

St John's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100953
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	354916
Inspection dates	8–9 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Joy Considine

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	221
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Hardie
Headteacher	Fiona Singleton
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 16 lessons taught by nine teachers and they met with pupils, school leaders, members of the governing body and a group of parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at school development plans, pupils' assessment and tracking information, minutes from governing body meetings and other documentation relevant to the inspection. Additionally they analysed questionnaires received from 54 parents and carers, as well as those from pupils and staff.

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

- The rates of progress made by all groups of pupils, particularly by boys in English and mathematics throughout the school.
- How well teachers use assessment information to plan lessons that are sufficiently challenging for all pupils.
- The impact made by school leaders on improving the quality of teaching to raise standards and increase rates of progress.
- The effectiveness of the school's actions to improve attendance.

Information about the school

This is an average sized primary school that serves pupils from the local community. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than usual. The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language is above average. The provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is in the Nursery and Reception classes. There is a breakfast club which is managed by the governing body. There has been significant disruption within the teaching team since the last inspection.

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

This school provides a satisfactory quality of education for pupils. Although there are strengths in pupils' personal development, their attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 is only satisfactory. Work seen in lessons indicates that all pupils are making at least satisfactory progress, and better where teaching is good. Girls do better than boys but assessment information shows that the gap is narrowing quickly, especially in mathematics and reading.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school and the wider community. The school council contributes to decisions regarding school development. Pupils throughout the school regularly hold fundraising activities to support good causes. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils get on well together and they respect and value those from different backgrounds and cultures.

Teaching is at least satisfactory, with an increasing proportion that is good. Where teaching is most effective, pupils benefit from well-planned and challenging activities that enable them to achieve well. However, assessment information is not used consistently enough to match activities to pupils' needs and abilities. Consequently more able pupils in particular do not always achieve as well as they could. Although the school provides a wide range of experiences to enhance the curriculum, this is satisfactory rather than good, because skills and knowledge in some subjects are not planned for sequentially.

Parents appreciate the good care, guidance and support for pupils. One parent wrote, 'This is my child's most important journey in life and I can think of no better place for my child to be.' There are secure procedures and systems in place, including good partnerships with parents, carers and external agencies to support the needs of pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable.

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory although the new leader has introduced changes that are already beginning to improve provision for children. There is more consistency in the quality of planning between the Nursery and the Reception class so that children make satisfactory, and occasionally good, progress.

School leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, although planning for improvement is not precisely linked to raising standards and improving pupils' progress in English and mathematics. Leaders monitor the work of the school but this is not rigorous enough and so a few areas of underperformance are not always addressed. There have been some significant improvements since the last inspection, particularly in the improved attainment of pupils in Key Stage 1, showing that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improving the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good in all parts of the school by:
 - making better use of assessment information to plan lessons that are well matched to the learning needs of all pupils, including those who are more able
 - marking pupils work to show them what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills when learning other subjects.
- Improve the quality of the curriculum planning so that pupils learn and acquire skills and knowledge sequentially and progressively.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management at all levels by
 - developing school improvement plans which have a sharper focus on raising standards in English and mathematics, with more challenging targets for improvement.
 - developing more rigorous systems to monitor, review and evaluate the school's work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Since the last inspection, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics has improved and is now broadly average. Greater emphasis has been given to teaching letters and sounds and this has improved pupils' skills, particularly in reading and writing. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils make satisfactory progress overall in English and mathematics but progress is uneven between year groups. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that in too many lessons, pupils complete photocopied worksheets and many of these provide insufficient challenge for pupils. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory and sometimes good progress throughout the school. This is because they receive additional support from highly skilled teaching assistants. Pupils enjoy their lessons and say that teachers make learning fun. This was seen in one lesson, where pupils had to investigate what made mechanical toys and machines work in preparation for designing and making their own moving models of fairground rides. However, some pupils, particularly those who are more able, say that the activities they are expected to do are sometimes too easy and this slows the progress they make. Attendance has improved and is now average.

Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and they behave well. They feel safe in school and they say that there is no bullying and that incidents of racist behaviour are rare. Through the school's good partnerships with external providers, there is a wide range of physical activities which make an effective contribution to their understanding of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities and contributing to the wider community. Pupils in Key Stage 1 plant bulbs in the adjacent community garden to improve the local environment. Other pupils have worked with local artists to produce impressive sculptures that were exhibited in a local art gallery. There are many

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occasions where pupils are able to reflect on wider issues. For example in one lesson, pupils were fascinated by illustrations showing a snake swallowing a frog and they contemplated on what might happen if the snake had nothing to eat.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
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	3
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?

During the inspection, the quality of teaching was variable. In the better lessons, the pace was brisk and effective questioning by teachers engaged the interest of pupils. For example, in one lesson, the teacher asked pupils to comment on the use of repetition in poetry to create effect and this challenged pupils and made them work hard. However, these good practices are not fully embedded in all classes. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good in all lessons and this inspires pupils to engage in the main teaching part of the lesson. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but they do not provide pupils with enough information about how they can improve their work.

The planned curriculum is enriched by a wide range of educational visits and visitors. Pupils learn French and specialist tuition enables pupils to learn to play a musical instrument. Visits have included those to the Hindu Temple and Year 6 pupils have a residential visit to France. Staff are developing the curriculum to make effective links between subjects and this engages pupils' interest and enjoyment. This was seen in a mathematics lesson where pupils were analysing pie charts showing the percentages of the different religions practised in different countries, thus linking mathematics, geography

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and religious education. However, not enough emphasis is placed on systematically planning for the specific skills and knowledge of different subjects to develop learning sequentially.

The school has very positive relationships with pupils and their families. When appropriate, the school has accessed specialist support from the local authority to help them to meet the needs of pupils who occasionally find some aspects of school challenging. The school has effective links with other local schools and so arrangements to support pupils as they move to the next stage of their education are good. Arrangements for the protection of children are good and meet all requirements. The breakfast club gives pupils a good start to the day and the wide range of extra activities at the end of the day provides good quality care for pupils. Effective support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities results in them making similar to, and sometimes better progress than, their classmates, particularly in reading and mathematics.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

School leaders are ambitious and share a common sense of purpose. One member of staff wrote: 'The entire school team has a clear focus on school improvement. We are honest and reflective practitioners and are striving to ensure that all pupils achieve their very best.' Although they have implemented actions to raise standards, disruptions to the staff team have meant that these are not secure across all parts of the school. Initiatives to improve the quality of teaching have had some success but it is still not consistently good in all year groups. The governing body provides a satisfactory balance of challenge and support and it is well placed to take a more active role in shaping the strategic direction of the school. Partnerships with parents have been further strengthened since the last inspection. One parent wrote, 'Nine generations of my family have attended this school and in September, I hope to make it ten.'

Safeguarding arrangements are good. Systems are in place to ensure that pupils are safe in school and all visitors to school are thoroughly checked. Although equality of opportunity is central to the school's ethos, the variable progress made by pupils in Key Stage 2 means that this is satisfactory rather than good. The school promotes community cohesion well. In addition to their active involvement in the local multi-cultural community, they have established links with a school in Zambia and they celebrate many other events, including Mexico's 'Day of the Dead' festival. School leaders are aware that links with contrasting parts of the United Kingdom are more limited.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory, but there are signs that it is improving strongly. Children's literacy skills are below those expected for their age, but they are now making better progress in this aspect of their development. This is because new systems to assess children and to track their progress have recently been introduced. Whilst staff are developing their skills in assessing children's attainment, there are still some missed opportunities for them to record these observations. Staff work closely as a team and they provide good support for those children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those who speak English as an additional language.

Staff have created a bright, attractive environment in which children feel safe and well cared for. There is a good balance of activities, some of which are led by adults and others that children are able to select for themselves. For example, some children were painting whilst others were riding bicycles and another group were looking for words in the doll's house. This has led to the development of good learning skills such as independence, cooperation and resilience. Sometimes adults do not always intervene at appropriate times and this means some opportunities to develop children's language skills are missed. The leader has a good understanding of what needs to be done and has appropriate plans in place to secure further improvement.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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

A very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were positive about most aspects of the school and are happy that the school is meeting the needs of their children. Most said that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps their children safe and helps them to develop healthy lifestyles. They agreed that the school is led and managed effectively and that teaching is good. Inspectors found that teaching is satisfactory, with an increasing proportion that is good.

A small minority of parents and carers who responded indicated that inappropriate behaviour is not always dealt with. Inspectors found behaviour to be good in classrooms and in and around the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St John's 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 54 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 212 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	63	20	37	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	52	22	41	2	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	23	43	25	46	5	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	33	34	63	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	35	29	54	4	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	35	28	52	4	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	39	30	56	2	4	1	2
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)	14	26	25	46	4	7	2	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	30	34	63	3	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	31	20	37	10	19	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	28	25	46	8	15	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	22	41	25	46	3	5	3	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	44	27	50	3	5	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



13 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's Primary School, London E2 9LR

Thank you for making us so welcome and for talking to us when we came to visit your school recently. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting you all and listening to what you had to say about your school.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. Adults know you well and they take good care of you. You told us that you feel safe in school and that you understand how to keep yourselves healthy and active. You work well together in lessons and you behave well in and around the school. You make satisfactory progress and reach average levels overall by the time you leave school.

We have asked the school to do three things.

- Make sure that teachers use assessment information to plan lessons that are better matched to your learning needs and to provide you with more opportunities to record your work independently.
- Plan the curriculum so that you develop your skills sequentially so that you make more progress in English and mathematics.
- School leaders should develop plans which are focused on raising standards and to check regularly on how well they are working.

You can help your teachers to make your school even better by asking them how you can improve your work and what you need to learn next. I hope that you continue to work hard and enjoy school and I wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Joy Considine

Lead inspector

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