



Inspection report

St John's CE Primary School

**Better
education
and care**

Unique Reference Number 102027
LEA Enfield

Inspection number 275925
Inspection dates 25 and 26 May 2005
Reporting inspector Mr R Hartley HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Type of School	Primary	School address	Theobalds Park Road
School category	Voluntary Aided <i>Diocese of London</i>		Enfield Middlesex EN2 9BD
Age range of pupils	4 to 11 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0208 363 4709
Number on roll	79 full-time 6 part-time	Fax number	0208 367 1284
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr A Vittachi
Date of previous inspection	January 2004	Headteacher	Mrs R Moore

Age group	Published	Reference no.
4 to 11 years	28 June 2005	275925

Introduction

When St John's CE Primary School was inspected in January 2004, it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. Her Majesty's Inspectors of schools (HMI) subsequently visited the school on two occasions to monitor its progress, and reinspected the school in May 2005.

Description of the school

St John's CE Primary School is situated on the outskirts of Enfield. The school is smaller than average, with 79 full-time and 6 part-time pupils on roll. The number on roll has declined slightly in recent years, although it has now stabilised; the Foundation Stage class is full for September 2005. The majority of pupils live in the neighbourhood, although some travel from further afield. There are no pupils who are learning English as an additional language. Five pupils are eligible for free school meals. Eleven pupils have been identified as having special educational needs.

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Overall effectiveness of the school

In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils.

St John's CE Primary School has experienced difficulties for a considerable period of time, mainly due to weaknesses in leadership and management, unsatisfactory provision in the Foundation Stage, and an unacceptable degree of underachievement, especially affecting the more able pupils. Since the January 2004 inspection there have been major staffing changes including two joint acting headteachers appointed prior to the current substantive headteacher, and several short-term appointments in the Foundation Stage class.

However, with the determined leadership of the three headteachers and the commitment of the rest of the staff, there has been rapid and substantial improvement, and the school is now providing a good education for its pupils. Standards in lessons have shown significant improvement. As a consequence of good quality planning and assessment, tackling underachievement, and teaching which is consistently satisfactory and mostly good or very good, the pupils are achieving well. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are exemplary; they are keen to do well, attentive, and enjoy their work. The curriculum meets national requirements and there is a broad range of additional activities to enrich the pupils' educational experience.

Improvement since the last inspection

The inspection of January 2004 required the school to address key issues concerned with the leadership and management of the school, the Foundation Stage provision, underachievement, the quality of teaching, and assessment. There has been good progress in relation to all these issues.

Capacity to improve

The school has shown good progress over the last year and is well placed to improve further. The two acting headteachers set a keen pace for improvement focusing on raising standards, boosting staff morale, and tackling underachievement. The substantive headteacher has built on this good start and has achieved a good measure of success, both consolidating the initiatives and successfully promoting her own ideas for the school's regeneration. The staff are giving a good degree of support and are keen to make rapid progress. They are receptive to new ideas and have worked hard to use information about the pupils' achievements to plan work and set realistic targets for improvement. The staff are keen to refine their skills and display a healthy regard for regular monitoring and evaluation of their work.

Despite the limited number of staff to take on responsibilities, the co-ordination of subjects and aspects is good, with regular reviews of standards in both the core and foundation subjects.

The local education authority (LEA) and diocese give good quality professional support and the governing body is keen for the school to do well.

What the school should do to improve further

The key priorities for the school's development plan are to:

- continue to develop the quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage;
- improve standards in spelling in Years 5 and 6.

Achievement and standards

The children make a sound start in the Foundation Stage and reach satisfactory levels. However, many of them could achieve more than they do. There is a mixture of adult and child initiated activities, although the children spend too long in whole group sessions, and at times the work fails to challenge them. Standards of attainment in the 2004 national tests did not sustain the steady progress of the previous three years. However, comparisons or trends over time would be unreliable because the cohorts at both key stages were small: 14 pupils at Key Stage 1 and seven at Key Stage 2, including two pupils with identified special educational needs. Teachers' assessments of this year's Year 2 and Year 6 pupils show an encouraging picture, with almost all reaching their targets set in September 2004 and a small number exceeding them: a significant number of pupils are working at levels above those expected for their age. Standards in lessons have shown steady improvement since September 2004 with almost all being good and very good and none being unsatisfactory. A prominent feature of the pupils' success is the capacity of the work to challenge accurately pupils of different abilities in all subjects. There are many pupils who are reaching standards that are beyond those expected for their age, especially in Key Stages 1 and 2, particularly in literacy and numeracy; for example, their ability to use an extensive vocabulary and general knowledge to communicate ideas, and to apply their number skills to solve practical problems. Nearly all the gaps in learning that had taken place over time have been addressed successfully, although the quality of spelling remains weak in Years 5 and 6.

Personal development

The pupils' behaviour is exemplary and attitudes to work are consistently very good. Throughout the school the pupils' interest in the work is high and they show good levels of concentration and perseverance.

All the teachers strive to provide work which not only interests and excites the pupils, but also spurs them on to greater effort. The pupils respond well to questions which challenge them and thrive on being involved in the cut and thrust of a lesson. They are keen to do well and co-operate readily with each other, especially when solving problems or sharing ideas.

Relationships between the pupils are friendly and caring and they show genuine interest in what each other is doing. They benefit from the staff's desire to give each pupil a high quality experience in school, and in turn they respect adults and feel confident to share their ideas and opinions with them.

The school makes good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies set a good tone in addressing each of these elements. The school reflects its Christian foundation including celebrating the richness and diversity of different cultures within the school and wider community. The pupils have opportunities to join a range of sports and cultural clubs, and have taken part in a 'Black History' week and a book week which have been well-supported by parents. Visits in the locality and further afield are linked to topic themes; for example, local museums, a castle and an animal farm.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching is good overall; it is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and consistently good and often very good in the other three classes. These levels represent the cohesion which has been achieved amongst the staff and their ability and willingness to respond to the changes in planning, differentiation of work, assessment, and the general organisation and management of the school's procedures and systems. As a result, pupils are making rapid progress, standards are rising and the incidence of under-achievement has all but disappeared, as reflected in the levels achieved in the latest assessment figures.

The teachers' lesson plans are of good quality, learning objectives are shared with the pupils and the tasks are well judged according to pupils' needs. The activities are full of interest, engage the pupils and the teaching is consistently enthusiastic. The teaching assistants and parent helpers make important contributions to lessons, particularly in leading groups.

There is an effective system for assessing and tracking the pupils' progress. Assessment data is stored electronically and the information is used well to set targets and monitor progress. Targets are set in the core subjects and assessments are taking place to enable the pupils to have targets in some foundation subjects. The teachers make good use of data in identifying weaker areas of learning and to aid their planning. Each child has an assessment portfolio with examples of assessed work.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and based on national requirements. Proper emphasis is given to pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy where the pupils are achieving well. The relevance of the curriculum has improved since the staff tackled the major issue of under-achievement. Not only is the curriculum relevant to the pupils'

different needs, but links are being forged between subjects to bring cohesion to what is taught; this is a growing strength in the school.

The school is well resourced, although the staff make good use of other sources to support the work; they are particularly skilled at creating their own materials, especially to enhance science, history and geography lessons.

The classroom environments are bright, appealing and conducive to learning. The pupils' work takes prominence in displays and covers a broad range of work. Resources are easily accessible and pupils from an early age are encouraged to select for their own purposes.

Leadership and management

The school has gone through an unsettled period after the January 2004 inspection. The substantive headteacher resigned shortly afterwards. In the period up to the appointment of the current substantive headteacher in April 2005, the school had been led by the deputy headteacher and subsequently by two acting headteachers. During this time, a number of important short and long term measures were secured to put the school on a firm footing and provide the context in which rapid progress could be made in remedying the many weaknesses.

The pace of change has been rapid, yet realistic and sustainable. The headteachers, together with maximum support from the staff, tackled successfully the critical areas of assessment, monitoring, and raising achievement of all the pupils. The re-organisation of the Foundation Stage provision has been a priority, although its impact on standards has yet to be seen.

The senior staff have undertaken key responsibilities and identified priorities for action. They are a very effective group who have taken a full part in the school's regeneration.

The LEA, diocese and governing body have played an important part in the school's improvement through supporting the headteachers, providing regular professional development, and monitoring progress.

Appendix – Information about the inspection

St John's CE Primary School was inspected under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 by a Registered Inspector and a team of inspectors in January 2004. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in September 2004 and in December 2005 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of January 2004.

In May 2005, one HMI returned to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

During the visit nine parts of lessons and one assembly were inspected. The pupils' conduct was observed around the school and on the playground at break and lunchtimes, and samples of their work were inspected. A sample of pupils in Years 2 and 6 were heard reading and their writing over the year was examined. Discussions were held with the headteacher and senior teachers, and informally with other staff. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Account was taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of January 2004 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.

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