



St James CofE Aided Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125176
LEA Surrey LEA
Inspection number 281910
Inspection dates 18 May 2006 to 19 May 2006
Reporting inspector Rob Crompton AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Thursley Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Elstead
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Godalming GU8 6DH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01252 703248
Number on roll	160	Fax number	01252 702945
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Rev William Lang
Date of previous inspection	27 September 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Ann Tann

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 11	18 May 2006 - 19 May 2006	281910

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most pupils in this village school are White British with about ten per cent from Black and Asian backgrounds. Twelve pupils have English as an additional language, five of whom are at an early stage of learning English. Children enter the school with average attainment. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is more than in most schools. Half of the teaching staff are new since September 2005.

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 accurate evaluation; this is a good school where pupils achieve well and it provides good value for money. Pupils enjoy school very much and this is reflected in good attendance rates. Their behaviour, attitudes to learning and personal development are excellent. Pupils are extremely well cared for and supported by skilled support staff and teachers.

There is good provision in the Foundation Stage and reception children make good progress in all areas of learning and achieve standards that are in line with expected levels. Throughout the school, the teaching is good and so pupils make good progress. Consequently, from average starting points they attain standards which are above average in English and mathematics and are high in science. Teachers make good use of assessment data to track pupils' performance, and very good provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties. More able pupils do well, particularly in science, where a large proportion reaches the higher levels. Although improving, a lower proportion achieves such levels in English and mathematics. The teachers make very good use of the school's extremely strong links with parents and the local community to enhance the quality of the good curriculum.

Good leadership, management and governance, guided by the strong leadership of the headteacher have led to good improvement since the last inspection. There is good capacity to keep on improving given the school's track record in raising standards and maintaining good teaching. Parents think very highly of the school. Typical of their comments were, 'We have felt welcome and included from day one', 'They have worked wonders with him' and 'We cannot praise St James' enough'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate the progress of more able pupils in English and mathematics

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well through the school and reach good standards due to consistently effective teaching coupled with pupils' positive attitudes. Children make good progress in the reception class, particularly in personal, social and emotional development, and this provides a secure base for their subsequent learning. Pupils continue to make good headway in reading, writing and mathematics through Years 1 and 2, reaching above average standards. The pace of learning is sustained during Years 3 to 6 and leads to good standards in English, mathematics and high standards in science by the end of Year 6. Pupils now have a good level of competence in information and communication technology (ICT); an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well. They meet their individual targets and many reach the standards expected for their age. Pupils with English as an additional language also make good progress. More able pupils do particularly well in science. Although

they make good progress in English and mathematics, the level of challenge could be raised even further for a few of these pupils. Overall, however, pupils through the school meet the challenging targets set for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are justly proud of their school and contribute very well to the school and the wider community. Members of the school council successfully contributed to pupils' understanding of healthy eating and influenced changes to lunch menus. The recently established 'green team' were equally clear about their role in protecting the environment. Pupils' attitudes are extremely positive and they develop mature social skills and strong moral values.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. They enjoy school and attendance levels are good. Pupils' spiritual development is outstanding. When discussing the visit by an English astronaut, they marvelled at his achievement. One said, 'I thought - wow, this person standing in front of us has been into space!' Pupils discussed the work of a visiting sculptor with fascination. One remarked, 'He made a tree into a man!' Pupils have a good understanding of cultural diversity and the artistic and musical traditions from across the world.

Pupils understand the need to stay safe and know how to avoid hazards such as busy roads and sharp tools. Pupils' good basic skills and their ability to work cooperatively mean that they are well prepared for moving on to secondary school and for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils develop good learning habits because teachers skilfully promote their study skills. In Year 2, for example, pupils are learning to approach problems through different ways of thinking, such as generating ideas before committing to a particular method. Pupils receive good feedback on their work through teachers' careful marking and by commenting on one another's work. They gain a very clear idea of how to improve through individual targets in their workbooks. Teachers derive these through very careful assessment. Close monitoring of pupils' progress enables teachers to set challenging work for different abilities. They plan lessons very carefully and modify them in the light of pupils' responses. Classrooms abound with stimulating displays which promote learning and celebrate pupils' achievements. Teachers use ICT very effectively to support learning and this contributes to pupils' progress across the curriculum. Effective questioning builds on pupils' existing knowledge and understanding and most lessons move at a brisk pace. Support staff make a valuable contribution to lessons but could be further involved in introductions and summaries. Occasionally, introductions are overlong, leaving not enough time for independent work. Overall, however, teaching and learning are good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and enables pupils to develop literacy, mathematics and computer skills that lay secure foundations for learning. The Foundation Stage is very well organised and includes a good balance of work both indoors and outside. Good links between subjects enhance learning, for example, Year 3 pupils produced writing and artwork inspired by African cultures and stories. Music is strong with good opportunities for pupils to learn to play an instrument. Effective support for pupils with learning difficulties contributes to their good progress and the school is working hard to refine further the English and mathematics programmes in order to meet the needs of pupils more consistently. Pupils enjoy a very good variety of educational visits and after-school clubs. A successful programme of personal, social and health education develops important life skills and increases self-confidence. The recent 'Big Breakfast' event with parents and the community was enjoyed by all, and helped the pupils to learn about healthy eating and lifestyles. Such activities are welcomed by parents; as one said, 'The school provides innovative and interesting opportunities for learning'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Parents are extremely pleased with the care and support provided for their children. One summarised their views with her comment, 'My son loves his school and feels very safe, secure and happy there'. Inspectors agree that this is an excellent aspect of the school's work. Governors and staff undertake robust and systematic health and safety checks. Child protection procedures are secure and there is a good programme of staff training. The school checks pupils' progress carefully and individual learning targets are shared with them so they understand what they need to do next. Targets for more able pupils are being sharpened in order to accelerate their progress further and this is having a positive impact on standards. Assessment information is used well to keep an eye on how different groups, such as boys and girls, are doing. Monitoring and care of pupils with learning difficulties are excellent. Very efficient systems enable staff and parents to review pupils' progress towards individual targets. This excellent partnership contributes much to the success of the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Staff and governors have gained an accurate picture of the effectiveness of the school. The headteacher provides very strong leadership and knows the school well because of rigorous and systematic monitoring of teaching, learning and achievement. She is supported very well by the deputy headteacher and staff and there is a clear sense of collective responsibility and teamwork. Effective subject leadership has led to improved standards since the last inspection. First class management of provision for pupils with learning difficulties

has led to significant improvement. There have been good improvements to assessment and target-setting, and teachers are refining these further to set even more challenging targets. The school's track record in raising standards demonstrates that it has good capacity to continue doing so. For example, the school has identified ICT as a continuing priority and this has resulted in much improved provision and standards.

Governors carry out their roles and responsibilities well. They monitor the school's performance through first hand observation in order to hold the leadership team to account. Staff are well deployed and very good use is made of the building, surrounding grounds and resources to provide a stimulating learning environment. Governors are committed to the school and play a central role in maintaining its extremely strong links with the local community. Together with the staff, they survey parents' and pupils' views to continue improving the school. Parents justifiably hold the school in very high regard. The remark by one parent, 'St James is a fantastic school', typifies the views expressed in the parental questionnaires.

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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	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?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	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	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?	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?	2	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	2	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	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

Children

Thank you for making my colleague and me so welcome during our visit. We agree with your opinion that St James is a good school. It is certainly an exciting place to be. Your teachers make lessons as interesting as possible. As you told us, they give you a clear idea about how you are getting on and what you need to do next. It was good to see how well you are learning how to find things out for yourselves, for example, by using the Internet for research. The combination of good teaching and your hard work means that you progress well and reach good standards. Outside the classroom, you have lots of appealing things to do. We were impressed by your enthusiasm for music and with your concern for the environment. It was good to see how extremely well you behave and how much you contribute to school life and activities in the village. Best of luck in the paper boat race!

It is clear that you feel safe in the school and get on very well with the adults. This means that you always have someone to turn to if you're concerned about anything. Mrs Tann and the staff do all they can to ensure that you enjoy school and get the most out of it. The smiling faces of the Year 4 and 5 children as they returned from their trip to Swanage showed how much they had enjoyed themselves. The outside areas give you lots of space to play as well as many natural things to study. We're sure that you appreciate all that Mr Sorenson does to help around the school, particularly looking after the swimming pool and the new polytunnel.

Your teachers are continually looking for ways to help everyone do as well as they can. We have asked them to think particularly about keeping a close eye on those of you who are particularly good at English and mathematics to see if you can do as well in those subjects as you do in science. This may mean even harder work for some of you but we are sure you will rise to the challenge. With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Rob Crompton

Lead inspector