are gradually rising but some unevenness remains. Knowledgeable governance has supported the school through the interim headships. The governing body has worked closely with senior leaders and the local authority and retained the loyalty of parents and carers.

Positive relations with parents and carers support pupils and their learning. Information is provided through newsletters, meetings and text messaging, and courses to support learning at home are well attended. Arrangements for equal opportunities ensure there is no discrimination and that all pupils can participate in everything the school offers. Careful

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monitoring of all pupil groups ensures none slip behind. All safeguarding requirements are met, ensuring pupils are safe and know how to keep themselves safe. There are effective links with external agencies and staff training in child protection is up-to-date. Arrangements to promote community cohesion result in the harmonious school ethos. Leaders and managers have a secure understanding of the community the school serves, but actions to extend pupils' awareness of other lifestyles and communities in the wider world are at an early stage.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</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>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills below those typical for their age, and are well-below in language and personal and social skills. Many are learning English as an additional language. They make sound progress in all areas of learning through the Nursery and Reception classes. Although their skills are below average when they move to Year 1, school data show an upward trend over time.

Good relationships between parents and carers are promoted informally as they arrive with their children each day. Children are well cared for so they feel secure and happy in the welcoming settings. They behave well and show consideration for others. They are encouraged to reply politely when asked, 'Would you like some milk?', and happily follow routines and share equipment. Most respond quickly to the 'tidy up time' music.

Satisfactory teaching provides interesting activities, although the purpose of some activities is not always clear. Opportunities for children to initiate learning by following their interests and thus progress more rapidly are limited. Staff's open questions are designed to develop the children's language skills and prompt ideas and imagination but do not always draw out responses from Nursery children. The pirate theme in the Reception class captured boys' interest and inspired them to use the writing table. The



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children enjoyed discussing why the water made their hands look blue while they were creating a treasure island. The large area outside the nursery is well equipped for physical activities but is not used to provide a wide range of learning activities when children have opportunities to choose independently. Reception children have limited opportunities to learn outside and do not have free access to an outdoor area.

Leaders and managers ensure welfare arrangements meet requirements. Regular assessments track the children's progress in all areas of learning, but assessment information is not always used to ensure children are challenged to extend their learning.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

Questionnaires were completed by about 50% of parents and carers, a higher-than-average rate of return. The very large majority made positive responses to all questions. A few expressed concerns about teaching, pupils' progress, how they are helped to support learning at home, and about leadership.

The inspection team discussed all these issues with the school. A permanent headteacher is now in post, has introduced an 'open-door' policy to encourage parents and carers to become more involved, arranged a parents' evening, and offered courses to support learning at home, for example, in numeracy. School data and inspection evidence show that pupils' progress is satisfactory and improving.

## 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 171 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 353 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	89	52	80	47	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	90	53	75	44	4	2	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	61	36	96	56	10	6	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	64	37	91	53	11	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	65	38	89	52	13	8	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	56	33	97	57	18	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	66	39	98	57	5	3	1	1
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)	45	26	99	58	12	7	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	23	114	67	13	8	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	63	37	98	57	9	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	44	26	102	60	18	11	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	44	26	98	57	17	10	4	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	68	40	88	51	6	4	1	1

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](http://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"><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.**



24 March 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St John's CofE Primary School, Manchester, M13 0YE**

The inspection team asked me to tell you how much we enjoyed meeting you when we visited your school. We were impressed by your friendliness, politeness and good behaviour; you are a credit to your school and to your families. We send a special thank you to the children who met us at lunchtime. You told us that you enjoy school and feel very safe there, and your parents and carers agree.

We judged St John's School to be satisfactory. Leaders and managers care for you well. The Early Years Foundation Stage gives children a happy start but they do not get enough 'choosing' time or work outdoors enough. Teaching is satisfactory and the curriculum provides lots of enjoyable extras, such as playing steel pans or ukuleles, sports coaches, clubs and trips out of school.

You make satisfactory progress and more of you are reaching the right standards for your age but this has not always been the case. We think you could reach higher standards and progress faster in English and mathematics so we have asked the leaders and managers to:

- help you use more interesting and imaginative words in your writing
- make sure you understand the language in numeracy problems so you know how to tackle them
- give children in the Early Years Foundation Stage more opportunities to work outside and follow their interests
- make sure you are always taught well.

We know you are glad to have a 'forever' headteacher at last, and will do your best to help. We send you our very best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Kathleen McArthur

Lead Inspector

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