

St John's Highbury Vale CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100440
Local Authority	Islington
Inspection number	276311
Inspection dates	23–24 November 2005
Reporting inspector	Sue Vale

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 on roll	
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J James Mr Alan Ward
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Conewood Street Highbury Vale London N5 1DL
Telephone number	02072264906
Fax number	02072264785

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St John's Highbury Vale Church of England Primary School is a one-form entry school with 206 pupils on roll. The school is popular and over-subscribed. It has a very good reputation in the local community. Most pupils live within the parishes of its three feeder churches, Christ Church, St Augustine's and St Thomas Finsbury Park. A smaller than average number of pupils is eligible for free school meals. There are 28 pupils with special educational needs, which again is below the national average. The school's profile has changed since the last inspection, with increasing numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups attending the school. Two thirds of pupils are of white British heritage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade:

What the school should do to improve further

* Set personal targets in literacy and numeracy to involve pupils more in their own learning.*
Ensure that pupils with learning difficulties have more detailed targets on their individual educational plans, and that their progress against these is recorded at review meetings.

Achievement and standards

Grade:

Personal development and well-being

Grade:

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade:

Teaching is effective because teachers have high expectations of pupils and good subject knowledge. They are clear about what they want pupils to learn, and can convey this in interesting ways. Because of consistently good teaching, pupils make very good progress over time. Teachers are skilled at using interactive whiteboards to make learning more fun, and often involve pupils. In one Year 5 lesson teaching was outstanding. All pupils made huge gains in their understanding because the teacher's enthusiasm excited and energised the class. Pupils made choices about their learning and were challenged to go even further in devising increasingly difficult sums. Effective systems are in place to track pupils' progress. Teachers use assessment information well to match work to pupils' abilities, providing good support for those with learning difficulties. More able pupils are well challenged. Marking varies in how well it informs pupils about the quality of their work. At the moment class targets are too general. The school is rightly deciding how best to move to personal targets for pupils, and to involve them more in their own progress. Parents play an active role in their children's learning and provide outstanding support to the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade:

The school provides a good curriculum that is very well enriched by visits and extra-curricular activities. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. A particular strength is the way links between literacy, numeracy and ICT enhance learning in other subjects. For example, Year 4 pupils created a Tudor newspaper. The lead teacher in ICT has inspired confidence in staff, resulting in imaginative use of computers and interactive whiteboards to enliven the curriculum. Workshops and focused weeks allow teachers to develop a subject in depth and become more creative. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good with a rich variety of stimulating activities planned to develop children's early skills. Pupils have many opportunities to take part in a wide range of clubs and activities, such as Salsa, board games and infant choir. A termly magazine celebrates pupils' achievements and reports on special events and visits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade:

The strong Christian ethos of the school underpins its very good pastoral care of pupils. There are effective arrangements to safeguard pupils' interests. The well-established daily routines are creating an orderly and caring school environment in which all pupils can grow in confidence and thrive. Everyone's contribution is valued and all are included. Governors are very diligent at promoting health and safety in the old and sometimes cramped building. Support for pupils with learning difficulties is good, with a well trained team of teaching assistants. Targets for these children are rather general, and review meetings do not record progress, even though in fact they do as well as the other children. Child protection requirements are fully met. There are very strong links with other agencies.

Leadership and management

Grade:

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school. It was lovely to have the opportunity to meet some of you and to discover your views of the school.

This is what we found out.* You behave very well and obviously enjoy learning.* You achieve very well and reach high standards.* You make very good progress in your learning.* The staff look after you well.* The teachers are very good at explaining things to you and they make sure that you keep busy and that you are challenged in your learning.* In lessons, you work hard and do your best.* Your head teacher and all the staff work very well together as a team and provide you with a good education.

For your school to get even better your teachers need to continue with the plans they have to give you individual targets so that you all know how you can improve your work even more. These need to be quite specific so that it is easy to know when you have met them.Thank you once again for letting us meet you. We enjoyed ourselves very much.

Best Wishes,

Sue Vale

Lead Inspector