



St John's Church of England Primary School, Radcliffe

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105349
LEA Bury
Inspection number 277342
Inspection dates 26 September 2005 to 27 September 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Mike McLachlan CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Johnson Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Radcliffe
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Manchester, Lancashire M26 1AW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 723 1078
Number on roll	141	Fax number	0161 723 3274
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs J Evans
Date of previous inspection	6 November 2000	Headteacher	Miss Elaine Sandring

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St John's is a small school, which serves pupils in a local area with severe social and cultural deprivation. A well above average number of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around the national average. The numbers of pupils whose first language is not English is very low. Many pupils join and leave the school at different times of the school year. Very good improvement since 2000 has been recognised by the government. The school has received the Healthy Schools and Basic Skills awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that it is a good school that gives good value for money. It has many outstanding features and clearly lives its motto of 'Love, learn and grow'. Teaching and learning are good with some that is outstanding, particularly in Year 6 and in the Foundation Unit. Pupils' progress is good as they start school with well below average social and basic skills. High quality provision in the Foundation Stage means that pupils make very good progress here and quickly reach just below average standards. By the end of Year 6, standards are in line with the national average. The weakest element of pupils' work is their writing skills. Personal development is outstanding and children thrive in a community that insists that every child matters and that working hard and enjoying each other's company and talents is important. Children are taught social skills very well. There are very effective links with the community and the local authority and other support agencies. Despite the school's best efforts, the full involvement of parents in the life of the school remains a weakness. Pupils of all abilities are valued and supported well. Leadership by the headteacher and by senior staff is outstanding and they are supported and challenged to do their best by a good governing body. Self-review is very good so that strengths and weakness are clearly understood and strong teamwork has brought about significant improvements in behaviour, progress and standards since the last inspection. The school clearly has the capacity and the desire to seek further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

The school should focus on:

- Continuing the drive to raise standards and improve writing skills
- Continuing to share the most effective classroom practice to bring the elements of satisfactory teaching in line with the best
- Ensuring that the recent changes introduced to improve the range of subjects taught is closely monitored to make sure children reach the required standards
- Reviewing the impact of actions taken so far and seeking the support of other agencies to involve parents more in the life of the school and in supporting their children's learning at home.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's view that pupils make good progress given their low standards when they start school. Challenging targets have led to standards rising dramatically in recent years. Despite high proportions of pupils who leave and join the school during the year, pupils make good progress throughout their time at school and most reach national average standards by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science.

In the Foundation Stage, outstanding teaching results in pupils making very good progress and many reach standards that are just below the national average. The standards reached in Year 2 over the past few years have been close to the national average showing good progress. The fall in the number of pupils in Year 2 who reached the national expectation in the 2005 tests was due to a high proportion of pupils in the group who had learning difficulties and some who started later in the school year. The school's excellent analysis of data shows that progress in Years 3 to 6 is good for those who have been at school since the start of the junior stage and is satisfactory for those who join at a later time. The weakest element of pupils' work throughout the school remains their writing. This is mostly due to the lack of exposure to books and other activities outside school that widen their vocabulary. This is clearly identified in the school's development plan and a well thought out programme is in place to bring about improvement. Due to the high level support available in each class, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress given their starting points. There are no significant differences in the progress made by boys and girls.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

A major strength of the school is the pupils' excellent personal development and well-being. Children arrive with very limited experiences and underdeveloped interpersonal skills and yet, within weeks, they feel secure and are fully engaged in all aspects of school life. They really enjoy lessons because teachers make them fun. Most pupils hang on their teacher's every word and try their very best to please. Pupils behave well most of the time, although some are volatile and benefit from the sensitive mediation of adults who know them well. Attendance rates are slightly below average. The headteacher does not tolerate attempts by parents to disguise reasons for non-attendance, even though this insistence on transparent recording results in higher rates of unauthorised absence.

A cheery welcome and relaxed atmosphere greets pupils and parents. An underlying sense of fair play runs through all activities. Pupils are encouraged to express their opinions, to listen to the views of others and to work together for the good of the whole community. Healthy living is promoted well and children snack on cheese and crackers at playtime, purchased from the healthy tuck shop run by the older pupils. Teachers are particularly good at identifying how learning in every lesson can benefit children's future economic well-being and display this information in lessons.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In the Foundation Stage, teaching is outstanding. From the moment children walk into class, their attention and interest is captured by the learning activities. Adults' expectations are of the highest order and children do not disappoint. Children approach

activities with a sense of fun and excitement. Squeals of glee ring round as, for example, they explore the delights of flattening shaving foam with a satisfying slap of their hands while trying to describe how this feels. Teaching in the infant department is good and continues to move pupils' learning on at a good pace.

Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is always at least satisfactory and much, particularly in Year 6, is good or outstanding. Staff in all year groups have a clear understanding of pupils' previous learning and assess work well. This helps them to establish first class relationships and to set challenging activities that meet the needs of every individual. Teachers share with pupils what they are about to learn, why it is important and how it can help them with their future work. Pupils consistently enjoy their learning and are delighted not only by their own achievements, but also by the achievement of others. In a Year 6 class, for example, pupils spontaneously applauded a particularly good answer from one of the group. A significant strength is the way pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are skilfully drawn into the lesson by the support of the very well qualified teaching assistants and the sensitive but probing questions of the teacher.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and provides an effective framework for pupils' personal and social development within a safe environment. Skills children need to become effective learners are established early. The new system of 'blocking' the curriculum allows pupils to experience a wider variety of subjects in depth, but will need close monitoring to ensure pupils reach the required standards. Pupils' learning is carefully enriched through visits and the work of outside agencies. The excellent new information and communications technology suite enables pupils to hone their computer skills. A rich programme of extra-curricular activities successfully promotes pupils' skills in sports, music, art and craft. High quality provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very well developed, led by an expert teacher and highlights all the important skills in managing personal emotions and behaviour as well as working with others crucial for pupils' future success. Provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very good and enables them to make similarly good rates of progress as other children. Well qualified and effective teaching assistants work very well with teachers; they increase children's self-esteem.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Outstanding care, guidance and support reflect the vision of the headteacher and governors in providing a haven for children. Support agencies remark that the headteacher and staff 'perform miracles' here and pupils and parents agree. Another particularly striking feature is how well pupils care for one another. They are encouraged to help in lessons if someone does not understand exactly what to do and they act, unbidden, to resolve problems for one another. Close links with secondary schools ensure pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Child protection

arrangements are secure and the headteacher makes effective links with external agencies in order to provide the best possible support for the most vulnerable children. Adults have a clear understanding of pupils' medical and dietary requirements and there are well established procedures to assure pupils' health and safety in school. The following quote from a pupil who left in 2005 succinctly sums up the school, 'No one can deny how wonderful school life is at St John's- make the most of it while you are here'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher clearly understands the needs of her pupils and the community. She values the support and guidance available to her from the local authority and other agencies ensuring the school is at the forefront of effective practice. An excellent example of this is that the important national debate that 'every child matters' is not only influencing her teachers' work, but also the pupils' school council who have it as their agenda. Consequently, pupils and teachers alike are seeking to enjoy and achieve in their work in a safe and caring community. The strengths in teaching, support and care and the significant rise in standards are due to her quiet but determined approach, ably supported by an expert senior management team and the teamwork and the willingness to learn and develop shown by the staff.

The school regularly evaluates its work and accurately assesses what it does well and what it needs to improve. For example, it is rightly concentrating on improving the quality of writing throughout the school. To this end, it is sharing the most effective practice in teaching and organisation to further improve the satisfactory or good provision in other parts of the school. The school works hard to involve all its partners, regularly seeking the views of parents, pupils and others and responding to concerns raised. The work of the school is supported and challenged by the good and well experienced governors who, together with the headteacher and all staff, clearly demonstrate the capacity to bring about further improvement.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

N/A

Thank you very much for the way you greeted us during our time in your school. We were delighted by the way you talked to us about your school and your work. It was clear to us that your motto 'Love, learn and grow' was at the heart of your school.

What we liked about your school.

We thought that:

- you go to a good school and some parts of it are very good indeed
- you all make good progress in your learning and are developing into very mature and grown up young people
- your teachers teach you well and some are very good indeed
- you behave really well in the playground and you can work very well together in lessons
- you are taught a good range of skills and subjects and you have many opportunities to take part in additional activities
- you understand very well why each of you is important and the teachers and the school council are trying very hard to make sure all of you can learn in a safe and caring school
- you show concern for each other and help each other often before you are asked
- the headteacher and her senior staff are very good indeed and know what the school does really well and what they and you have to do to get even better.

We think that to become an even better school the teachers and you need to:

- improve the quality of your writing in all year groups
- share the best teaching and learning ideas so that more lessons become very good
- make sure that the new arrangements for teaching subjects are checked regularly to see that they are improving your standards in each subject
- try and support and encourage more of your parents or guardians to take part in the school and help you more at home with your schoolwork.

To finish we certainly agreed with one of you who left last year who wrote in the yearbook:

'No one can deny how wonderful school life is at St John's - make the most of it while you are here'.

Thank you again for the way you looked after both of us and the way you represented your school so well during our time with you.