

St John's Primary School

St John's Road, Wallingford, OX10 9AG

Inspection dates 20–21 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress across the school, reaching above average standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers know their pupils well and plan lessons carefully around topics that capture their interest. This motivates pupils to work with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Marking is highly effective in guiding pupils to improve their work.
- School leaders, including the governing body, have consolidated the school's previous good performance. The school's accurate self-evaluation and good quality professional development for staff continue to play an important part in ensuring the good quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are outstanding, right from Reception. This contributes very well to their good learning. Pupils are unfailingly polite and welcoming to each other and to visitors. They like to work together and help each other in lessons and at playtimes. Pupils enjoy school very much and know how to stay safe.
- The wide range of opportunities and experiences provided by the school, together with a clear emphasis on developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, contributes highly to the happy, harmonious and caring community.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. This is because teachers do not always set work at the right level of difficulty to ensure consistently rapid progress.
- Pupils, especially the most able, are not always given targets that are ambitious enough to enable them to learn at a fast rate. Therefore, they do not consistently reach the highest standards of which they are capable.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons taught by 10 teachers. In addition, inspectors observed the teaching of phonics (letter patterns and the sounds they represent). Two of these observations were made jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, parents and carers, staff including senior and middle leaders (those members of staff often responsible for different age phases or subjects), groups of pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including teachers' planning, the school's self-evaluation and development plans, assessment information, monitoring files, minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding documentation and samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked with them about their books.
- Inspectors considered the 52 responses to the on-line questionnaire for parents and carers (Parent View).

Inspection team

Beverley Perin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Wolfson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families) is below average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. Very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds or speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is less than half the average.
- The school's governing body manages a daily breakfast club and an after-school club, which were part of this inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher joined the school two years after the previous inspection.
- The school is planning to convert to academy status in June 2013 through the establishment of a local umbrella trust with a small number of other primary schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding so that all pupils make rapid progress by:
 - checking that teachers always plan activities at the right level of difficulty so as to enable pupils, especially the most able, to reach the highest standards.
 - setting pupils, especially the most able, more ambitious targets for achievement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils work with interest and enthusiasm in all years, applying themselves keenly to succeed. They work readily in pairs or groups to complete tasks and enjoy developing their ideas together. Pupils develop knowledge, skill and understanding across the full range of subjects at a good, rather than outstanding pace, as not all pupils reach the highest levels in their work.
- Pupils enter Reception with skills that are just below those expected for their age. As a result of carefully planned activities and well-targeted support, children make good progress in all areas of their learning and personal development by the time they start in Year 1.
- Pupils make good progress across Key Stages 1 and 2. They reach standards in English and mathematics that are consistently above average. However, while progress is good, the level of the work set does not fully stretch pupils' thinking or work rate. This is especially true of the most able pupils who are not yet reaching the highest levels of which they are capable. For example, no pupils in Year 6 last year attained the more challenging Level 6 in the reading and mathematics tests.
- Pupils make good progress in their reading through the school. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in the Year 1 phonic-screening check was above average and represented good progress from their starting points. Reading continues to be taught well and reading at school and home is actively encouraged. Consequently, pupils are enthusiastic and confident readers and told inspectors that they enjoy reading a great deal.
- Progress in writing is consistently good or better across the school because pupils have frequent planned opportunities to write on a wide range of interesting topics across the curriculum. Inspectors saw examples of pupils' persuasive writing to a group of entrepreneurs to seek financial support for a product they are developing themselves.
- Pupils are enthusiastic mathematicians and make good progress, increasingly applying their number skills with real purpose. For example, in one lesson, pupils were seen grappling with percentages and proportions in order to calculate possible profit margins and discussing the possible outcomes with each other.
- The few disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported and make similar progress to their peers. The same is true of the few pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.
- Pupils in receipt of the pupil premium, reach similar standards as their peers, and often better than all pupils nationally, as measured in average point scores in English and mathematics. This is because they benefit from one-to-one or small-group teaching to help them catch up or reach higher levels.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers and other adults work well together to secure pupils' good learning. They regularly check their pupils' progress to identify those who are at risk of falling behind so that those pupils have extra support.
- Classrooms are busy learning places with helpful and stimulating displays that celebrate pupils' achievements across different curriculum areas and provide learning prompts and resources that visually record their current and recent learning. This motivates pupils to work hard and with enthusiasm.
- Teachers plan interesting activities across subjects that help pupils to develop and practise a range of skills. For example, in one lesson, pupils learned to classify shapes. They worked inside

and outside the classroom to identify, measure, discuss and record different shapes. In another lesson, following a visit to a pizza restaurant, pupils enjoyed pretending to divide the pizza into various sized pieces and learning to use a protractor to measure the angle of each slice.

- Questions are used well to extend pupils' learning and they have many opportunities to develop their ideas through speaking and discussion. In one lesson in Reception, for example, the children decided to build a volcano together in the sandpit. The teacher encouraged them to describe what they were doing and skilfully prompted their imagination, finding opportunities to help them to expand their vocabulary.
- Pupils' work is marked frequently and teachers always give highly effective written and oral feedback to pupils on what they have done well and what needs to be improved. Pupils routinely respond to and act promptly on their teachers' comments so that they learn from their mistakes and their work improves as a result.
- Teaching does not ensure pupils' outstanding progress because, typically, activities are not planned to stretch the most able to reach the highest levels as the work is not always hard enough to really challenge pupils' thinking and work rate.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons, around school and in the playground is outstanding. They are charming, welcoming and polite to each other and to adults at all times. They have excellent attitudes to learning and older pupils enjoy supporting the younger ones, for example, acting as play leaders in the infant playground.
- Pupils and their parents say that they feel very safe in school and pupils are aware of how to keep safe, for example when using the internet. Pupils explained to inspectors that they have learned about the difference between being a bystander and actively stepping in to stop bullying, should it occur. Pupils are aware of different forms of bullying; including racist and cyber bullying and they express intolerance of teasing people because they are different.
- When, very occasionally, behavioural incidents do occur, pupils say they are dealt with very effectively by the school and are managed well for the very small minority of pupils who occasionally find it more difficult to settle into school life.
- Pupils know and believe in the school's key values, citing 'honesty, friendship and love' as those most recently promoted. They have great pride in their school and one pupil told inspectors, 'I look forward to coming back to school after the holiday because it makes you feel so at home.' Many nodded in agreement.
- Pupils feel their voice is valued through 'K.N.A.S.T' (Kids Need a Say Too). They have influenced the atmosphere in the school hall at lunchtime through the addition of music, contribute to the school's behaviour policy and are being asked to say how they feel about their learning experiences.

The leadership and management are good

- The school benefits from the determined and effective leadership of the headteacher who, with other leaders, the staff and governing body, strives to ensure that everyone is successful in a school that cares about every child.
- An effective process of self-evaluation enables leaders to identify the school's priorities and plan developments accurately. Consequently, school leaders have ensured that the quality of teaching has strengthened and that all groups of pupils make at least good progress. The school has correctly identified that targets set have not been high enough, especially for the most able, and that there is not yet enough outstanding teaching to ensure that a higher proportion of pupils make outstanding progress.
- Leaders help teachers and teaching assistants to improve their practice through regular lesson

observations and giving advice, teaching the class together, training and coaching. Teachers visit other schools to share or observe best practice.

- Middle Leaders have dedicated time to plan together in teams, which has had a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning experiences, particularly in writing and reading, where leaders have made sure that pupils have daily opportunities to practise these skills across all subjects.
- The good range of subjects planned (often called the curriculum), provides many opportunities for exciting topic work. Pupils benefit from a good range of visits, for example to museums and theatres, and pupils particularly appreciate the variety of enrichment clubs such as the 'Funky Friday' jazz club and cookery club. The 'forest school' initiative, which develops pupils' environmental awareness, is greatly valued by the whole school community for contributing to pupils' personal, social and emotional development.
- The school places a high value on developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and ensures there are opportunities for pupils to reflect on how they can help each other and value differences. As a result, pupils respect and value others' backgrounds and beliefs in lessons, through assemblies and visits to local places of worship.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well and works hard with individual families to engage them and ensure that any pupils at risk of not doing well are identified quickly so they too make good progress. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors receive training and development to maintain their effectiveness. Governors monitor the work of the school closely through regular visits during which governors meet the headteacher, members of the leadership team and staff, visit lessons and talk to groups of pupils and listen to them read. Governors contribute to the school's self-evaluation processes and have supported the headteacher in tackling underperformance of staff. The governing body is informed about the outcomes of the school's annual performance management targets, which helps them ensure that salary progression and promotion are based on evidence of teacher performance. Governors know about pupil performance of different groups including those supported by the pupil premium and how the school compares to others. Minutes of meetings confirm that governors ensure value for money. Governors ensure that arrangements for safeguarding and other statutory duties are securely implemented.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	123065
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	403506

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Esther Mason
Headteacher	Jane Ratcliffe
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 May 2008
Telephone number	01491 837305
Email address	head.2567@st-johns.oxon.sch.uk

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