

St John's Priory School

Independent school standard inspection report

DfE registration number	931/6009
Unique Reference Number (URN)	123279
URN for registered childcare	EY308827
Inspection number	386826
Inspection dates	28–29 February 2012
Reporting inspector	John Seal HMI

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090070.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No. 090070

© Crown copyright 2012



Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

The inspection of registered provision was conducted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006.^{3, 4}

Information about the school

St John's Priory is an independent preparatory school for girls and boys aged from two years and three months to eleven years. Situated in the town of Banbury, the school occupies a grade 2 listed building which was once a priory. The school is registered for 160 pupils. Currently there are 84 on roll, including 28 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage of whom 19 are funded under the government's nursery scheme and 16 attend part time. None of the pupils has a statement of special educational needs. No child is looked after. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds with a small proportion of pupils from a diverse range of ethnic minority backgrounds. Two pupils speak English as an additional language. The school states that its aims are 'to provide academic excellence'. This is the school's second Ofsted inspection since it was registered and opened in 1990. The last inspection was in 2008. Since the last inspection, there have been several changes in the leadership of the school. More recently, the ownership of the school has changed and the current headmaster commenced his duties in May 2011.

Evaluation of the school

St John's Priory continues to provide a good quality of education and meets its aims well. Pupils make good progress because of the good teaching and assessment supported by a good curriculum. Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety, including the safeguarding arrangements, is good. The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Strengths throughout the school include outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and outstanding behaviour of the pupils. All regulatory requirements are met; an improvement from the previous inspection.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

³ Schools which provide childcare for children from birth until the term in which they reach their third birthday must register this provision separately with Ofsted.

⁴ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/21/contents.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good. The school's curriculum policy, based on the National Curriculum, effectively supports the schemes of work which are in place for all subjects. As a result, pupils' needs are met very well. The areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage are equally well planned. Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is effective. Physical education (PE) is well provided for in all age groups. There are regular timetabled visits to a local senior independent school for pupils to use the sports' facilities and take part in a wide range of sporting and physical activities, including rugby, netball, hockey, football and swimming. Pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are of a high standard. The curriculum is enriched through additional specialist-taught subjects including French, Spanish and drama for all age groups. All ages of pupils have opportunities to learn a wide range of musical instruments. These are also taught by a specialist music teacher. There are regular visits and visitors to enhance pupils' curriculum experiences which include local places of interest, authors, residential trips, museums, theatres, music festivals and the local church. Very shortly before the inspection, pupils from Key Stage 1 visited the Birmingham Sea Life Centre.

Teaching and assessment are good overall. From the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 6, the quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to good. In the well-taught lessons, teachers are confident in their specialist subjects. Their planning accurately meets the needs of all pupils. Activities are practical, investigative and develop pupils' ability to become more independent in their learning. Pupils are provided with information about how they are progressing. In the small number of cases where lessons are less well taught, pupils' prior learning and abilities are not taken into account in planning or activities. Consequently, some pupils find the work easy and others, who sometimes require additional support, struggle to make progress. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for through the additional support of special educational needs coordinator.

The school is developing an effective system for keeping track of pupils' progress and attainment. National Curriculum tests are used at the end of Years 2 and 6. Teachers use National Curriculum levels to monitor and assess pupils' progress throughout the school. Based on this information, they set targets for further progress in English and mathematics. This information is generally used well by most teachers to inform their planning, but not consistently. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is regular and conscientious, but not all of it provides pupils with enough information to help them identify their next steps for learning.

From the Early Years Foundation Stage to the end of Year 6, pupils make good progress during their time at the school. Their progress accelerates in this year particularly in the core areas of reading, writing and number. By the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, they have progressed well enough to successfully pass the entrance examinations for the local senior independent schools and achieve high

levels of attainment in the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests for English and mathematics.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding in all age groups. The school is proud of its welcoming and friendly atmosphere. Pupils' attendance is high and their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils say they are safe and happy. There has been no reported incident of bullying. Pupils' very positive attitudes are demonstrated in their keenness to learn both collaboratively and independently. The younger children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have a strong start and as a result become confident learners. This continues throughout school.

In addition to high standards of basic skills, pupils of all ages work collaboratively. Pupils take on additional responsibilities with relish, including monitors and prefects. The school council contributes well to the learning environment of the school.

Pupils develop a good awareness of different religions and cultures. This is effectively promoted through a series of effectively-planned events marking religious festivals throughout the year. For example, the school recently celebrated the Chinese New Year.

Pupils' good understanding of public institutions is fostered through visits to local museums and libraries. Pupils are keen to learn and keen to take part in the range of activities the school provides. They often work well together contributing to the local community. They demonstrate very good awareness of people who are less well off than themselves. For example, the school has links with the St John's orphanage in Africa.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for all the pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. This includes provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage where children's welfare, health and safety are given high priority. As a result, children feel safe and well cared for. Procedures and policies for safeguarding, including the training of staff, are good. There are policies for behaviour, anti-bullying, fire and first aid and procedures are well understood by staff and implemented effectively. Pupils are properly supervised. Health and safety procedures and risk assessments are secure and pay due regard to national guidance. The school's three-year access plan meets the regulatory requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

A very high proportion of pupils who returned the questionnaires were very positive about all aspects of school life. Those that spoke to inspectors demonstrated a good awareness of how to live healthy lifestyles and stay safe.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

Thorough procedures for the vetting and appointment of staff are in place and these meet all requirements. The school has a single central register of staff checks which contains all the required information.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school's accommodation provides sufficient space for the children and pupils to be taught effectively and safely, meeting all the regulations. The school buildings are appropriately decorated and include furniture and fittings which are fit for purpose. There are specialist rooms for art, ICT and music. Since the last inspection, the school has moved the provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage to provide better access for outdoor learning and play. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There is a suitable area for pupils who are ill. Outside there is a good-sized playground.

Provision of information

All of the required information is provided, or made available, to parents, carers and others. There are weekly newsletters and an informative and helpful website.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's complaints procedure meets the requirements.

Registered provision for children aged from birth to three years

The school's good provision for the under threes is good. The youngest children receive a warm welcome to the start of their school life. Their learning development and welfare needs are met well. Children are confident, articulate and happy and their behaviour is excellent.

Well-qualified adults ensure that children are actively involved in their learning. Teachers' planning suitably provides children with experiences across all areas of learning. In each class, children are provided with a range of learning activities based on teachers' observations. Activities generally match most children's needs but in a very few lessons, this is not the case, particularly for the youngest children. Nevertheless, overall, children's progress is good. Most of them exceed the goals expected for five-year-olds. The youngest children communicate their needs well and develop appropriate language. Their progress is identified and recorded appropriately.

The outdoor learning area has improved since the last inspection because of the more immediate and appropriate access to a secure and pleasant garden. However, opportunities for child-initiated learning in the outdoor area, particularly for the children in the Nursery, are not maximised because of weaknesses in teachers' planning.

The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. The deputy headteacher effectively oversees the staff, who work and cooperate well. Individual children's records are maintained appropriately, supporting the positive relationships with parents and carers and providing them with useful information.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- improve teachers' use of assessment information on pupils' prior learning so as to be more consistent in the provision of activities which match the needs and abilities of pupils.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
--	--	---	--	--

The quality of the registered provision for children aged from birth to three years

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

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Nursery and Preparatory		
Date school opened	1990		
Age range of pupils	2 years 3 months to 11 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 49	Girls: 19	Total: 68
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 10	Girls: 5	Total: 15
Number of children aged 0–3 in registered childcare provision	Boys:1	Girls: 0	Total:1
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	Reception £2,590 per term Years 1 to 6 £2,600 per term		
Annual fees (childcare)	Saplings £1,200 to £2,550 Nursery £1,605 to £2,590		
Address of school	St John's Road, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX16 5HX		
Telephone number	01295 259607		
Email address	bursar@stjohnspriory.com		
Headteacher	Mr Paul Cawley-Wakefield		
Proprietors	Mr Karl Durham Mr Giorgio Mystkowski		

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.



1 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's Priory School, Banbury OX16 5HX

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed looking at your work and observing you in your lessons. Those of you who spoke to us and returned the questionnaires told us that you enjoy your school. We have judged that the school gives you a good quality of education, with some areas that are outstanding.

These are the findings from the inspection.

- Your behaviour is excellent.
- Your attendance is good.
- You are able to learn different subjects and learn to play lots of musical instruments, learn French and Spanish and play different sports.
- The school cares for you very well and makes sure that you are all safe.
- Most of your lessons are good, but sometimes teachers give you work that is either too easy or too hard. This means you don't always learn as much as you could.

We talked with your headmaster and staff about the things that need to be improved. They will be working hard to make things even better for you, especially making sure that in lesson your work is not too easy or too hard for each of you.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Seal
Her Majesty's Inspector