

# St John's CofE Primary School

Blakebrook, Kidderminster, Worcestershire, DY11 6AP

**Inspection dates** 23–24 April 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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

- Children join the Reception class with below average skills for their age. When they leave Year 6, pupils' attainment is average but is rising. Pupils achieve well, good teaching ensures there are no major variations in progress between different groups of pupils.
- Lessons are carefully planned and prepared and offer varied, lively and interesting learning experiences, so pupils make good progress.
- Marking of pupils' work is excellent and includes useful comments that encourage pupils to improve their work. The regular checks that teachers make on progress helps them develop a full understanding of the best methods to use to help individuals.
- Warm relationships both between pupils and with staff contribute to a calm, safe atmosphere and pupils' good behaviour. Disruption to learning is very rare and incidents of bullying are most unusual and swiftly and effectively dealt with.
- The rigorous checks done by leaders and managers provide them with a full understanding of all aspects of the school. Areas of concern are vigorously followed up and thorough planning results in rapid improvements. Staff share the headteacher's vision and unwavering commitment to making the school better; they work very well together to ensure the school's success.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally teaching is paced too slowly or offers few opportunities for pupils to learn independently. Teachers do not always check on progress enough or sum up properly at the end of lessons.
- Members of the governing body do not check on the progress of pupils who are eligible for additional government funding thoroughly enough.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 17 lessons taught by 16 teachers and undertook four joint observations with senior staff.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils, teachers, the headteacher and senior managers, representatives of the governing body and a local authority officer.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, examined numerous school documents including policies on safeguarding, assessment and progress checking information, planning documents, performance management arrangements and various records, including governing body minutes.
- The views of 41 parents were analysed through the Parent View website. The findings from a recent parental survey undertaken by the governing body were analysed. Staff questionnaire responses were also taken into account.

## Inspection team

John Carnaghan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Julie Fox

Additional Inspector

Glen Goddard

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for looked-after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families) is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for its pupils (lessons that take place regularly away from school).
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
  - maintaining a brisk pace throughout all lessons so that pupils' learning is maximised
  - achieving a good balance between the teacher's instructions and the opportunities for pupils to think and work independently
  - ensuring that lesson summaries check on pupils' progress and enable teachers to plan future lessons that build on what has already been learnt.
- Strengthen the way the governing body analyses the allocation of pupil premium funds and finds out whether this expenditure assists eligible pupils in making good or better progress and provides good value for money.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the school in Reception with skills that are generally lower than those seen for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. They make a good start because they are well taught and quickly develop good learning habits which include listening carefully to adults, taking turns and sharing. Children are well prepared for working on the National Curriculum when they transfer to Year 1.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 has risen steadily over the last three years. Attainment is currently average in English but above average in mathematics. This pattern means that pupils' achievement at St John's is higher than the national average.
- Progress this year has been rapid in all years. This is a result of greatly improved teaching. Lessons are now relevant, brisk and challenging and all groups of pupils are stimulated to learn.
- Thorough assessment helps the school to identify pupils who find learning difficult and put in place the appropriate help they need. This means that very few pupils fall behind and achievement is good for most pupils, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs. The school's approach ensures equality of opportunity for all pupils and makes sure there is no discrimination.
- Under-achievement in mathematics in past years has been carefully checked and the reasons perceptively analysed. Fundamental changes to the teaching of the subject have eradicated previous weaknesses. Effective training has raised staff confidence and lessons are now purposeful and well-focused on developing pupils' numeracy skills. Progress in mathematics is accelerating and standards are rising across the school.
- Linking sounds and letters is well taught from an early age and in consequence pupils make good progress in reading. Additional assistance is well directed to help those with difficulties to build their skills, so all pupils develop their ability to use the printed word across the subjects they study. The school uses every opportunity to promote pupils' enjoyment of reading. Current attainment in Year 6 is predicted to be above the average results seen last year.
- Pupils receiving pupil premium funds benefit from a variety of extra support, including mentoring which is carefully selected to meet individual needs. The gap in attainment between these pupils (who are in the main eligible for free school meals) and other pupils at the school has been carefully analysed and actions are resulting in progress quickening and the gap narrowing rapidly.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching shows a number of strengths that are consistently applied by teachers. This is delivering accelerated progress across the school.
- Lessons are meticulously prepared and planned. They usually include brief, interesting activities that are well targeted to meet pupils' needs, being challenging and supportive in equal measure. Varied resources are used carefully to stimulate learning. For example pupils use laptop computers to draft and redraft their creative writing.
- Other adults in classrooms are well briefed by teachers so they know what to do, offering

particularly effective support to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, making sure that no-one falls behind.

- Teachers make clear what they want pupils to learn. They set high expectations and question pupils carefully as lessons go along to check that everyone is making progress, adjusting activities as a result when they need to.
- Classroom relationships are very positive. This is because teachers are good role models, managing behaviour with assurance, tact and courtesy. This fosters good relationships. In turn, pupils are almost always polite, receptive and keen to learn.
- An excellent Year 6 English lesson typified many of teaching's strengths. With confident, challenging questioning the teacher probed pupils' understanding of the text they were reading, giving a particular emphasis to developing their vocabulary by encouraging them to explain their answers in depth. Pupils were managed skilfully but with subtlety so they were keen to please and worked flat out to meet tight deadlines. They made outstanding progress.
- The marking of books and setting of targets is outstanding. Pupils benefit from the high quality, friendly advice that is regularly written in their books and use their targets to help them understand the next steps in their learning.
- Occasionally the intense pace of learning in lessons flags and tasks run on too long resulting in pupils' concentration diminishing. This can lead to a lesson running out of time so the teacher cannot sum up and reiterate learning properly or indicate what is planned for the next session. When teachers spend too long talking pupils cannot get on with learning independently and this slows their rate of progress.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The school is typically calm and orderly. Pupils get along well with one another, for example older ones actively keep an eye on their younger peers at play times. Movement around the school is quiet and sensible, with pupils taking turns to go through doorways in the more congested areas.
- Pupils listen well to one another and their teachers and follow instructions promptly and quietly. They appreciate the praise and rewards that their positive attitudes merit.
- When occasional lapses in behaviour occur, the school has effective policies to deal with them, including fairly applied sanctions. Staff offer very good support to individuals who find managing their behaviour difficult and this minimises disruption to others.
- Pupils, parents and staff agree that bullying is very unusual. Pupils know about the various forms of bullying, including cyber bullying. They express justifiable confidence in school staff to take bullying very seriously and act promptly and effectively should it occur.
- The school provides regular helpful briefings to pupils on how to stay safe in their everyday lives so, for example, they know how to avoid risk on the roads as well as on the internet or when texting or using web-sites.
- Attendance is average but rising due to the school's improvement work.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher's constant search for improvement and his high aspirations for the school are fully shared by leaders, managers and other staff. Close team-work has resulted in a united school that is ambitious to develop further. The school has moved from inadequate to good in under four years and demonstrates a strong capacity for sustaining continuous improvement.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this good and improving school.
- A comprehensive, rigorous system of checks on staff performance, particularly their teaching, has driven improvements across the school. The checks made on planning, marking and classroom performance are used relentlessly to promote the best possible practice. Perceptive analysis of these checks helps leaders to identify what training is needed both by groups of teachers and individual staff, so that teaching can continue to develop and improve.
- Information about pupils' progress is regularly gathered and checked to make sure it is as good as it can be and to identify any variations. The school then introduces the required support to help those whose progress is not fast enough, so fewer and fewer pupils fall behind.
- The mixture of subjects taught has been carefully developed to meet pupils' needs and tastes and develop their skills. For example topics like the study of the 'Titanic' are proving very interesting to boys and help to narrow the small gap in attainment with girls. Each term, pupils' learning is enlivened by either a visitor to the school or a curriculum related trip. An innovative feature is the study of languages spoken by local community groups such as Polish and Filipino.
- Well-planned assemblies contribute positively to pupils' spiritual understanding and classrooms have notice boards that exemplify current themes and encourage personal reflection. Pupils' politeness and respect for others is visible throughout the school and strong evidence of their good moral and social development. Different cultures are studied as part of the curriculum and plans are in place to seek partner schools in contrasting areas.
- The 'pyramid' of local schools provides mutual support and assists the sharing of good practice. Close links with the adjacent comprehensive school eases the transition of Year 6 pupils to secondary education.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors carry out thorough checks on the school's work. Links with subjects and a cycle of visits mean that members have a good grasp of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. They are well aware of the links between teachers' performance and their progress up the pay scales.
  - Regular training opportunities enable governors to keep abreast of educational developments. It also enhances their understanding of the school's performance compared with national averages. This enables them to hold the school to account.
  - The governing body undertakes regular checks on pupils' safety. Their perceptive contributions help the school in fully meeting safeguarding requirements
  - Members are aware of the pupil premium expenditure and contribute to discussions that determine where it should be spent. However, they have not fully evaluated how well pupils have done as a result of the extra support they have been given, so are unsure whether this provides good value for money.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135056
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	400159

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	391
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev Derek Arnold
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lawrence Gittins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 March 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01562 745558
<b>Fax number</b>	01562 871765
<b>Email address</b>	head@stjohns.worcs.sch.uk



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