

St John's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105929
Local Authority	Salford
Inspection number	308985
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2009
Reporting inspector	John Dunne

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	204
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Dave King
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Rubin
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Daisy Bank Avenue Swinton Manchester Lancashire M27 5FU
Telephone number	0161 737 4622
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pupils at this slightly smaller than average sized school come from a wide range of social backgrounds including a significant number from disadvantaged areas. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is lower than average as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is slightly higher than average. The school has received the Healthy Schools Award, the Quality Mark and has been awarded the Financial Management Standard in Schools. The school has had three changes of leadership and management in the past 18 months. A new permanent headteacher was appointed in April 2008.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. The new headteacher is leading the school successfully to improve its performance. As a result of her excellent leadership and management skills, clear vision and an unwavering determination to raise standards, the school is showing improvement in many aspects of its performance.

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They begin school with skills and knowledge which are lower than those expected for their age and make good progress so that by the end of the Reception year they are working securely within the levels expected of them. After a decline in 2006, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are now rising again. This rise was particularly sharp in 2008, when standards were significantly above average. Inspection evidence and teacher assessments show that current standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are also well above average. This represents good progress, given pupils' starting points. As a result of significant gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding, it has been more difficult for the school to raise standards at Key Stage 2 as rapidly as it has in Key Stage 1. In 2008 Key Stage 2 provisional test results were broadly average overall, but lower in mathematics than in English. Nevertheless, these standards represent satisfactory progress overall in relation to pupils' starting points.

High expectations established by the new headteacher, together with closely monitored policies and systems with increased accountability, have resulted in improved behaviour and attendance of pupils, which are now satisfactory. The school recently exceeded its challenging target for attendance. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although the quality of lessons is too variable. There are gaps in the subject knowledge of some teachers, especially in mathematics, and teachers' planning does not always create learning activities which challenge pupils of all abilities. There are also inconsistencies in teachers' use of the marking and behaviour management systems and this is impacting negatively on learning. Committed senior leaders and close monitoring from governors have given good support to enable all staff to develop their skills. Improved achievement in mathematics in Years 5 and 6 is a clear indication that systems put in place are working. Middle leaders are becoming increasingly involved in monitoring teaching and learning and are beginning to develop the necessary managerial skills, although they are not yet active enough in improving classroom practice.

The significant number of vulnerable pupils, those with learning and emotional difficulties and pupils presenting challenging behaviour, receive effective support and individualised programmes from a wide range of adults and outside agencies in this caring school. As a result, they are making satisfactory progress.

Pupils say that recent improvements have been significant and as a result, they are much happier, feel safe and secure and believe they are making much more progress. Inspection findings support these views. The views of parents and pupils have been carefully sought by the school and used to improve provision. The majority of parents and the overwhelming majority of pupils are highly supportive of the school's leadership.

The significant improvements made during the past year in behaviour, attendance, progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching and learning, marking, achievement and standards demonstrate that the school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children enter the Nursery with standards lower than those expected for their age. They make good progress in communication, language and literacy, and number development so that by the end of Early Years Foundation Stage most children are working within the goals expected for the end of this stage.

Children settle in well and enjoy playing and learning in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Personal and social development is outstanding and children play well together, take responsibility and work independently. Their welfare is well catered for because of the good quality of care from the adults. Children enjoy having access to the outdoors at all times and teachers and teaching assistants provide exciting, good quality learning opportunities in the outside area. For example, children enjoyed a number hunt in the wooded area which gave them opportunities to develop good language, negotiation and number skills due to the high quality interaction with adults, as well as contributing effectively to their physical development.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. All the adults form a closely knit team who work and plan effectively together. An example of their commitment is their daily, early morning meeting to review and update learning plans for all children. Links with parents are good. For example, children take home 'All About Me' books which inform parents of children's achievements and progress and many parents respond positively providing details of what children are doing at home. Despite determined efforts by the school, there are still too many parents bringing their children to Nursery and Reception late, which means they miss important opportunities to develop their reading skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Eliminate inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning so that all lessons are at least good.
- Ensure that all teachers have sufficient subject knowledge and understanding to raise standards in mathematics.
- Improve the monitoring of teaching and learning by middle managers.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are now broadly average by the end of Year 6 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Provisional results in Key Stage 1 assessments in 2008 were significantly higher than average. This represents good progress for this group of pupils.

Provisional results in the Key Stage 2 national tests in 2008 indicated that standards were broadly average overall, but lower in mathematics than in English and science. When these pupils started Key Stage 2, their standards were broadly average. Consequently this represents satisfactory progress overall for this group of pupils.

The school now sets very challenging targets for pupils and increasing numbers are achieving them. However there remains inconsistent progress in mathematics across the school. Improved

teaching and thorough analysis of the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding, with well targeted intervention, have begun to improve achievement in mathematics amongst pupils currently on roll.

The significant number of vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because of the way teachers and teaching assistants modify lessons for them and provide opportunities for small-group work. The small number of pupils from ethnic minorities and those who speak English as an additional language also make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Children greatly enjoy the frequent, moving and thought-provoking religious assemblies. They also learn how to show empathy, concern and respect for others and other cultures through well planned lessons and the effective use of outside agencies. For example, in a Year 3 lesson pupils were fascinated to learn how water shortages in Africa affected the lives of children of their own age. As a result of such experiences, their spiritual and moral development is good, as is their social development and understanding of other cultures.

Behaviour has been a serious concern, but the increasingly consistent application of new behaviour guidelines has brought about considerable improvement. Although incidents of inappropriate behaviour still occur, mostly at lunchtimes, they are decreasing. Pupils say that they enjoy school, feel safe and that any incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively. Pupils also say that they now know how they are expected to behave and understand the consequences of poor behaviour.

Attendance is satisfactory. Due to the strenuous efforts of the school, attendance and punctuality have improved and the number of pupils persistently absent has declined significantly.

Pupils are beginning to understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and physical exercise. Within the school council pupils have clear roles and responsibilities and were proud to tell inspectors how they had been given opportunities to bring about important changes in the school.

Pupils show their awareness of the needs of others through fundraising, supporting charities and activities with the church. However, the school understands that it needs to improve opportunities for pupils to participate in enterprise activities, engage with the wider community and to improve pupils' numeracy skills in order to develop their economic well-being further.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are good in the classes where teachers have good subject knowledge and plan a range of tasks so that all pupils are challenged. Where this occurs expectations are high, lessons are interesting and pupils make good progress because they are motivated to learn. Teaching is less successful when teachers' subject knowledge is weak, the pace is slow or planning does not effectively build on

previous learning. Consequently, in these lessons activities do not challenge pupils of different abilities sufficiently and teachers fail to identify and remedy gaps in knowledge and understanding. This is particularly the case in some mathematics lessons. Teaching assistants provide very effective support for those who need it, by adapting work to suit individual needs. Significant improvements in behaviour have promoted a much improved climate for learning. The recently introduced marking policy has significantly improved the quality of marking and pupils appreciate the helpful guidance they receive in most lessons on how to improve their work. However, a small number of teachers are not implementing the behaviour or marking policies fully and, consequently, this is contributing to the inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. However, it is still being developed and adapted to ensure that it meets pupils' needs and interests them more. Most lessons are taught as separate subjects and teachers are at an early stage of creating links between subjects that increase pupils' enjoyment and understanding of their world. The teaching of information and communication technology has improved and it is beginning to be used effectively across the curriculum to enhance pupils' learning. All pupils learn a modern foreign language which is well taught and this broadens the range of their learning. The school provides a good range of out-of-school clubs and activities. Provision for sporting activities has improved as a result of requests from parents and this is an indication of the improving relationships the school is developing with parents. Clubs are well attended and this has contributed positively to pupils' improved behaviour and attitudes to learning. Outside agencies, the local church community and other visitors to school enrich the curriculum for many pupils. The curriculum is well adapted for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school understands that it needs to improve opportunities for pupils to understand issues relating to sexual health, drugs, crime and citizenship.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school responds well to pupils' diverse needs with carefully planned individual support. Procedures for safeguarding pupils, including risk assessments and child protection, meet requirements and a very close watch is kept on potentially vulnerable pupils. This has been particularly successful in significantly reducing the numbers of persistent absentees. The school has well planned arrangements for those pupils who present challenging behaviour to ensure that their learning needs are met and the learning of others is not compromised. Pupils say there is always someone to turn to if they have any problems. For example, in some classes they can sign up for 'Bubble Time' which gives them the opportunity to have a private talk with their teacher if they feel insecure or worried. Skilled and well planned support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures that they make the same progress as others.

The school has developed comprehensive systems for identifying gaps in learning, particularly in mathematics, and effective intervention strategies to identify underachievement. The school has newly introduced electronic systems for measuring progress against challenging targets and teachers are beginning to use this detailed information to inform their lesson planning. As a result, increasing numbers of pupils are meeting the very challenging targets that are set for them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the future development of the school which is shared by the majority of staff and by pupils, because they have been fully involved in the planning. The headteacher has been well supported by the local authority, governors and many other support agencies who have also contributed significantly to improvements in the school. The school understands that there is still some way to go to improve teaching and learning further, but systems are developing and most middle managers are eager to respond to the way they are now increasingly being held to account. The school clearly understands what it needs to do to improve further and has the drive to succeed with challenges it still faces. The school has successfully placed emphasis on promoting community cohesion within the school and on building relationships with parents. Whilst it promotes sound links with its local community, for example through out of school clubs and a community carol service, provision for increasing pupils' understanding of wider national and international communities is less well developed. Therefore its promotion of community cohesion is currently satisfactory. However, confidence in the school has increased and the demand for places has grown. The school is more successfully promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating discrimination and, as a result, all groups of pupils are now making better progress. Governance is good because governors hold the school to account by making regular checks against very clear improvement plans which provide them with an accurate picture of how well the school is doing and what needs developing further. The impact of their work is becoming evident in improvements to provision and in pupils' achievement.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I am writing on behalf of the inspectors who visited your school recently. We greatly enjoyed meeting you. Thank you for the extremely warm welcome you gave us.

We have judged that your school is satisfactory and is improving quickly. We found that it does some things well, for example in the way it looks after you and cares for you. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are progressing well because your teachers work hard to make sure your lessons are enjoyable. Your teachers have also worked hard to help some of you to improve the way you behave and this is helping everyone learn better.

We have asked the staff to think about how they can make all lessons as successful as the best ones we saw. We have asked the school to make sure you make better progress in mathematics. We have also suggested that the teachers in charge of subjects could take a more active role in checking how well you are all doing.

You can also help by always being on your best behaviour. Some children in the Nursery and Reception classes don't always come to school on time and that is not giving you a good start to the day.

All the best for the future!