

St John's C of E Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	101321
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	376547
Inspection dates	16–17 January 2012
Lead inspector	Mary Summers

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Clark
Headteacher	Jane Martin
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2007
School address	Swan Lane Whetstone London N20 0PL
Telephone number	020 8445 4693
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Mary Summers

Additional inspector

John Mason

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 19 lessons or parts of lessons, which were taught by a total of ten teachers, and met with groups of pupils, governors and staff. They took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection and the 138 questionnaires that were returned by parents during the inspection. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documents associated with safeguarding procedures and self-evaluation. They examined data and information about pupils' progress, listened to them read and looked at samples of their work. They also scrutinised improvement plans as well as planning for lessons and the curriculum.

Information about the school

This average-sized primary school serves pupils from many different backgrounds. Approximately a quarter come from non-British White backgrounds and a high proportion of these pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals has risen sharply in the last two years and is now average. The proportion identified with disabilities and special educational needs, especially with statements of special educational needs, is above average. Many of those identified have significant physical or medical difficulties. The school has won a number of awards in recent years, including Healthy Schools status. The school currently meets the government's floor standards.

Breakfast and after-school clubs for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are provided by the school and similar clubs for pupils in the main school are organised by a private provider. The latter was not part of this inspection.

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

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It has maintained pupils' good achievement since the last inspection and continues to improve well because of the commitment of staff and school leaders, especially the headteacher. Pupils, parents and carers are extremely positive and appreciate the good levels of teaching and care that the school provides. National test results are above average but progress in mathematics, although good, is not as rapid as in English in Key Stage 2.
- Teaching is good. The teaching of early literacy skills is excellent and helps pupils gain a firm grounding in reading and writing. Mathematics teaching is good overall but does not always gain pupils' full interest and concentration in Key Stage 2. The school provides strong support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. As a result, they make good progress. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but do not always provide useful comments to help them improve their work. Pupils are not sure about their individual learning targets for English and mathematics and they are not reviewed frequently enough.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school. They are extremely polite and have very mature attitudes to their learning. Pupils from different backgrounds get on very well together and feel very safe in school. They take full advantage of the school's excellent curriculum, enjoying the wide range of sporting and creative opportunities offered. As a result, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- Senior leaders, including the governing body, have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They ensure that parents and carers receive high levels of information about the curriculum, school events and their children's progress. They have successfully strengthened teaching in literacy but plans to improve mathematics are not rigorous enough to secure rapid progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2 by:
 - ensuring that teaching fully engages pupils actively in their learning
 - using the information from ongoing assessment to plan activities that more closely meet pupils' different needs and abilities
 - ensuring that action plans for improvement contain clear and measurable success criteria and benchmarks by which progress towards goals can be checked. (by July 2012)

- Increase pupils' involvement in their learning by:
 - ensuring that they clearly understand their targets for improvement and review them frequently with teachers
 - ensuring that teachers consistently provide helpful feedback when marking pupils' work so that they know exactly what to do to improve.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Boys and girls achieve well during their time at St John's. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language make good progress because teachers use good visual resources to help these children understand. Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs also achieve well because of the high levels of support that they receive in lessons and in small groups out of class.

Children enter the Nursery at typical levels for their age. Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage they achieve well in all aspects of their learning. They participate keenly in a wide range of activities inside and outside, enjoying playing imaginatively together. The introduction of a focused literacy programme has strengthened children's progress in letters and sounds. A small group of boys from the Reception class, including some from non-British White backgrounds, learning English as an additional language, greatly enjoyed working with the teacher and made excellent progress in blending sounds to spell new words and read simple sentences.

Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1, developing their literacy and numeracy skills well. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading is above average. Most pupils in Year 2, including those with special educational needs, are reading a suitable range of texts confidently and fluently. They thoroughly enjoy books and stories. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 talk enthusiastically about the novels they are reading, for example *Kensuke's Kingdom*, and write vibrant newspaper reports and postcards describing the hero's adventures.

Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above average by the end of Year 6. However, their progress in mathematics is not always as rapid as that in English because lessons sometimes lack stimulus and practical involvement. Pupils benefit from the excellent opportunities provided for them to participate in music,

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dance and drama productions which enable them to hone their creative skills to high levels.

The very large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire say that their children are making good progress and that the school successfully meets their children's needs. Their strong support is endorsed by inspection findings.

Quality of teaching

Most parents and pupils who completed the questionnaire said that teaching is good, and inspection evidence confirms this. Teachers have extremely positive and respectful relationships with pupils, manage their behaviour sensitively and provide very effective role models to pupils. These contribute well to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers mark pupils' books regularly but seldom provide useful information to pupils about how they can improve their work. Individual targets are set but pupils are not always clear about them. Teachers do not review them regularly enough with pupils to ensure that they are effective.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and this contributes well to their delivery of the curriculum. This helps them put their lessons across in a stimulating and dynamic manner. A good English lesson in Year 5, for example, involved pupils working together to compile lists of words to describe the texture, smell, shape, taste and colour of a range of different fruits. They used this exciting vocabulary to write some good quality poems containing similes and metaphors. Teaching in science helps pupils to develop secure knowledge and understanding as well as good investigational skills. A Year 6 lesson on insulation involved pupils experimenting with different materials to decide which would be most effective in making a solar panel. They took detailed temperature readings and compiled their findings in well-structured reports.

Mathematics lessons include very well-paced mental mathematics starter activities, where pupils use individual whiteboards to record their answers. Paired work during these introductory activities involves all of the pupils and helps them to consolidate their understanding. In Key Stage 2, however, the main teaching parts of lessons sometimes lack pace and interest, with teachers using a narrow range of strategies to maintain pupils' attention. In some cases, the information from assessments is not used well enough to ensure that the activities closely meet pupils' different needs and abilities.

Teachers deploy support assistants well, usually to support pupils with disabilities or those with special educational needs. There is a clear focus about what pupils are expected to achieve. Pupils respond well to this well-organised support and feel comfortable to take risks with their learning, knowing that their efforts will be valued. Teachers have good strategies for helping pupils who are learning English as an additional language to understand lessons and develop their fluency and confidence in English. They use a great many visual resources such as computers to illustrate

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new vocabulary and concepts.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Parents, staff and pupils are extremely positive about the standard of pupils' behaviour and virtually all parents say their children are safe at school. Typical behaviour over time is excellent. This is confirmed by the extremely low levels of exclusions and incidents of bullying or racism. Pupils nonetheless are very clear about what to do if such incidents occur, and feel extremely confident that staff will sort out any such problems. Visitors, for instance the local community police officer and school nurse, talk to pupils about the dangers of cyber-bullying and drugs. Parents commented very favourably about their children's positive attitudes to their education, with one writing, for example, about how the school "encourages [their] child to try new things, showcase [their] strengths and build [their] confidence".

Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes extremely well to their strong relationships and the care and support they offer without hesitation. Pupils look out for one another in class and in the playground, quickly noticing if someone appears lonely. One pupil who was quietly standing by a tree was quickly approached by others in her class who were concerned she was unhappy. She reassured them that she was merely 'resting'. Pupils confirm that poor behaviour and bad language 'hardly ever happen in our school'. They understand the consequences but say how important it is to 'always own up' rather than make things worse by lying.

Pupils work hard in class. They take great pride in their work as seen in their books and displays around the school. Pupils in Year 6 take their responsibilities as prefects and monitors very seriously, encouraging younger pupils to choose healthy options from the salad bar at lunchtimes and leading activities during the weekly 'Broadening Horizons' curriculum sessions. Several boys, for instance, sensitively guided younger pupils who were learning to play musical instruments in 'The Band'. Such positive relationships encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own and each other's actions.

Attendance, once an area of concern, is now above average as a result of the concerted efforts of the headteacher, administrative staff and educational welfare officer. Punctuality is excellent in the mornings and after break times.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and senior leaders have successfully focused on the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. More-able pupils are well catered for and challenged in lessons. This has led to more than half of Year 6 pupils exceeding nationally expected levels for their age over the last few years. The curriculum is now outstanding because strong links have been developed between subjects and pupils receive a wealth of opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in

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meaningful ways. For example, measuring the results of investigations in science and writing sensitively about their beliefs in religious education. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Older pupils develop a strong moral conscience, considering, for example in science, the benefits and drawbacks of using fossil fuels.

The headteacher enjoys strong support from parents and pupils, who value her sensitivity and understanding. At the same time, however, there is a strong commitment to improve pupils' achievement and teaching through good in service training opportunities for staff. A successful focus on improving literacy teaching through the well-organised professional development programme in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 has meant that pupils are on track to reach above-average levels of attainment this year. Middle managers monitor provision regularly but action plans in mathematics are not rigorous enough to ensure that weaknesses in, for example mathematics teaching, are addressed rapidly.

The governing body is well organised and plays a significant part in evaluating the school's performance and highlighting areas for improvement. It places a high priority on ensuring that safeguarding procedures are very effective and meet statutory requirements. Staff promote equality of opportunity well. Senior staff track the progress of different groups of pupils to identify underachievement.

Pupils' consistently above-average attainment, outstanding behaviour and attitudes, coupled with improvements in literacy teaching, attendance and the curriculum alongside the strong commitment of staff mean that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

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).

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.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.



18 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's C of E Primary School, Whetstone N20 0PL

Thank you so much for welcoming us recently to your school and giving us your opinions about the school. Your views in the questionnaire, and everything else that we saw, helped us to get to know your school and how well it works. You said that your school is good and we agree. Here are some of the things we liked best.

- You work hard in class and make good progress.
- Your behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the school.
- You show extremely high levels of respect for one another's different views and backgrounds.
- The adults arrange an excellent range of activities to make sure you enjoy school.
- The headteacher and governors do a good job in keeping you safe and ensuring you receive a good education.

There are a few things that could be even better in your school. We think the pupils in Key Stage 2 could make more progress in mathematics so we have asked the teachers to plan lessons that are more interesting and involve you more actively in your learning. We have also asked them to use the information they get from checking pupils' progress to plan activities that will help them improve. We think that the adults in charge could write more detailed plans about how to improve your progress in mathematics to ensure that things improve quickly. We have asked your teachers to make sure that you understand your targets in English and mathematics and to review them more regularly. Finally, we think that they could give you more ideas when they mark your work about how to improve.

You all can play your part in helping your school become even better by making sure you continue to work hard, behave well and attend school every day unless you are ill.

Yours sincerely

Mary Summers
Lead inspector

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