



St John's CofE Aided Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125164
LEA Surrey LEA
Inspection number 281903
Inspection dates 19 June 2006 to 20 June 2006
Reporting inspector Wendy Simmons AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Markfield Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Caterham
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		CR3 6RN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01883 342009
Number on roll	523	Fax number	01833 343836
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Mary Shackel
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs Carol Howard

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This very large school educates pupils from a wide surrounding area. Most pupils come from socially advantaged White British heritages and many from Christian backgrounds. At Year 3, the intake increases from two to three classes. The proportion of children with learning difficulties is average.

This is the school's first inspection following the amalgamation of St John's Infant and Junior Schools in 2003. Since then, the school has faced significant difficulties in recruiting staff, notably in appointing a permanent headteacher. The current headteacher joined the school in April 2006 following two terms when the school was led by the deputy headteacher. The school has the 'Football Association Charter Mark' and is working to gain the 'Healthy School's Award'.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St John's is a satisfactory and improving school. This judgement matches the one made during the school's very recently up-dated self evaluation. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

This is a popular and happy school where relationships are good and pupils enjoy learning. Pupils are well cared for and mostly behave very well. Good provision in the Foundation Stage helps children to reach high standards and to be well prepared for the next stages of their education. Throughout the school, the rich curriculum, strong Christian ethos, and good moral, spiritual, social and cultural education help pupils to develop important personal skills.

By the time pupils leave they often reach higher than expected standards. This represents satisfactory progress from their generally high starting points. Pupils make steady progress because teaching and learning are satisfactory. However, some lower ability pupils, especially boys, do not make as much progress as other pupils. While the most able pupils do well by Year 6, because of the good teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6, they do not do well enough in developing their writing skills in Years 1 and 2. Teachers do not use assessment information well enough to plan pupils' learning and the marking of pupils' work is not rigorous enough to allow them to make quicker progress.

The school demonstrates a good capacity to improve because the new headteacher is driving improvement forward rapidly and effectively. She is well supported by her deputy and staff. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and improving. Clear action is already being taken to improve assessment, raise boys' achievement and improve learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop marking and the use of assessment information to improve pupils' learning and overall progress
- Raise the achievement of boys, especially those of lower ability
- Improve standards in writing by Year 2 for the most able learners.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are higher than average by the time pupils leave the school in English, mathematics and science. Pupils make satisfactory progress from their high starting points when joining in either Reception or Year 3. The school has set challenging targets for improvement and is making steady progress in reaching these. Notably, good progress has been made in improving mathematics. Pupils make the best progress in reading and science because investigation work is challenging and reading skills are well taught. However, pupils' progress in improving writing skills is patchy, especially

for the most able pupils in Year 2. Recent action taken to develop handwriting demonstrates the school's good capacity for further improvement.

Overall, pupils learn important basic skills that prepare most of them well for their future lives, including satisfactory computer skills. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage but, in Years 1 to 4, their progress varies. The school's tracking information has correctly identified the inconsistent progress made by different groups of pupils, especially that made by lower ability boys. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress, but lack of space means that group activities are sometimes difficult to organise for these pupils. In Years 5 and 6, many pupils make good progress because of high quality teaching and learning. As a consequence of this, over half gain very high standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school's view is that pupils' personal development is outstanding. However, the inspection finds it to be good overall. Pupils attend regularly and are mostly keen to learn. They enjoy the good range of extra-curricular activities, especially music and sport, which they say, 'are great'. Pupils actively adopt healthy lifestyles.

Pupils' strong spiritual, moral and social development helps them build a clear sense of right and wrong. Pupils quickly learn how to act safely, take responsibly and care for each other, as evident in the way they make friends through the "Buddy" scheme. Good spiritual and cultural experiences enable pupils to show empathy, sensitivity and respect, which are important skills for their future lives in our diverse multicultural society. The vast majority behave very well and show positive attitudes. However, behaviour occasionally slips in a few lessons. Here, some boys lose concentration and do not make as much progress as they should.

Pupils make a positive contribution to their community and quickly learn about team work. They contribute widely to charities, share their views with the local council and perform at many venues, including Fairfield Halls and Southwark Cathedral. Pupils' opinions are highly valued by the school and acted upon, as evident when pupils helped to plan the play area.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Relationships are mostly very good and staff have good subject knowledge. Teachers use information and communication technology well to aid pupils' learning. Teaching assistants give satisfactory support.

Teaching and learning are good for children in the Reception classes and in Years 5 and 6. In other year groups, teaching and learning are satisfactory. This is because there is considerable variation in the quality of teaching between classes.

Learning is adequately planned but sufficient account is not always taken of pupils' differing capabilities. Assessment information is not being used well enough by teachers to identify pupils who need specific help. As a result, tasks do not always match pupils' needs, and this is why there is variation in pupils' achievement. While some teachers mark pupils' work well, the quality of marking is very inconsistent. Pupils are not always told how they can improve their learning or given time to extend their work. This is an important factor in explaining why few pupils reach high standards in their writing by Year 2. Pupils with learning difficulties are usually quickly identified and given satisfactory support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's good curriculum enriches pupils' learning and wider personal development well. Training has already taken place to explore how the curriculum can be planned to meet the different needs of boys. Overall, good emphasis is placed on pupils' personal development. For example, they learn important social skills in the Foundation Stage; particularly good development is also evident for older pupils in football, literacy, numeracy, science and computer activities. In Years 5 and 6, pupils enjoy learning French and this is shortly to be extended into other year groups. Pupils say that they 'enjoy school', notably music and the performing arts, as evident in their high quality singing for the imminent performance of 'Oliver'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of its pupils and parents agree. In the words of one parent, 'It is a caring school and the headteacher is making sensible changes.' While another said, 'It is cleaner, tidier and more organised....producing confident, happy and self-assured children.' Pupils feel valued and know that there is always someone they can turn to if they have problems. One parent commented, 'The school has given tremendous support to our family.' Robust child protection and risk assessment procedures are in place. Parents and pupils confirm that bullying is rare. Pupils told the inspectors that if it does occur, it is swiftly and effectively dealt with.

Good guidance is given to pupils about being safe and the importance of selecting healthy foods and taking regular exercise. Satisfactory support is given. Although assessment information is used to identify those who do not achieve as well as others, not all pupils know their targets for improvement well enough. The cramped accommodation means that medical care cannot take place in a designated medical room; nevertheless good care is given to sick pupils. Lack of space sometimes means that pupils have to do group activities in cramped areas.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory and this leads to pupils achieving satisfactorily. The newly appointed headteacher has made a quick impact on the school, especially through her evaluation of teaching and learning and her plans to improve pupils' thinking skills. She has high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. The care of pupils is central to the school's work.

Parents are very happy with the appointment of a permanent headteacher and comment that leadership is now strong. Parents are actively involved in helping the school to improve. For example, when they raised concerns about incidences of bullying, which have now been resolved. Pupils feel involved in the school and were delighted to help in the selection of their new headteacher.

The team ethos is developing well. Senior managers are exploring ways to increase links between the infant and junior departments. However, space is very limited, with no joint staffroom or shared administrative area. This makes communication and whole staff development difficult on occasions.

The school demonstrates satisfactory and improving self evaluation and is well placed to make further improvement. For example, the role of middle managers, such as subject leaders, is currently changing to aid better monitoring of learning and pupils' achievement.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors are very keen and committed to helping the school to improve and have appointed a strong headteacher. Governors know most of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and are beginning to ask more challenging questions about pupils' progress.

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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?	3	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	NA	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	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	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	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?	2	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	3	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

Pupils

You may remember that three inspectors came to your school recently to find out how good it is and how well you are doing. Thank you for being so friendly and telling us about your school. We are writing to let you know what we found out.

We think that your school is satisfactory and getting even better. We know that you are pleased to have a new headteacher. We think that you are well cared for and very happy. You mostly enjoy learning and behave very well, so keep this up! We think that teaching is satisfactory and some lessons are very good. You are lucky to have so many opportunities to do different activities, especially sport and music. We especially like the opportunities that you have to learn social skills and to respect each other. You do especially well in learning to read and understand science.

I have asked your headteacher to help you to make even more progress. So I have asked the teachers and other adults to do these important things. * mark your work more clearly, so that you know how to improve * make sure that all activities help you to improve quickly, especially the boys * help those of you in Years 1 and 2 to get even better at their writing. Enjoy your production of 'Oliver' and have a lovely summer.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Simmons

Lead Inspector