

St John's Church of England Primary School

Denmark Street, Waterloo, Liverpool, Merseyside L22 9RG

Inspection dates 25–26 April 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- All pupils achieve well and make good progress from the time they join the school to the time they leave. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average.
- Teaching is good in all classes and there are some examples of outstanding teaching. Teachers plan interesting lessons which take account of pupils with different needs.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and in the playground. Pupils feel safe and are proud of their school.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers and between pupils are good. As one pupil said, 'It's not like a school, it's like a family.'
- The school is highly effective at promoting pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which adds to the school's happy and caring atmosphere.
- Vibrant displays in classrooms and around the school, including the many banners and international flags in the school hall, create a bright and exciting place for pupils to learn.
- The dynamic leadership of the new headteacher is moving the school forward at a rapid pace. Together with other leaders and the governing body, she has ensured that achievement and the quality of teaching have continued to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding and pupils do not have enough opportunities to plan their own activities.
- Not all pupils know how well they are doing or what they have to do to improve.
- Almost all leaders are new to their roles. They do not consistently use the information collected about pupils to identify where more help is needed. Neither do they carry out enough checks on the quality of teaching to help improve lessons further.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They saw 15 lessons or parts of lessons, three of which were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 21 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also spoke informally to parents as they brought their children to school.
- Questionnaires from 15 staff were received and their views taken into account.
- The inspection team listened to pupils read, spoke with them about their learning and looked at the work in their books.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school's checks on how well it is doing, school improvement plans, data on pupils' current progress, leaders' reports of lesson observations, minutes of the governing body meetings, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Heather Simpson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lenford White

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St John's is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from a White British background and speak English fluently.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.) At St John's, this funding supports those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children that are looked after.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is a breakfast club on site which is managed by the governing body.
- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2012 and she has formed a new leadership team.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate further pupils' progress and increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by ensuring that:
 - teachers allow pupils to plan their own activities and use their own ideas
 - pupils know how well they are doing and know what they need to do to improve.
- Develop the roles of the newly established leadership team by:
 - consistently using the information gathered by teachers and through testing to track pupils' progress and arrange additional support if pupils are beginning to fall behind
 - checking on the quality of teaching and providing support to help teachers improve their practice and deliver outstanding lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children enter the Reception class with skills and knowledge which are lower than those typically expected for their age. They make good progress due to the wide range of activities planned and the careful guidance and support given by adults. As a result, most reach levels which are similar to those nationally by the end of Reception.
- Pupils make good progress from Year 1 to Year 6. This leads to attainment that is above average in both English and mathematics by the time pupils leave the school. The numbers reaching the higher levels, especially in mathematics, are higher than those nationally.
- While attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 fluctuates, it is broadly average. Attainment dipped in 2012 due to the specific characteristics of this group of pupils. Also, approximately a third of the original pupils left the school and new pupils joined part-way through Key Stage 1. Currently, Year 2 pupils are on track to reach standards which are average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Reading is enjoyed by pupils across the school. It is taught well and, from the outset, children are able to use their knowledge of letters and sounds to break down unfamiliar or tricky words. Older pupils can discuss their favourite authors and develop good reading habits, for example, reading at bedtime. Volunteers and support staff make a valuable contribution to hearing pupils read and ensuring they keep up with their classmates. A programme in Year 2 for pupils who were falling behind has had a significant impact and led to pupils making excellent progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress due to carefully planned activities which meet their individual needs. Adults provide high quality support both inside and outside lessons. Additional resources have also been purchased to support their specific needs, for example, special furniture or toys, and coloured exercise books and mini whiteboards, to help those with dyslexia. This has helped to raise their achievement.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium achieve well. The funding is used to provide additional teaching assistant support and equipment. As a result, these pupils make good progress and, on occasion, better progress than others in their class. Consequently, there is no gap in attainment in English or mathematics between these pupils and others in the school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is consistently good in all classes and some lessons seen during the inspection were outstanding. Relationships between adults and pupils are highly positive and pupils say that teachers make it, 'fun to learn'. The large majority of parents who responded to Parent View believe that their children are taught well.
- Where teaching is outstanding, teachers use creative and imaginative ideas. This leads to highly motivated and enthusiastic participation of pupils in lessons. For example, in an outstanding Year 6 lesson, the teacher dressed up as 'Darth Vader' to teach pupils about punctuation, such as question marks, exclamation marks and brackets, through actions. Every pupil was totally engrossed and copied the actions of Darth Vader. They were involved throughout the lesson and the teacher was relentless in focusing on extending and developing pupils' vocabulary and writing throughout this session.
- Well-planned lessons, which build on pupils' previous knowledge and understanding, are carefully matched to pupils' individual needs. However, pupils tend to do the activity given them by the teacher and do not have enough opportunities to plan their own work or use their own ideas.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They extend and develop the correct terminology in numeracy and literacy lessons and also check that pupils understand new words introduced.
- Classrooms are vibrant with many useful prompts that pupils can use during lessons to help with

their writing or mathematics. There are also areas where pupils can sit and think or read quietly.

- Support staff and adult helpers are used effectively in each classroom so that pupils at all ability levels have maximum adult support and encouragement. They make a particularly valuable contribution to the progress made by those who have special educational needs by working with them individually or in small groups.
- Teachers check on pupils' understanding during and at the end of lessons. Apart from pupils in Year 6, pupils do not know what levels they are working at or what they need to do to reach the next level. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and occasionally add some suggestions for improvement. However, this is inconsistent and opportunities are not always provided to allow pupils to act on the advice given.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour in lessons and around school is good and, in school worship, it is excellent. Pupils show respect for each other and all adults and are proud of their school. Most parents agree that children behave well and feel safe. Staff and pupils agree.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, such as physical and verbal bullying, and older pupils are able to describe what cyber-bullying is. They say that bullying is rare but that if there are any problems, they are quickly sorted out by adults. School records show this is the case and that behaviour over time is typically good.
- Pupils feel safe and are taught how to keep themselves safe. They know who to approach for help if there is a problem and know about the need to take care when using the internet.
- The breakfast club adds to the high-quality care that pupils receive. It not only provides a good start to the day, but offers valuable opportunities for pupils to socialise and mix with different age groups.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. It is strongly promoted through the range of subjects taught, including a wide range of European languages, and the high level of care and respect shown by adults. Pupils from different backgrounds and with different abilities work and play together happily. They have a good appreciation of those from other cultures through their link with, as pupils call it, their 'sister school' in Waterloo, Sierra Leone.
- Attendance is average over time, although an outbreak of chicken pox and some severe weather conditions have affected this year's figures.

The leadership and management are good

- The newly appointed headteacher has set a very clear and ambitious direction for the school. This is supported and shared with other leaders and the governing body. Staff morale is high. All those who returned questionnaires had positive views and, as one member said, 'It's a pleasure to be part of such an excellent team.'
- Leaders and managers have an accurate overview of where the school's strengths and areas for development lie. Action plans have been drawn up to ensure that continual improvement takes place, based on appropriate priorities.
- Information is collected on how well pupils are doing but not all leaders use this to identify when pupils are starting to fall behind and then take action to ensure additional support is provided.
- Currently, the headteacher checks the quality of teaching and sets targets for teachers based on the school-improvement priorities. Other leaders are new to their roles and have not had time to carry out enough checks in lessons or in pupils' books to determine how they can help teachers improve further.
- A high priority is placed on staff training. All staff have benefitted from external or internal training and this is helping to raise achievement and improve the quality of teaching.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive regular additional support, and the gifted and talented pupils have other opportunities, for example, running the school newspaper.

- A wide range of subjects are taught, including French, German and Spanish and links made to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Visits, visitors and school clubs also provide memorable experiences and help promote pupils' personal and social development.
- The local authority accurately judges the school to be good. It is aware of the school's strengths and priorities. It has recently provided valuable support to the new headteacher through paired visits to some lessons and by arranging a partnership with another headteacher at a local school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are actively involved in school life, for example, by leading worship, giving talks to classes or observing teaching with the headteacher. They know how well the school is doing compared to other schools nationally as they have a good understanding of data and use this information to challenge and support school leaders. They are aware of what the pupil premium is used for and know what impact this has on the progress of those pupils who are known to be eligible for this funding. Appointed governors set targets for the headteacher and check that salary increases for staff are only awarded where there is clear evidence that pupils are making good progress. Training is regularly undertaken to help governors fulfil their statutory duties effectively, for example, in relation to safeguarding and finance. As a result these aspects are fully met.

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	104920
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	411888

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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gary Shaw
Headteacher	Suzanne D'Alton
Date of previous school inspection	15 July 2010
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