



St John's Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108476
LEA Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number 277983
Inspection dates 27 April 2006 to 28 April 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Andrew Scott

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Teindland Close
School category	Community		Newcastle upon Tyne
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Tyne and Wear, NE4 8HE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 2735293
Number on roll	164	Fax number	0191 2730651
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Eileen Railton
Date of previous inspection	1 January 2001	Headteacher	Mrs Julia Bayes

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school in an urban area of considerable deprivation. Nearly all pupils are from white British families; a few pupils come from different ethnic backgrounds and have English as an additional language. The movement in the pupil population is higher than normal. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school has recently been renamed, following a request by parents.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors share the school's view that its provision for pupils is satisfactory, with several strengths. Children progress well in the Nursery and Reception classes because of effective provision, but do not reach their expected goals because of low attainment on entry to the school. Overall achievement by pupils is satisfactory. Standards by Year 6 are low, influenced in part by the high percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the turnover of the pupil population. Teachers have many good skills but do not always have high enough expectations of pupils. The curriculum is enriched well by activities outside the classroom, but the school recognises the need to make lessons more varied and interesting, as well as give pupils more scope for independent learning. Pupils feel secure and happy at school because of the good levels of care and support by all adults. Staff are very good role models for pupils to develop good behaviour and an awareness of a healthy lifestyle.

Good leadership by the headteacher, well supported by the deputy headteacher, has established a positive ethos for learning. Standards are gradually rising, and a more settled staff have the right skills and attitudes to ensure higher achievement. The school has a satisfactory view of itself. It recognises its strengths but does not evaluate weaknesses rigorously enough so that progress can improve. The school offers satisfactory value for money at present and is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils.
- Maximise opportunities for pupils to acquire independent learning skills.
- Develop further a more stimulating and diverse curriculum to promote pupils' learning.
- Be more analytical in evaluating the school's effectiveness so that plans for improvement are more detailed and specific.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. When they enter the Nursery, children have poor skills, especially in communication, mathematical awareness and knowledge of the wider world. They make good progress in all areas of learning that now include language and mathematics, because of a recent emphasis on these basic skills. Nevertheless, by the end of the Reception year, few children achieve all the goals expected of them.

Standards by Years 2 and 6 have been rising in recent years but are still well below average in English and mathematics. For example, pupils do not have a good enough vocabulary to be able to express themselves convincingly when speaking or writing. They have reasonable skills in calculation, but are not adept at using their knowledge to solve mathematical problems for themselves. In science, standards are below average.

Pupils have a satisfactory level of knowledge, but are less secure about carrying out investigations for themselves.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Their learning is often good in small group activities but less successful within whole class work, when they are sometimes not fully engaged. The welcoming atmosphere and effective support enables pupils with English as an additional language to learn English quickly; their overall achievement is much like that of other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils develop well as individuals. They clearly enjoy school, show good attitudes to those around them and to their work. Inspectors agree with parents that behaviour is generally good; instances of poor behaviour are rare. Pupils develop good self-esteem and show pride in their school, although this is not always obvious in the presentation of their work. Their attendance is below average, but it is improving following concerted efforts by the school.

Pupils understand the need to stay safe and the value of adopting a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy the healthy menus at lunch time and take full advantage of the many sporting and fitness activities on offer. They develop a good sense of responsibility by, for example, acting as mentors to younger pupils and taking part in fundraising. Pupils say that the school listens to their views, especially through the school council. There is a strong community spirit in the school. Daily assemblies are happy gatherings where pupils have good opportunities to reflect on what they have heard and to celebrate their achievements. Cultural development is satisfactory, but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to understand and explore their own local culture and that of others.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, and not good as the school believes. However, teaching is good in the Foundation Stage. Here, children benefit from a good blend of direct teaching and independent learning. Staff keep a close eye on children's progress and set work which challenges them. The recent focus on literacy and numeracy has raised pupils' confidence in communication and improved their number skills.

Overall, teachers are good at presenting new concepts clearly. They structure work sensibly so that pupils learn in logical steps; they use resources adeptly to reinforce learning and ask good questions to check understanding. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are satisfactorily met, and teaching assistants give good support to this group of pupils. All staff rightly value pupils' ideas and

efforts. Sometimes, though, their praise is too effusive and can give pupils a false impression of their success.

The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory. Teachers vary work to suit the different needs of pupils reasonably well but not with sufficient rigour. Lessons do not always have a swift pace and so pupils do not always do enough work. In addition, teachers sometimes do too much for pupils in lessons and do not encourage them enough to be responsible for their own learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It rightly has a strong emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy. There are good initiatives; for example, to improve pupils' speaking and listening and there are themed weeks, such as Monkey Madness, to motivate pupils. However, the school knows that it could do more to promote literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) through other subjects. Although there are interesting activities such as music tuition and Spanish lessons, the curriculum in most lessons is fairly routine and not particularly inspiring.

The curriculum in the Nursery and Reception classes is good, especially because children are encouraged to develop independent skills. This is not so apparent elsewhere in the school. The good range of activities outside normal lessons, including residential visits, promotes enjoyment in learning and the adoption of a healthy lifestyle. The work done here prepares pupils well for life in the community and the world of work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school takes good care of its pupils with thorough systems to ensure pupils' safety, health and well-being, including child protection procedures. There is a strong emphasis on healthy eating and fitness. Effective supervision on the newly designed playground ensures good opportunities for creative play. Pupils particularly appreciate and enjoy the breakfast club each morning.

Pupils know who to turn to if they have a problem, and they value the buddy system which makes sure that no-one feels left out or unhappy. The school deals firmly with the few incidences of poor behaviour and there is good support for vulnerable pupils and those new to the school. Parents feel welcome in school.

The school has introduced good systems for monitoring pupils' progress in their work and setting targets for improvement. However, these are quite recent and have not had enough time to boost standards appreciably.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory, although the school believes them to be good. The leadership of the headteacher is good, though. She has maintained a clear focus on raising standards, appointed staff shrewdly and introduced a good system for checking pupils' progress. She is well respected by staff, pupils and parents alike, and well supported by an enthusiastic and perceptive deputy headteacher. Together, they form an effective partnership and instil a strong sense of teamwork among all staff.

The management of the school is satisfactory. The school knows its strengths, is keen to absorb new ideas and has good priorities for improvement. However, the pace of improvement is not as good as it could be. The analysis of areas for improvement is not precise enough to produce action plans that are detailed and specific. Some plans are taking a long time to come to fruition.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and well involved in the work of the school, but are not objective and rigorous enough in holding the school to account. Parents are happy with the school but do not take enough advantage of the school's efforts to involve them in their children's learning.

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The main issues have been addressed, yet there remains some work to do. Improvement since 2002 has resulted in steadily rising standards and the school is in a good position to improve further.

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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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

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The Pupils

St John's Primary School

Teindland Close

Newcastle upon Tyne

Tyne and Wear

NE4 8HE

28 April 2006

Dear Pupils

I am writing to thank you for the part you played in the inspection of your school. Mrs Straw and I thoroughly enjoyed meeting you and everyone else in the school, and we are grateful for the help you gave us. We understand why you like your school and we think that it gives you a satisfactory education. We believe that it has a number of strengths.

You have a good start to school in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Teachers set good examples so that you behave well and are thoughtful towards one another.

There are some interesting activities outside lessons.

The school takes good care of you and ensures that you know how to lead a safe and healthy life.

Your headteacher and deputy headteacher work well to make the school a happy and productive place for you.

The standards of your work could be higher if teachers expect more from you in lessons, give you more opportunity to work on your own and make lessons more exciting and interesting. To help this, the school needs to be more careful in its plans for improvement.

We wish you every success for the future.

Yours faithfully

Andrew Scott

Lead inspector