

St John's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112849
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	378580
Inspection dates	21–22 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Doris Bell

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	377
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Freeborn
Headteacher	Wendy Rose
Date of previous school inspection	15 October 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 29 lessons taught by 13 teachers. Also, they met with staff, parents and carers, groups of pupils and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including teachers' planning, the school improvement plan, assessment, monitoring and evaluation records, records for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and safeguarding policies and procedures. Also, inspectors analysed the responses to the questionnaires for pupils and staff, and to the 97 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- Is progress in mathematics accelerating this year, is the improvement in English being sustained, and how effectively is the school closing the gaps between the attainment of different groups of pupils?
- Does the creative curriculum promote literacy and numeracy skills well enough to assist in accelerating pupils' progress?
- Are leaders and managers at all levels clear about how to improve pupils' progress, especially in mathematics, and how successful are they in doing this?

Information about the school

The school is a larger-than-average-sized school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and the proportion of pupils who have statements of special educational needs is well-above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average and more pupils join or leave the school at unusual times than is found nationally. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Appointed following the last inspection, the headteacher took up her post in April 2009. The school has achieved a number of awards, including national Healthy Schools status, the Activemark, and an Excellence Award for Anti-Bullying. A privately run breakfast club operates on the school site. It is inspected separately.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

St John's Primary school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The headteacher has set a clear vision for improvement. Staff and the governing body are fully behind her in that. Staff have risen well to the challenge of taking responsibility for their own subjects and aspects and for being accountable for pupils' progress. The headteacher has helped the governing body to challenge as well as support the school and it fulfil its duties well. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and there is a strong determination to succeed. That contributed to the improved national test results for English and mathematics in 2011. Staff work together well, learning from and supporting each other. The quality of teaching, which is satisfactory overall, is improving because staff are making better use of assessment information to plan pupils' learning. However, that is not always the case in mathematics. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly, but the impact of teaching on learning is not always clear and the overall judgements do not always match the observation notes. The school improvement plan has clear, manageable priorities, but the criteria against which progress towards them is checked are not always sufficiently related to measurable outcomes for pupils. Taken together, all of that demonstrates that the school has satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

Children start school with skills below the levels typical for their age. They learn and develop well in the Nursery and Reception classes. Pupils' attainment is average in Year 6 and their achievement is satisfactory. The good progress in English from last year, especially in writing, is also evident in the work of pupils currently in the school. Progress is improving in mathematics. Until now, it has been hindered by several changes in the leadership of the subject and by some insecure subject knowledge. That has resulted in too much variation in the quality of teaching in the subject. The weaknesses, which are being tackled systematically, relate mainly to ensuring work is at the right level for all pupils and mathematical vocabulary is used at all times. Where teaching is good, mathematics is made fun for pupils, as when an element of competition was built into a lesson where pupils tried to solve real-life problems ahead of each other. The well-planned curriculum brings subjects together in an imaginative way. It promotes basic skills well and provides good guidance on how to measure progress in skills in different subjects.

Pupils behave well and they have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy. They feel safe and well-cared for and confident that they can turn to an adult for help. They know their views are valued and they enjoy school.

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That was summed up in a comment from one pupil, 'I really like school, I even come when it's raining'. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are supported well. The additional help they receive ensures that they, too, make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in their learning. The school's good partnerships with parents and carers, other schools and external agencies contribute effectively to pupils' learning, personal development and well-being. All of that is part of the overall good care, guidance and support provided for all pupils, which ensures they leave the school at least adequately prepared for their futures.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics by establishing more consistently good teaching in the subject through:
 - increasing teachers' subject knowledge and their use and promotion of mathematical vocabulary
 - ensuring that mathematical learning is always matched closely to pupils' different stages of learning.
- Sharpen monitoring and evaluation by:
 - including more easily measurable success criteria in the action plans that support the school improvement plan
 - ensuring that lesson observations focus more closely on pupils' learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Attainment in English was significantly above average in 2011 and it is on track to be at least average in the current Year 6. Pupils in Year 6, for example, showed a good understanding of the similarities and differences between biographies and autobiographies, recording their ideas jointly with the teacher, in a Venn diagram. As well as developing their learning in English, the use of Venn diagrams consolidated their mathematical understanding also. Pupils know how to assess and improve their own and each other's work. In one lesson, pupils in Year 6 advised each other on how to take notes, explaining that by writing in full sentences, they might miss vital information. Much is now in place to accelerate progress in mathematics by making it more practical and related more closely to real life. That has increased pupils' enjoyment of the subject, as well as their progress, and their attainment is broadly average. For example, pupils in Year 3 and 4 explained how they had gone outside to measure the monster footsteps that had 'appeared in the playground' and then used the information to calculate the overall size of the monster.

Higher-attaining pupils and those who find learning difficult for any reason, including

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those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress. That is because work is usually matched to their individual needs well and they receive additional support to help close the gaps in their learning. In English, however, higher-attaining pupils make good progress, as is evident from the significantly above-average proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in the national tests in 2011. That is not the case in mathematics, but work is under way to tackle the issue.

Almost all parents and carers responding to the inspection questionnaire agree that the school keeps their children safe. The large majority of pupils say that behaviour is good. They are aware of the small number of pupils with behaviour difficulties, understand that they need a different approach by teachers, and show sensitivity to their needs. Pupils report that bullying does occur occasionally, but, when it is reported, staff and especially senior staff deal with it quickly and effectively.

Pupils are reflective and caring and they are proud of the contribution they make to the school, for example, as prefects and school councillors, and running clubs for younger pupils. The school council has been instrumental in acquiring new play equipment and introducing healthy snacks. Pupils understand the benefits of regular exercise and they make healthy eating choices. Their good contribution to the wider community includes involvement in a project with the local allotment association aimed at promoting healthy eating. Pupils show initiative as play leaders and playground buddies, participate in local events and raise money for a range of charities at home and abroad. They are justifiably proud of their links with a school in India and the contribution they make to improving the lives of the pupils there. They have a developing understanding of different faiths and cultures and how these influence the way people live. They take part also in several enterprise initiatives involving local businesses that give them a different outlook on life and raise their aspirations of what they might do in the future.

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

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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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?

In the majority of lessons, the outcomes of the greatly improved assessment procedures are used effectively in planning. In literacy lessons, that is done well. Here, staff remind pupils constantly, through marking and verbal support, about the importance of using what they know already to help them with new learning. The curriculum provides many opportunities to promote writing and subjects are brought together well to do this. For example, pupils in Year 3 crossed the boundaries between English, science, history and information and communication technology as they explored and wrote about the Vikings. Staff are skilled at helping pupils to realise the importance of communicating clearly. For example, after trying to record a radio broadcast about monsters, a different group of pupils in Year 3 realised they needed to have a script, so that they could concentrate on speaking clearly into the microphone.

The curriculum identifies opportunities for pupils to use and extend numeracy skills also in different subjects. Not all staff are taking full advantage of the opportunities, but work is under way to increase their subject knowledge and their confidence to do so. Some staff concentrate too much on what pupils should be doing at their age, rather than at their stage of learning. That means that activities are sometimes not challenging enough for higher-attaining pupils, or too hard for those who find learning difficult. The recent concentration on using mathematical learning to solve real-life problems is helping to tackle the issue. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of well-attended extra-curricular clubs at lunchtime and after school, which add to pupils' learning and personal development and their overall enjoyment of school.

The school is vigilant in supporting all pupils and particularly in helping pupils and their parents and carers, where circumstances may make them more vulnerable. It supports pupils with identified behavioural difficulties well and minimises the impact the pupils can have on learning for other pupils. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is assisted, in most lessons, by the effective use of support staff. Occasionally, however, teachers do not keep a close enough check on what support staff are doing and pupils become confused by the mixed messages given. That affects explanations in mathematics particularly. Good procedures are in place to ease transition for all pupils from one year to the next and on into secondary school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have established effective teamwork across the school, generating in all staff a strong determination to improve outcomes for the pupils and a shared understanding of the staff's individual and collective responsibility for doing so. Pupils' progress is tracked and recorded well and the pupils' targets are challenging. Staff and pupils are expected to achieve them and staff have to account for any slippage in pupils' learning. That is already proving successful in accelerating progress, including in mathematics. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly, but here, as in the school improvement plan, too few criteria are set out to measure success in improving pupils' progress.

The governing body uses its members' expertise well to support the school, while challenging it over its performance. It is included in the school's monitoring and evaluation cycle and gains information at first hand through visits to classrooms, analysis of data and discussions with staff and with parents and carers. It meets with pupils also, especially the school council, to seek pupils' views and, where possible, it acts on them. The school adopts recommended good practice in safeguarding. All training, including for child protection, is up to date and all policies are kept under regular review by the governing body.

The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily. It challenges stereotypes successfully and has adopted a 'zero tolerance' approach to any form of harassment, including racism. The school has a good understanding of its own community and the community it serves. Through visits, visitors, religious education and good links with the church and with other schools, it gives pupils a greater understanding of communities beyond their own and of some of the different faiths and cultures within the United Kingdom. Its established links with India contribute to pupils' growing global awareness. That awareness is also fostered within the curriculum and contributes to the good contribution the school makes overall towards community cohesion.

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

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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	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

Good leadership and management have ensured that children continue to achieve well despite several changes in staffing in recent years. Effective induction procedures to the Nursery classes and good links with parents and carers result in children settling quickly into school routines. The calm, well-ordered learning environment encourages children successfully to explore learning opportunities. Children behave well and are learning to take turns, listen carefully, and work together or independently. Good attention is paid to children’s health, safety and welfare. The importance of hygiene and being safe is stressed in all activities, especially with the younger children, and children select freely from the many exciting activities planned for them, indoors and out. They are curious and they want to learn.

Children enjoy practising the sounds that start or end words. That work starts in the Nursery and, by the time children leave the Reception Year, most can recognise the sounds when written down and use them to read simple words. Children tell stories successfully by ordering pictures to show that stories have a beginning, a middle and an end. Early mathematical skills are developing well through opportunities to sort and count and to learn about different shapes. Higher-attaining children in a Reception class showed good knowledge of different shapes and used an appropriate range of vocabulary to describe them.

Children’s learning is assessed and tracked well and it is adapted to suit their different needs. However, opportunities are missed sometimes to support learning, for example, by consolidating or extending it as it occurs, or encouraging children to share learning with each other.

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

The response to the questionnaire for parents and carers was smaller than is found in most schools. Most of those who did respond, or who spoke to inspectors during the inspection, are satisfied with what the school does for them and their children. Comments such as 'St John's has always helped my children', 'the teachers are all so enthusiastic' and 'nothing is ever too much trouble' are typical of the positive comments received. A very small minority of parents and carers felt that the school did not deal well enough with what they regard as poor behaviour. Inspectors explored the issue in detail, including by speaking to staff and a large number of pupils and by examining the school's records of incidents relating to behaviour. They found that the vast majority of pupils regard behaviour as good and that, when poor behaviour does occur, the school deals with it effectively,

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

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

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

The inspection team received 97 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 377 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	57	40	41	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	45	46	48	49	2	2	1	1
The school informs me about my child’s progress	48	49	43	44	5	5	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	48	44	45	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	47	48	46	47	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	40	41	50	52	5	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	37	60	62	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)	35	36	52	54	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	40	41	53	55	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	31	49	51	14	14	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	33	57	59	6	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	34	35	56	58	5	5	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	45	46	47	48	3	3	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.



23 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's CofE Primary School, Derbyshire, DE5 3BD

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. It was a pleasure to talk with you about what you do there and to hear how you enjoy school and want to do well. We found your school to be satisfactory overall, but noted that you behave well and develop good personal and social skills. That is because staff care for you well and you trust them to help you should you have any concerns. Also, you have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves safe, fit and healthy, and you like taking responsibility for different things around the school. Certainly, you enjoy all the different clubs and activities the school puts on for you, and it was good to see that also some of you help by running clubs for younger pupils. We could see that you do well in English and you are making better progress in mathematics now than in the past. However, we have asked the school to do the following things to help you do even better:

- help you to make even better progress in mathematics by improving teaching and learning in mathematics
- set out some clear criteria, so that staff see how well the school is doing with its action plans and, when senior staff are observing your lessons, focus more on what you are learning and less on what the teacher is doing.

We hope that doing these things will help you to enjoy learning even more and make even better progress. You can help by continuing to behave well, working hard and always listening to what you are asked to do. We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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