

St Johns Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108476
Local authority	Newcastle Upon Tyne
Inspection number	377764
Inspection dates	2–3 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Gordon Potter

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Nicholls
Headteacher	Tracey Caffrey
Date of previous school inspection	11 February 2009
School address	Teindland Close Benwell Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE4 8HE
Telephone number	0191 2735293
Fax number	0191 2730651
Email address	tracey.caffrey@stjohns.newcastle.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed nine lessons taught by nine teachers, conducted visits to lessons with the headteacher and deputy headteacher and held meetings with representatives of the governing body, the School Improvement Partner, staff, parents and carers, and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school policies and documentation relating to safeguarding and strategic planning, examples of pupils' work, assessment data and monitoring records. They also scrutinised the 72 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.

- How effective have strategies been to improve reading, writing and girls' attainment in mathematics?
- How effective have strategies been to improve attendance?
- How much impact have recent strategies had on increasing progress and raising attainment and how sustainable are they?

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. While the majority of pupils are of White British heritage, since the previous inspection there has been a significant increase in the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well-above average. The percentage of pupils supported at school action is above average. The proportion of pupils at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school during Key Stage 1 and 2 is well-above average. The school has achieved Healthy School status and the Basic Skills Award.

There have been staff changes since the previous inspection. The headteacher has been in post since November 2009, having been acting headteacher for a term before that. The deputy headteacher took up post in September 2010 and there is a new leadership team.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. The inspirational and highly effective headteacher has had a significant impact on improving school effectiveness. Very ably supported by the deputy headteacher, the senior leadership team and a highly effective governing body, she has initiated strategies which have led to improvements in assessment, teaching and the curriculum. Accordingly the rate at which pupils make progress has increased and attainment has risen and is now average. The school's accurate self-evaluation and its rapid success in making improvements demonstrate its good capacity to improve and its good value for money.

All staff provide exceptional care and support, including outstanding arrangements for safeguarding and protecting pupils. Child protection issues are acted upon rapidly and sensitively. As a result, pupils are happy, feel safe and show a good awareness of how to stay fit and healthy. Pupils make a strong contribution to the school through the elected school council and they say that 'games masters', pupil playground leaders, help them play together and behave well. They have good spiritual, moral and social development and have an outstanding cultural awareness. This is because, alongside its outstanding promotion of community cohesion, the school celebrates the growing ethnic diversity of its pupils alongside its local heritage. The school has excellent arrangements to engage with parents and carers and, accordingly, parents and carers are highly supportive of the school. Outstanding partnerships with outside agencies encourage creative and enterprise skills and there are highly effective links to support pupils with a range of complex needs. The school has striven to successfully improve attendance. Its wide range of well-judged strategies has significantly reduced rates of persistent absence so that attendance is average overall. However, there remain a few families who do not see the benefits of ensuring their children attend regularly.

Highly successful strategies ensure that overall good teaching engages pupils and helps all groups to make good progress. The curriculum increasingly provides a memorable range of experiences and has a strong emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills in English and mathematics. However, in some lessons there are too few opportunities for pupils to work together, solve problems and apply their skills in open-ended and investigative activities. This is especially the case in mathematics and contributes to slower progress than in English. Outstanding procedures monitor pupils' progress and ensure that work is extremely well matched to the needs of individual pupils. Teachers constantly check pupils' understanding and adjust learning

accordingly. Excellent marking accurately tells pupils how well they have done and how to improve and teachers provide opportunities for pupils to act upon that advice.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the summer of 2013, further increase the rates at which pupils make progress and raise pupils' attainment to higher levels, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that lessons offer sufficient opportunities for pupils to work together, solve problems and apply their skills in open-ended investigative activities.
- Further improve attendance by working closely with families who still do not appreciate the value of their children attending school as often as possible.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their work is good. Pupils have good attitudes, are extremely courteous, form positive relationships and show great keenness to do well in their work. They especially enjoy challenging and lively activities, such as making a film with a local history group which helps to develop their writing, drama and research skills. They enjoy using links with local businesses, visits to museums and contact with other schools to develop their writing and enterprise skills. They enjoy exploring life in different countries and communicating with children in Ecuador which helps to develop their excellent understanding of the wider world.

The skills and abilities with which children join the Early Years Foundation Stage are predominantly well below those typical for their age. As a result of improvements to assessment and the quality of teaching, attainment has risen since the last inspection and is now broadly average by the end of Year 6. Progress in mathematics is not as strong as in English. Despite exceptionally high levels of pupil mobility, pupils make good progress regardless of when they join the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because of the sensitive support and the very skilful teaching they receive.

Pupils are very aware of the importance of a healthy diet and of taking plenty of exercise. This is reflected in their enthusiastic involvement in physical education and the fact that many pupils enjoy a healthy school meal. They care for one another very well, have great respect for each other and for the adults in the school, and say they feel very safe. Pupils are confident that they know exactly what to do in the event of a concern. Pupils make a highly positive contribution to the school community through the elected school council which discusses and enacts improvements in school, such as organising the healthy tuck shop. It meets regularly and plays a major role in helping pupils to behave well and feel safe. As librarians, pupils encourage reading and this has helped to raise standards and the enjoyment of books. They support a wide range of charities and participate in competitions with

other local schools and in activities in the city which celebrate local life and history, and improve the environment.

Average attendance rates and average attainment, supported by involvement in enterprise activities and developing skills in teamwork and in information and communication technology, ensure that pupils' development of workplace skills is satisfactory.

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	3
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	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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers make it extremely clear to pupils what they will learn, how they will know if they have succeeded and systematically show them how to approach tasks. Teachers use questions exceptionally well to ascertain what pupils already know and check that they have made progress. Teachers and teaching assistants interact extremely well to identify pupils' individual learning needs so that any misapprehensions are rapidly addressed. Marking is exceptionally successful in guiding pupils how to improve their work and many opportunities are given for pupils to act upon that advice. While this approach to teaching has been successful in raising attainment, there remain too few opportunities for pupils to work together, solve problems and apply their skills in open-ended and investigative activities, especially in mathematics.

The curriculum contributes to pupils' good progress by offering a systematic and focused approach to the teaching of basic skills in English and mathematics. There is a developing range of stimulating activities which is helping them to see the links between subjects and to develop and apply important skills, including in teamwork and enterprise, and writing at length. For example, pupils are encouraged to see the relevance of their work by taking on the role of experts. Well-planned enrichment activities, including visits to residential centres and to museums, visits from religious groups and opportunities to work with artists, musicians and sports coaches, help to develop pupils' skills in sport and art and their understanding of environmental issues and other faiths and cultures. There are many popular extra-curricular clubs which

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

promote learning and enjoyment in sport and the arts, for example by taking part in 'boxercise' and archery or experiencing dance.

This is an extremely caring school in which everyone looks out for each other and goes that extra mile to identify and support families who are vulnerable due to their circumstances. The extremely effective work of all staff, including the contribution of the highly respected Parent Support Adviser, ensures that pupils' individual needs are recognised. There are excellent procedures to address the needs of the increasing number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language and as a result, these children make good progress both personally and academically. Well-established and highly effective practices involve parents and carers when their children enter school, move from class to class and transfer to secondary school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has had a remarkable impact on the school in a short period of time. She has determinedly, rigorously and skilfully pursued and implemented strategies that have brought about an improvement in school effectiveness. A highly committed leadership team has been created which has introduced initiatives that are raising attainment and increasing pupils' progress. It has developed effective systems for tracking progress and has made the curriculum more stimulating. All staff have clear roles and responsibilities and are accountable for key areas of the curriculum. They welcome these opportunities to contribute to decision making and the school improvement plan and to advance their own professional development. Governance is good. The Chair of the Governing Body has a very clear understanding of how to improve school effectiveness. Accordingly, the governing body has been instrumental in supporting the school through a period of change and has taken robust action to ensure that standards have risen.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are outstanding as all aspects meet government requirements and are rigorously monitored and reviewed to ensure pupils' safety. Excellent arrangements ensure that child protection procedures are of the highest quality. The school has introduced a range of highly effective initiatives to involve parents and carers in their children's learning and to provide regular information about their children's progress. It also has exceptionally effective links with outside agencies to support the pupils' wide-ranging needs and to develop learning opportunities. There is a clear commitment to promoting equal opportunities and to ensuring that discrimination against any group is avoided at all times. The school is proud of its inclusive nature and makes an outstanding contribution to community cohesion. The sense of community in the school is exceptionally strong and there are excellent links with the local community. Pupils have a highly

developed understanding of the United Kingdom as a diverse, multicultural society and of life in other countries.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Effective and enjoyable interventions, by all adults, are skilfully directed to develop skills in singing, counting, speaking and listening, and linking sounds and letters so that children make good progress from their starting points. However, the proportion of pupils reaching the attainment expected for their age by the start of Year 1 remains below national expectations. There are innovative practices, such as peer massage, which help to promote children's emotional and social development. Children particularly enjoy creative activities, including painting and singing, construction, using information and communication technology and role play. Children also enjoy exercising and exploring together and there is a clear commitment to outdoor learning which includes plans to redevelop the outdoor area.

Children develop independence and a good understanding of how to stay healthy, through accessing healthy snacks and drinks. Staff ensure that requirements regarding children's safety are rigorously met. They encourage children to share, to take turns and to behave well. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a clear understanding of how children learn and works effectively with the Nursery class teacher so that work is well planned, based on observations of children's learning and children's own preferences. However, it is not always clear how activities are specifically linked to learning goals. Boys, in particular, would benefit from more focused play activities and opportunities are missed to develop some learning areas as more vibrant environments. Information about children's skills and abilities offers a clear picture of attainment on entry and is well-used to measure ongoing and overall progress. Extremely positive partnerships with parents and carers enable children to settle quickly into the Early Years Foundation Stage classes. The learning journeys, in particular, help parents and carers to understand how well their children are progressing.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Approximately one-third of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire, which is typical to that found nationally. The respondents strongly support the school and its leaders and how they meet their children’s needs, ensuring their children enjoy school and are healthy and safe. The inspection findings reflect these very positive views.

Most parents and carers believe that unacceptable behaviour is dealt with effectively. A very small minority expressed concern about the behaviour of pupils. Inspectors investigated this concern in detail and found that the school is employing appropriate and extremely effective strategies to support the few pupils who find good behaviour difficult.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Johns 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 72 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 218 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	50	34	47	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	41	57	31	43	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	36	50	33	46	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	51	35	49	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	41	57	30	42	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	50	35	49	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	49	35	49	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	34	47	38	53	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	49	35	49	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	53	29	40	5	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	42	40	56	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	40	56	30	42	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	42	58	30	42	0	0	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.



4 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Johns Primary School, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE4 8HE

On behalf of the inspection team, thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school and talking to us so freely.

You go to a good school and your teachers know how to make it even better. The team was impressed by the work of the school council and your singing and artwork. Your behaviour, politeness and the great care and respect you have for one another are admirable. Your teachers take exceptional care of you and try hard to make your lessons fun and help you to work hard. You told us that you look forward to coming to school because you like your teachers and appreciate the activities the school provides for you, such as visits and clubs. Your parents and carers like the school very much. Your teachers have agreed with me that they should do the following things to help your school to improve even more:

- help you reach higher standards at the end of Year 6, by providing more opportunities for you to investigate together, solve problems and apply your skills in exciting activities, especially in mathematics
- work with your parents and carers to make sure that more of you attend school more regularly.

You can all help by continuing to do your best and attending regularly. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Potter
Lead inspector

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