

St John's CE Primary School

Clarence Road, Longsight, Manchester, M13 0YE

Inspection dates 27–28 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Excellent leadership by the headteacher, strongly supported by an increasingly effective staff team, has raised the quality of teaching to be good throughout the school. As a result, the achievement of all groups of pupils is good.
- High quality provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs means they do particularly well.
- The school is very effective in helping pupils who initially lag behind their classmates' standards to catch up and to achieve well.
- Pupils enjoy school, feel safe and secure there, and have good relationships with each other and with staff. They behave well.
- Pupils are keen to learn, work hard, and show good skills in working collaboratively.
- Achievement continues to rise and is particularly good in reading by the end of Year 6.
- Extremely good support for pupils who speak English as an additional language means they learn English very quickly and then make the same good progress as other pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are still minor inconsistencies in the good teaching. Aspects which are strengths in most lessons are relative weaknesses in a few others.
- Occasionally, work is too hard or too easy for some pupils, particularly the more able; the pace of learning sometimes slows for parts of a few lessons.
- Adults do not always keep a close enough eye on groups who are working independently.
- The marking of pupils' work does not always tell them how to improve, and pupils do not always respond to their teachers' comments.
- Pupils in the older classes do not consistently use a joined style of handwriting.
- Although each individual child's progress is checked carefully in Reception and Nursery, there is no system to give leaders a clear view of how well different groups are achieving.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons, six of these as joint observations with senior leaders. They also visited several sessions to observe how disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are helped to learn.
- Several younger pupils in Key Stage 1 read to inspectors.
- The team spoke to staff formally about a number of issues, and held discussions with those teachers whose lessons were observed. Inspectors also spoke to groups of pupils, members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority.
- Work in pupils' books was analysed, as were the records the school keeps of pupils' attainment and progress.
- Pupils were observed at break-times, in the lunch hall and around the school.
- Insufficient replies were received to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) for them to be published. Inspectors examined the results of several surveys the school had undertaken into parental opinion, and spoke informally to a number of parents in the playground.
- A variety of documentation was examined, particularly that relating to keeping pupils' safe, how staff performance is managed, and how the pupil premium funding is spent. Inspectors also analysed the school's strategies for gaining an accurate view of its performance.

Inspection team

Steven Hill, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Karen Bramwell	Additional Inspector
David Halford	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a large primary school in an urban location.
- The very large majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, with about three-quarters having Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage. Others come from a wide range of different groups. About 80% of pupils speak English as an additional language, a very high proportion.
- The school receives pupil premium funding for almost 40% of its pupils, because they are known to be eligible for free school meals. This proportion is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action is average. The proportion who are supported at school action plus or who have statements of special educational needs is above average. The proportion with statements is particularly high, at about five per cent. Many of these pupils have complex needs on the autistic spectrum.
- The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs who have hearing impairment. Three such pupils are currently on roll.
- The school meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations set for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A new headteacher took up her post just before the previous inspection in 2011. Since then, there have been substantial changes in other staffing.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement to be excellent by making more teaching outstanding, particularly by ensuring that:-
 - tasks are always at the right level of difficulty for different pupils, especially in challenging the more able
 - a brisk pace of learning is maintained throughout lessons
 - marking shows pupils more clearly how to improve, and pupils always follow up their teachers' advice and have time to do so
 - adults always check during lessons that groups working independently are doing as well as they should, and intervening if needed to help them improve
 - pupils in Key Stage 2 use a joined style of handwriting in their work.
- Devising systems to record children's progress in the Reception and Nursery that give leaders a clear overview of how well different groups are achieving.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good because all groups of pupils make good progress throughout the school. Progress has accelerated considerably in the last two years. Children start in the youngest classes with skills that are well-below those expected for their ages. Attainment was a little below average at the end of Year 6 last year, and this year is on track to be better, particularly in reading. The improved progress means that attainment is going up in all year groups.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make particularly good progress in the light of their difficulties and their starting points. They receive carefully targeted support which is designed to meet their particular needs. Skilled adults challenge these pupils to achieve as well as they can and ensure that they have tasks that are manageable.
- Pupils in the hearing impaired resourced provision do extremely well. They receive specific, tailored help out of class, but spend most of the day learning successfully alongside their peers, where extra adult help and good provision of suitable technological support help them learn.
- Pupils' reading standards are going up throughout the school. The teaching of phonics (how the letters in words represent different sounds) is done well, with younger pupils receiving lively, motivating teaching in small groups matched to their particular levels of learning. This is underpinning better progress as pupils get older. Writing standards are also rising, but not as fast. In older classes, pupils are slow to write consistently in a joined hand to improve their fluency and their spelling.
- Pupils who are entitled to free school meals made exceptionally good progress last year, with Year 6 making much greater gains in learning than their classmates during the course of Key Stage 2. This greatly narrowed previous large gaps in their standards, but their attainment was still a little behind that of their classmates by just under a term in English and by two terms in mathematics.
- There are no overall differences in the progress of different ethnic groups, nor between the achievements of boys and girls. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive excellent support throughout the school, and perform as well as first-language speakers.

The quality of teaching is good

- Almost all teaching is now good, and there are a few lessons where it is outstanding. This is a major improvement since the previous inspection.
- Teachers routinely prepare work at different levels of difficulty for different groups in the class, and generally this is done successfully. Occasionally, work is too easy or too hard for some pupils, particularly in not challenging the more able. At times, these pupils start by doing the same work as the rest of the class, when they are capable of tackling more difficult tasks straight away.
- A consistent strength of lessons is the good management of behaviour. Routines are well established and relationships with pupils are good. Pupils work hard and behave well as a result.
- Teachers give pupils many good opportunities to work collaboratively and discuss their ideas together. This is helping them to learn well in different subjects, and is greatly supporting the improvements being made in writing standards by helping pupils establish what they want to say before they put pen to paper.
- Most lessons have a good pace so learning is quick and pupils are fully involved. On occasions, the pace can slow for parts of lessons, often as pupils change activities or have to wait patiently for their classmates before beginning the next task.
- In the large majority of lessons, pupils' progress is regularly checked by the adults. They intervene skilfully to clarify understanding if pupils are confused, modify tasks if they are too hard, or challenge pupils to refine their work when they are successful. Occasionally, however,

groups who are working independently are left to get on for too long without adults checking on their success or helping them to improve.

- Teachers mark pupils' written work regularly, give them feedback on what they have done well, praise them for success, and point out their mistakes. In the best practice, teachers give pupils clear pointers to help them succeed in future. However, this is not consistent between classes and subjects. Too often, there is little evidence that pupils have responded to their teachers' advice.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good in lessons and this is a strong factor in the good progress they make. They work hard, listen attentively to their teachers and to each other, and concentrate well on what they are doing.
- Pupils enjoy learning and are keen to succeed. When mistakes are pointed out in their work, they tackle them cheerfully, and they attempt tasks they find difficult with persistence.
- Boys and girls from different backgrounds form good relationships so they collaborate well in the classroom, and play happily together at break times.
- Pupils themselves are realistic but positive about behaviour. They acknowledge that there are sometimes minor problems but say that the adults quickly address these, and help sort out disagreements between friends by listening to both sides of the story. The responses from parents show a high degree of satisfaction with behaviour in the school.
- Those disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, who find conforming to the usual standards of behaviour difficult, are given extremely effective help. The adults deal with any problems that occur so that the learning of others is seldom disrupted. A wide range of initiatives, targeted on these pupils' specific needs, ensures that their behaviour improves, they cope better with day-to-day difficulties, and their subsequent progress improves too.
- Pupils have learned about different kinds of bullying, and can explain clearly how this differs from other poor behaviour. They say it is rare in the school but that, if it happened, they would be very confident in approaching an adult about this, and are sure that the issue would be tackled quickly and effectively.
- Pupils feel safe in the school and can explain why, with the main factor being the trust they have in the adults to look after them. They have learned a lot about how to keep themselves safe out of school, when using the internet, for example.
- Pupils' enjoyment of many aspects of school is reflected in their above-average attendance. Punctuality has been a problem for a small number of pupils, but clear action by the school and outside agencies has addressed this well.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has provided excellent leadership to the school in improving its performance in the last two years. She has been strongly supported by the work of the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, in forming a team of staff who now share clear goals and a common approach to improving provision.
- The key to the school's success has been an unrelenting focus on pupils' progress, backed up by improved assessment procedures, and regular meetings which hold teachers to account for the progress of their classes. Any pupils falling behind are provided with increasingly sophisticated and well-tailored help to catch up. Much-improved leadership of the provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has strongly supported this.
- The concentration on progress has been complemented by a rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching. Teachers are given clear feedback on their performance, told what they need to do

to improve, and given advice and training to help them do so. Expectations have been raised as a result, and teaching quality greatly improved.

- The management of teachers' performance has been linked well to this monitoring, and the school has been robust in ensuring that good practice is suitably reflected in teachers' pay, and that progress up the pay scales has been dependent on meeting clear targets.
- The local authority has provided light-touch support which has complemented the work of senior staff and governors well.
- Pupil premium funding has been successfully spent on ensuring that eligible pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life, both socially and academically. Specific help to meet the needs of individuals and groups has greatly enhanced their achievement, so that their attainment is much closer to that of their classmates by the end of the school. This is just a part of the schools' successful programme to ensure that discrimination is combated and equal opportunities are available to all pupils, regardless of background.
- The school has increased the range and interest of its curriculum, with meaningful links between different subjects contributing well to pupils' understanding and enjoyment. Some exciting writing stems from pupils' interest in their history topics, for example. There is good provision made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, drawing well on the variety of cultures in pupils' own heritages.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have good systems to understand both how well pupils, including those eligible for the pupil premium, are achieving and the quality of teaching. They make good use of data to do this, and are well-able to challenge the school and hold it to account for its performance. They have supported the leadership team well in insisting on improved expectations. They understand the proper use of performance management, and make sure that systems are implemented rigorously. Together with senior staff, they have ensured that safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

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	105504
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	404996

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	355
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Gomersall
Headteacher	Isobel Booler
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2011
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