

St John's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104228
Local Authority	Walsall
Inspection number	377042
Inspection dates	4–5 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Susan Walsh

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	371
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Carter
Headteacher	Robert Yeomans
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 29 lessons or parts of lessons led by 16 different teachers. They also looked at the work of teaching assistants. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the school's development plans, its records of pupils' progress and minutes from meetings of governors, as well as other documents. They scrutinised 89 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, as well as questionnaires 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.

- Are more able pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities making optimum progress?
- Is teachers' planning ensuring that work is appropriately matched to pupils' needs, including when the pupils are taught in ability sets?
- Is the curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage providing sufficient opportunities for boys to develop their writing, is the outdoor space used effectively and is assessment informing the planning of activities consistently?

Information about the school

St John's Church of England Primary School is larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Most children are White British although a small number of pupils have Indian heritage. Very few pupils are at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. The school has been awarded Artsmark Gold.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This outstanding school provides a very good balance of learning and fun. There is a huge range of exciting opportunities that include residential visits for pupils of all ages and many after-school clubs. Excellent provision for music, the arts and physical education is central to the school's ethos of developing the talent of every child in the school. The outstanding care, guidance and support and excellent role models provided by staff are reflected in the pupils' caring attitudes towards others. Everyone is welcome and is helped to be successful regardless of their background. Parents and carers say 'nothing is too much trouble for the staff'. Pupils learn to work well together and they feel exceptionally safe. Consequently, pupils blossom into confident, articulate young people whose outstanding behaviour and tremendous enthusiasm in lessons make a significant contribution to their learning. They are very well prepared for their next stage of education because they learn to be independent, innovative learners who are very enterprising.

There is a sharp contrast between the quality of provision in the Nursery and Reception classes. Activities in the Reception classes are exciting and closely matched to children's interests and abilities. This combined with outstanding teaching ensures that children make very rapid progress when they are in the Reception classes. In the Nursery class progress is more ordinary because assessments are inaccurate and therefore expectations are not high enough. Teaching does not consistently ensure that questioning is finely matched to children's ability levels so that children's speaking and listening skills are quickly developed. Additionally, children in the Nursery are not always actively involved in activities that are moving their learning on. All pupils make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. Progress is accelerating because of improvements to the quality of teaching and the curriculum. Much of the teaching is now outstanding and teachers carefully assess what each pupil has gained from the previous lesson and then tailor the next lesson in ways that maximise their progress. Attainment is rising and is above average by the end of Key Stage 2.

The leadership and ambition of the headteacher and deputy headteacher have been pivotal to continuously developing a school where every pupil is valued and can succeed. Morale is very high and belief in the school's success runs through all levels of staff. The whole staff team, governing body and excellent partnership work make a very important contribution to making certain that this outstanding school constantly enhances all aspects of its work. The school seizes strategies that are designed to bring about improvement, rigorously implements them and makes

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certain that they are carefully modified to meet this school's specific needs. The pursuit of excellence has meant that the school has not only built on previously outstanding performance in key areas such as pupils' personal development, and the quality of care, guidance and support, but has also significantly improved the quality of teaching, the curriculum and leadership and management. Ultimately, this has improved outcomes for pupils, including their attainment in both English and mathematics, and demonstrates the school's outstanding capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the pace of learning for children in the Nursery class by:
 - ensuring that assessments of children's skills on entry are accurate
 - developing staff's questioning skills so that conversations with children are pitched correctly and are making more impact on improving children's speaking and listening skills
 - making certain that children are productively engaged in interesting activities that move their learning forward.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

When children enter the Nursery their skills are usually below those expected for their age but by the time they leave Year 6 attainment is above average. In recent years, pupils' progress has been good, but more recently many pupils are starting to make outstanding progress in lessons. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning and their outstanding behaviour make a very important contribution to their good achievement. They work hard in their lessons and share a determination to succeed. Pupils often have the opportunity to work together. They frequently help each other with tasks and are willing to give and receive advice. The school has recently implemented a new method of teaching mathematics and this has enthused both teachers and pupils. Many mathematics lessons were seen where the quality of teaching and the progress made by pupils are outstanding. Pupils find the methods of calculation easy to understand and are able to apply their new skills well. A strong focus on linking sounds to letters and developing reading skills has boosted pupils' progress in reading. The frequent practising of reading skills is encouraged and carefully monitored. Pupils are enjoying their writing and by Year 6 have developed a sophisticated vocabulary. The school has worked hard to ensure that pupils of all abilities are challenged. In lessons, including those where pupils are set by ability level, teachers quickly move on the learning of those pupils who have rapidly understood a concept.

Skilled learning support assistants are able to successfully reshape teachers' explanations and make certain that those pupils who find learning hard are able to fully understand the concepts that are being taught. They do sterling work in delivering an extensive range of very specific teaching programmes that are carefully matched to each pupil's individual needs. They also contribute well to the good and

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rapidly improving progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is exceptionally strong and is at the heart of the school's work. Pupils clearly know the difference between right and wrong and develop high levels of self-discipline. This is reflected in the very calm ethos of the school. Pupils are very proud of their school and do all they can to contribute to the school and local communities. This includes pupils belonging to the school council, volunteering to act as 'safety patrollers' in the playground and raising substantial sums of money for local and national charities. Not only are pupils well informed about health, but they are themselves ambassadors for health. The 'Food Dudes' scheme has been very successful and pupils are now willing to try a much broader range of food than previously. They enthusiastically explain to others how important it is to try new things. Although pupils have an outstanding range of experiences relating to music and art and meet adult visitors from various cultures and religions, their first-hand experience of children from different backgrounds is limited. Pupils' good basic skills together with outstanding attendance, maturity, self-assurance and the ability to lead and to work as part of a team mean that pupils are particularly well prepared for their next stage of education.

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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The vast majority of lessons are innovative and exciting and capture pupils' interests well. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge, which they use to inspire pupils

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

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and to maintain very high expectations of the quality of pupils' work and behaviour. The school's work on improving the use of assessment has had a positive impact on pupils' learning and has helped to accelerate progress, because work is very carefully matched to pupils' needs. The level of challenge for more-able pupils has improved and this is reflected in improved attainment and progress in English and mathematics. Skilful questioning is used both to check learning and to move learning on. Resources are used exceptionally well to promote learning. In one lesson pupils had been supplied with plants, autumn leaves and other natural materials that provided an excellent stimulus for their writing. Detailed marking, combined with good quality dialogue between teachers and pupils, means that pupils know exactly how to improve their work.

The school provides many memorable and valuable experiences for its pupils. This is reflected in the vibrant displays around the school which celebrate many aspects of the pupils' work. While continuing to have an excellent focus on reading, writing and mathematics, the comprehensive curriculum also ensures that pupils have ample opportunities to develop their talents in other areas, including developing their ability to use information and communication technology (ICT). For example, pupils have recently made a short film which illustrates the exciting range of experiences available in school. This film has reached the final of a national competition. This also reflects the school's Artsmark Gold award. An extensive range of residential visits help pupils to develop their social skills and independence and a very good range of visits and visitors brings learning to life.

The school provides an extremely welcoming and cheerful environment where pupils feel confident and safe. Very well targeted support allows each and every pupil to make the very best of the opportunities provided by the school. Outstanding support is offered to those pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who are in the care of the local authority. Consequently, these pupils make at least good progress in developing their academic skills and outstanding progress in their personal skills. Transition arrangements are outstanding. These ensure that pupils move smoothly through the school and look forward to the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

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How effective are leadership and management?

The ambitious vision and high expectations of the headteacher, governing body and other leaders and managers are underpinned by robust management systems. The careful tracking of pupils' progress and meticulous analysis of data are central to the school's success. If any child, whatever their ability level, is in danger of falling behind, swift and effective action is taken. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and the school is well aware of where further improvements could be made. The monitoring of teaching is comprehensive and involves many staff as well as external consultants. Due to outstanding leadership and management, teaching strategies produce excellent outcomes for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2, but these are less effective in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Much has been done to develop the quality of teaching. Teachers have enthusiastically embraced improved methods, in particular the enhanced emphasis on using assessment to inform planning, which has had a tremendous impact on accelerating pupils' progress in lessons. The role of the curriculum coordinator has been developed and coordinators are now having a very significant impact on the quality of provision. The school is very outward looking. Not only does it ensure that partnerships are fully exploited in order to secure the very best education for its own pupils, but it also generously shares its good practice with others.

Governance is outstanding The governing body provides the school with effective support and challenge, as well as ensuring that statutory requirements are met. Safeguarding procedures are outstanding. A realistic and proportionate approach to safety and safeguarding permeates all aspects of the school's work. The school makes certain that adults who work with children are carefully vetted and ensures that staff are very alert to safeguarding issues. The school has very precise information about all of the groups it serves and carefully evaluates their progress. Additionally, respect for the rights of others is an over-riding principle in the school's work. Consequently, the school's actions to promote equal opportunities are outstanding. The school's work to promote community cohesion is good. Excellent links with its local community are exemplified by the way the pupils have worked with the councils on local matters. The school teaches pupils to celebrate and value differences; however, links with other schools in the United Kingdom and beyond have only been started recently and therefore have not yet had time to impact significantly on pupils' awareness of different cultures.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1

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The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Assessment information suggests that the measures of children's skills on entry to the Nursery class are not entirely reliable and are probably too low for some children. Consequently, adults' expectations of children in the Nursery are not always high enough. Children make satisfactory progress in the Nursery and outstanding progress in the Reception classes. Therefore, by the time they join Year 1 children's skills are above average, particularly in linking sounds and letters, reading and mathematics. The success in mathematical development can be attributed to short, snappy sessions that focus on mathematics and make learning fun for young children. In the Nursery, too many children are not engaged by activities and some only involve children in passively watching others. Not enough is done to model speaking, and questioning is frequently not pitched correctly. Those few children in the Nursery who are in the early stages of speaking English make good progress because they are involved in lively activities that encourage them to speak in English. Children in the Reception classes have a terrific time. For example, boys and girls had lots of fun playing different roles in a restaurant; they were learning to write through taking orders and developing menus. Boys were especially enthusiastic about dressing up as chefs and really wanted to write. The use of 'talk-partners' works extremely well in the Reception classes because adults model speaking and then children are encouraged to practise what they have learnt. There is a strong focus on being responsible and making choices, which enhances children's personal development. Links with parents and carers are very good, and parents and carers receive good quality information that helps them to support their children's learning. Plans are well in hand to develop an easily accessible outdoor area for the Reception class and Reception staff make optimum use of other outdoor spaces around the school. The school is well aware of the issues that face the Nursery and has already taken steps to try to improve provision. However, the school recognises that the pace of improvement is not yet quick enough.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are very happy with the quality of education offered by the school. Many commented on the exceptional teaching received by their children and the approachable staff. Those parents and carers whose children have special educational needs and/or disabilities were especially pleased with the way that their children are supported at school. A small number of parents and carers were concerned about the difficult behaviour of a few children. Inspectors found that pupils with behaviour that is occasionally challenging are managed extremely effectively by teachers and support staff.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

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

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

The inspection team received 89 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 371 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	67	29	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	63	33	37	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	45	51	36	40	6	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	57	32	36	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	55	62	29	33	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	50	56	33	37	4	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	62	70	25	28	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)	51	57	29	33	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	51	57	33	37	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	43	48	35	39	5	6	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	44	49	36	40	3	3	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	54	61	34	38	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	62	70	25	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



6 October 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St John's Church Of England Primary School, Walsall Wood
WS9 9NA**

It was a delight and a privilege to visit your school. All of the team really enjoyed talking to you all and listened very carefully to what you had to say. It is clear that you are very proud of your school. No wonder – it is outstanding! You say that your teachers are nice and kind and we agree. They do keep you very safe and value each and every one of you. We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour and the way that you are so enthusiastic about learning. We also thought that you know a lot about how to keep healthy. You all get on very well together and try hard to help each other in lessons. There are lots of wonderful things for you to do at school and this makes learning fun.

Teaching in your school has improved and is now outstanding. Although you have made good progress in the past you are now making outstanding progress in many of your lessons. Your standards of attainment are above those reached by pupils at most other schools. It was good to see how well you are doing in your mathematics lessons and to know that many of you are practising your reading at home. Children in the Reception class make rapid progress but children in the Nursery class learn at a slower rate. We have asked your school to improve this by making sure that staff in the Nursery ask children questions that help them to improve their understanding and speaking skills. We want them to make certain that children are always involved in interesting activities. We have also asked staff to make more accurate checks on children's skills when they start in the Nursery class.

The leaders and managers at your school are doing an excellent job. They are working very hard and have made your school into one of the very best. You can all help your school to improve further by continuing to try very hard in all your lessons.

Yours sincerely

Susan Walsh
Lead inspector

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