



St John's Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115618
LEA Gloucestershire
Inspection number 279636
Inspection dates 28 September 2005 to 29 September 2005
Reporting inspector Lorna Brackstone RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Bowen's Hill Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Coleford
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Gloucestershire GL16 8DU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01594 832046
Number on roll	197	Fax number	01594 837 068
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	6 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Linda Gregory

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 28 September 2005 - 29 September 2005	Inspection number 279636
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St John's is an average sized primary school in Coleford, a small town in the Forest of Dean. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is average. Very few pupils use English as an additional language and nearly all are of White British heritage. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is high. When they join the Reception class, many children's skills are well below the expected level for four-year-olds. In 2004 St John's attained a Healthy Schools Award and was re-accredited with the Investors in People Award. Very recently the school has received two environmental awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is an effective school giving good value for money. The quality of education, including provision at the Foundation Stage, is good and, as a result, achievement is good. Provision for personal development is good and this has a significant influence on the behaviour of the pupils. They show positive attitudes to their work and enjoy learning because the teaching is stimulating. Adults know their pupils very well and provide the children with a high level of care and support. However, they do not always provide them with sufficient guidance on how they can improve their writing skills.

The good leadership of the headteacher is the key to the success of the school. She has developed strong links with parents and ensures that the school is very much part of the local community. The senior leadership team does not use the low standards of the pupils on entry as a barrier to improvement but are continually seeking ways in which they can enhance the quality of their experiences. Together with her effective senior leadership team, the headteacher has successfully tackled the areas identified for improvement from the last report. All staff and governors have a clear understanding of what needs to be improved. The school accurately self-evaluates its strengths and areas for improvement and is, therefore, well placed to improve further.

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

- continue to raise standards in writing by sharing with individual pupils what they actually need to do to improve their writing
- raise teachers' expectations of the way in which pupils present their written work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall achievement is good. Many children have low standards in all areas of learning when they start school, particularly in their limited use of language and weak social skills. The stimulating environment and the lively teaching in the Reception class enable the children to progress well. Most meet the expected standards by the start of Year 1, except in literacy and mathematics where standards are below expectations. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are above average in reading and science. Achievement is very good in relation to their attainment on entry because teaching is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

Year 2 standards in mathematics are close to the national average and above average by Year 6. Achievement in mathematics is good.

This is an improvement since the test results of the past few years because weaknesses in problem solving have been rectified.

Although pupils' progress is good in writing, standards have remained below average in Years 2 and 6 since the last inspection. The school has focused on the use of writing

in other subjects, and this has resulted in some improvement in standards. However, pupils are not given sufficient guidance on how they can improve their work, and untidy presentation is accepted too readily.

Pupils who find learning difficult are supported well and their progress is good. Those who are gifted and talented also achieve well because they are given additional challenges through public performances and competitions.

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and have good attitudes to work, including homework. Attendance is average and has improved since the last inspection as a result of more rigorous procedures. Pupils' social development is good. Children are warmly welcomed into the Foundation Stage and come happily to school. They develop confidence because clear routines are quickly established, and adults check that they are coping well with their new environment.

By Year 6, pupils have developed good work habits and willingly take a responsible part in all aspects of school life such as the school council and the 'buddy' system. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is good. The religious foundation of the school is reflected well in class discussions, assemblies and in art and music. Cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils develop a good understanding of the industrial history of the Forest of Dean and effective links are forged with the local community through music and drama performances. Pupils learn satisfactorily about other cultures through assemblies, religious education and geography lessons and by links with a range of charities.

The school has shown its commitment to promoting healthy and safe lifestyles through gaining awards for being a 'healthy' school. The school extends pupils' experience and confidence by entering them for area sports competitions and by taking responsibility for banking any charity money raised.

Grade: 2

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall, with very good teaching in the Reception class, and in Years 2, 5 and 6. Most lessons are well planned and resourced, and interesting. As a result, pupils are keen to learn and eager to take part when activities are practical.

Relationships between adults and pupils are very positive, giving pupils the confidence to explain their thoughts and feelings. The management of pupils is good overall because pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Tasks encourage collaborative and independent learning. Teamwork among staff and with visiting adults

is a strong feature. The work of all supporting adults is planned into lessons. Learning support staff play a very effective part in helping groups of pupils, particularly those who find learning difficult. Such pupils learn effectively when they are given this close attention. Targets in their individual education plans are kept up to date, and are well informed by consideration of their needs. In the Reception class all staff interact very closely with the children to help them develop their language skills and increase their confidence.

In a small number of lessons the organisation of activities is slow and teachers do not check to ensure that all pupils have an understanding of what they are expected to do. The quality of marking varies considerably in writing. Teachers' comments are effective in praising successful work but when writing is marked, weaknesses are not pointed out enough and so the pupils do not learn from their mistakes. Expectations of presentation are not high enough and the attention to accuracy of spelling and punctuation is not sufficient to help the pupils improve.

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. The Foundation Stage curriculum is stimulating and well organised. The programme for older pupils is well founded on national recommendations, and this ensures that consistent progress is made year on year. Recent modifications to planning now give pupils more opportunities to be creative. For instance, drama and role-play are used more within the curriculum. This makes learning interesting. Links between subjects are also currently being strengthened so that pupils gain a broader understanding. Visits are well planned to bring selected topics to life. For example, Year 6 visited the local railway museum to deepen their understanding of the origins of their community.

A good feature of the curriculum is the way in which activities are adjusted to match the different abilities of pupils. For example, those who find learning difficult are given extra help in lessons and withdrawn at times for well-focused intensive instruction.

There is a good range of after-class activities for pupils. Clubs are well organised around practical activities, such as cookery classes and multi-sport activities. These activities help pupils gain skills they will need in later life. The Eco club has a high profile, and actively encourages pupils to consider issues about recycling and respect for the environment.

The school grounds have been greatly improved and set learning into an attractive context, which is used well for study and constructive play.

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

All pupils are well cared for and given good personal guidance and support. Pupils are confident about approaching adults with their concerns, and feel safe. Staff know them well and the atmosphere of the school is friendly and welcoming. Child protection procedures are comprehensive and any elements of bullying are quickly dealt with. High expectations of pupils' behaviour are implicit in all activities. The school promotes a healthy lifestyle with a fruit scheme, and has discussed changes with the supplier of school meals. The quality of academic guidance through assessment and marking is satisfactory overall. Pupils are regularly assessed in the key subject areas and group targets are provided to help them move forward in their learning. However, the targets provided to improve the pupils' quality of writing are not specific enough for each individual. Consequently, pupils lack the understanding of how they can really improve their work.

Grade: 3

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and those areas that need further attention. She is well respected as a leader by staff, governors, pupils and parents. Her high aspirations for the school are communicated well to all staff. The self-motivating leadership team successfully ensures that all members of the school community are involved in the decision-making process.

The headteacher, senior staff and governors are fully committed to maintaining improvement and have a good capacity for further improvements. Regular evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning has accurately identified good practice, which is then shared with other teachers. Senior staff analyse the performance of different year groups of pupils so that weaknesses are noted and improved. They have also started to sample pupils' work, and this is giving them an understanding of strengths and weaknesses in provision.

Financial planning is carefully linked to getting the best possible educational opportunities. For example, some recent unexpected funding was used to create an outdoor learning environment that all could enjoy and use.

The improvement plan is detailed and is shared by everyone involved with the school. Teaching resources are deployed effectively and the spacious accommodation is used well.

Governors are supportive of the school and know that they have a successful leadership team. They fully recognise the importance of gaining first-hand knowledge from visits and are developing their skills to challenge the leadership team.

Grade: 2

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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?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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	2	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?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	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	2	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?	3	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?	2	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	2	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

29th September 2005

Dear Children,

Thank you for letting us come and visit your school. We enjoyed watching you learn. We liked talking to you about your work and speaking to your teachers about the things that you do in school.

What we liked most about your school

you are friendly and helpful to each other. We were particularly impressed with the way the older children look after the younger ones

you work well with each other in the classrooms, and play together happily and safely in the playground

your headteacher runs the school well. She knows about you all and is clear about how you are getting on in school. The headteacher, teachers and support assistants listen to what you all think about the school and are always thinking about how it can improve

the teachers enjoy teaching you and they make sure lessons are interesting and exciting

those of you who need extra help are given good support in the classrooms

your parents and carers are right in thinking you go to a good school

you work hard for your teachers and progress well in school. You are not afraid to ask for help

you are able to take part in a good range of activities after school.

What we have asked your school to do now

help you to understand how you can improve the standard of your work in writing

make sure that you always try to present your written work as neatly as you can.

Yours sincerely,

Lorna Brackstone

Mrs Lorna Brackstone Lead inspector