

# St John's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107701
<b>Local authority</b>	Kirklees
<b>Inspection number</b>	377630
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Joan McKenna

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>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	179
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kathy Robertson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lynn Hill (Acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 October 2008
<b>School address</b>	Boothroyd Lane Dewsbury WF13 2LP
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Joan McKenna  
Cathy Morgan

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 10 lessons taught by nine teachers, made shorter visits to classrooms and to sessions when pupils were receiving support outside of lessons, looked at pupils' work and observed other activities taking place. They observed the school's work, and scrutinised documents including policies, action plans, information about pupils' learning and progress, attendance data, information from the school's monitoring and arrangements for safeguarding pupils. Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body. Responses to questionnaires returned by staff and the 28 returned by parents and carers were analysed. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection.

## Information about the school

This infant school is smaller than the average-size primary school. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic heritages and who speak English as an additional language are well above average, with most of these being of Asian Pakistani heritage. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The school has gained the Activemark and Eco-school's Bronze awards and has Healthy School status. The school is being led by the deputy headteacher who is acting as headteacher, as the substantive headteacher is absent.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a good school. Under the acting headteacher's strong leadership, it is thriving and improving. It is highly inclusive and the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, as is the curriculum. Pupils' academic and personal outcomes are good. It is not yet outstanding because although all groups of pupils make good progress from their different starting points, they do not all reach the same levels of attainment.
- Children enter the school with attainment that is below that expected for their age overall. They leave with above average attainment. As well as all groups making good progress from their starting points, they also do so when compared with similar groups of pupils nationally. However, the attainment of some groups, such as those known to be eligible for free school meals, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, is not as high as for others. Narrowing these gaps is recognised by the school as the next priority to tackle in its quest to become outstanding.
- Teaching is good overall. Lessons often feature very interesting tasks, clear explanations and good promotion and checking of pupils' understanding. A minority of lessons are less effective, with tasks that are not at the right level of challenge for all and less guidance given on how to do well.
- Pupils feel safe, secure and happy in school. They behave well and have very positive relationships with each other and with adults.
- The leadership of teaching and performance management targets for staff are effectively linked to school priorities. This brings about improvement, such as higher attainment in writing. Governance has improved, although the governing body does not use pupils' performance data fully when checking the school's effectiveness. Parents and carers are very positive about the school.

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

- Raise attainment further through narrowing the gaps between different groups of pupils by:
  - analysing the attainment and progress data of different groups in greater depth and using the information to take more targeted action to accelerate the progress of any group attaining less well than others
  - promoting greater consistency in the quality of teaching by improving it to the standard of the best
  - giving consistently clear feedback to pupils in lessons and through marking so they know how to improve their work and reach their targets.
  
- Ensure that the governing body understands what data about pupils' attainment over time are indicating regarding their progress and uses the information fully to hold the school to account.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

The learning of children and pupils of all ages within the school is good. Virtually without exception, they are keen, eager and enthusiastic about everything they encounter. They willingly do as staff ask of them and try very hard with their work. The fact that so many activities are made so interesting for them helps engage them fully in their learning. For example, visits to a farm by Reception children and to the zoo by Year 2 children led to good quality writing in both cases as there were so many things they wanted to express. They work constructively together. Many volunteer answers to questions during discussion: a few are more hesitant. One boy's comment, 'I like to be challenged', typifies their approach to learning. They learn well because work is usually well matched to their different abilities but occasionally the level of challenge is not right for all and on these occasions the pace of learning slows.

Pupils achieve well. Attainment has steadily improved over the last few years at the ends of both key stages. From below average starting points overall, children's attainment is above the national figures by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and they make good progress across all areas of learning. At the end of 2011, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was significantly above the national average. It was highest, relatively, in writing showing that the weakness identified at the previous inspection has been successfully tackled. The attainment in Year 2 currently continues to be above average overall and in writing and mathematics. It is broadly average in reading, but action being taken to improve this is having a positive impact. Pupils have a good understanding of the sounds that letters make and employ a good range of strategies to read texts. The comprehension of a minority of pupils lags behind their ability to read the written words.

All groups of pupils, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those known to be eligible for free school meals, achieve well. Pupils of Asian Pakistani heritage achieve particularly well, reaching higher standards than such pupils nationally by a larger margin than that seen for other groups. However, there are still gaps in attainment between groups. Those who are not eligible for free school meals, for example, reach higher standards than those who are. There is also a gap between those who have special educational needs and those who do not.

All parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire said that their children are making good progress. Inspection findings endorse these views.

## **Quality of teaching**

Teaching is good and has led to improved learning and progress over time. Teachers create vibrant environments for learning through imaginative displays, such as themed areas for reading and writing that link with the topics being studied. The warm relationships and the encouragement they give help pupils to feel secure and enable the majority to be able to contribute in class. Teachers generally explain the purpose of lessons well so that pupils understand what they are doing and why. Activities are usually interesting. Some teaching is outstanding and a feature of such lessons is that pupils' basic skills are developed through very relevant tasks based on pupils' direct experiences, leading to high levels of motivation. This was seen in Year 2, when pupils were deciding which endangered species the class should adopt, following a visit to a zoo. This led to high quality writing. Teachers often match the level of challenge to pupils' different ability effectively. Teaching assistants and bilingual support workers often make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress, supporting those with particular language or learning needs effectively as well as wider groups. A minority of lessons are less effective. This is because explanations or expectations are sometimes not clear or work is not at the right level of challenge for all. Teachers generally use the strategy of asking those pupils who volunteer to answer questions rather than employing a wider range of strategies to check understanding and promote involvement.

Some marking is of good quality, with clear information given to pupils on how they are doing and how to improve. Not all gives them enough information. Pupils have targets, but how to reach them is not always referred to frequently enough. A positive feature is pupils' self-assessment of their understanding using 'smiley' or 'sad' faces'. However, teachers do not always follow up 'sad faces'.

The curriculum across the whole school is extremely well designed to provide an innovative and stimulating range of topics and activities to engage pupils in their learning while promoting their basic skills. Its practical nature provides excellent opportunities for pupils of all ages, including disabled pupils and those with learning or language needs, to participate fully. It promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development outstandingly well. For example, pupils learn about diversity in race, culture and religion through the topics that they study.

All parents and carers responding to the questionnaire said their children were well taught. Inspection evidence indicates that this is the case.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils show very positive attitudes towards school and to their peers. Typically, they are friendly, kind, courteous and respectful to each other and to adults. Pupils from different ethnic heritages get on very well together. There have been no reported incidents of bullying for some time. Pupils respond very well to the system of rewards and sanctions to promote good behaviour and incidents of misbehaviour are rare. Indeed, behaviour is good and sometimes exemplary. There are just a few occasions, when teaching is less effective, when pupils do not give their full attention in lessons. Positive attitudes and behaviour are encouraged by the extensive extended school's programme. The range and timing of activities, such as the popular kick-boxing and Bollywood dancing, encourage high levels of participation. The school successfully involves pupils in planning and participating in a range of anti-bullying and safety events, and they have a good understanding of how to keep safe. They feel secure and well looked after in school. The strong, inclusive ethos is evident in the way pupils care for each other and the support they give, including to pupils who have disabilities or who are new to learning English. Pupils make a personal contribution to the positive climate through their general conduct and the responsibilities they take on as monitors and school councillors. The school's efforts to work with parents and carers to ensure that pupils attend regularly and punctually are paying off, and attendance has risen to around the national average for primary schools.

All parents and carers responding to the questionnaire said the school keeps their children safe and that bullying is well dealt with. Only one indicated that behaviour was other than good in lessons. Inspection evidence supports the positive views expressed.

## **Leadership and management**

The acting headteacher leads by example and has created a unified staff team which is working well together towards common goals. Leaders at all levels have clearly defined responsibilities and, although some are still developing aspects of their roles, they carry out their responsibilities effectively. Senior and middle leaders undertake a range of monitoring and evaluation activities and make accurate judgements about the school's effectiveness. However, the outcomes of the monitoring of different leaders are not collated centrally so that there is an easily accessible overview. Nevertheless, helped by well-planned professional development, effective action is taken to improve the school, and its positive impact shows a good capacity to improve further. Pupils' progress is regularly tracked and the progress of individuals and year groups is analysed thoroughly. The progress of different groups, however, does not have as high a profile. Governors carry out their statutory responsibilities, and, following training, they have taken action to improve their effectiveness. They recognise the need to have a better understanding of data about pupils' progress to help question the school more closely.

Respect for children and high expectations for all of them are at the heart of this school. Provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because of the wide range of personal qualities that are very well promoted. The curriculum is also outstanding because of the many stimulating

activities provided which excite pupils about learning and enable them to do so effectively. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Equal opportunities are actively promoted, and the school ensures that all groups of pupils achieve well. The next priority, of raising the attainment of any group which is not as high as others, is recognised. Not all parents and carers are fully involved in the life of the school, and the school is taking effective steps to promote their involvement in their children's learning. The recently established breakfast club is popular and a new community room is almost near completion. Only a few parents returned questionnaires outlining their views of the school but those who did were almost unanimously positive. All said that they would recommend this school to others.

## 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	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1



September 2009. These data 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 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



29 March 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St John's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School, Dewsbury, WF13 2LP**

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when my colleague and I inspected your school. We enjoyed talking with you and hearing your views very much. You are very pleasant, polite children. You get on very well together and are kind to each other. You also work hard and behave well. Well done!

You told us that you think your school is good. We agree. Lots of interesting activities are provided for you. You told us how much you enjoyed the trips that some of you have been on to the farm and the zoo. We also saw you enjoying the Easter Egg Hunt and kick-boxing. You are well taught and you achieve well. Your teachers and other grown-ups look after you and care for you well and so you feel safe in school. You also care for each other by being responsible and by doing jobs around the school.

Mrs Hill and all the staff and those who govern your school want to continue to improve it and make it even better for you. There are some things we have asked them to concentrate on to help them do this. We would like everyone of you to reach the same high standard, so we have asked them to make sure that all lessons are as good as the best and that all of the work they give you helps you learn as much as possible. We would like teachers to give you more information to help you know how to improve your work and reach your targets. We also want your governors to know how well you are doing so that they can check that the school is doing its best to help you learn.

You can help by continuing to work hard and being such positive pupils, and by showing the governors linked to your class your work when they visit. I send you and your teachers my very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joan McKenna  
Lead inspector

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