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St John's CofE Junior Mixed and Infant School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 101319
Local Authority Barnet
Inspection number 286029
Inspection dates 27–28 November 2006
Reporting inspector Gordon Ewing

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Crescent Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Friern Barnet
Age range of pupils	3–11		London N11 3LB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0208 368 1154
Number on roll (school)	237	Fax number	0208 361 5039
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Fiona Childs
		Headteacher	Mr Graham Gunn
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	27–28 November 2006	286029

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St John's is an average size primary school serving a socially and culturally diverse community. The majority of pupils come from white backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is low. The number of bilingual pupils is higher than normal. The school's data on children's attainment when they enter the Nursery indicates a full range of ability but is broadly average. The headteacher was appointed three years ago following a significant period of instability.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St John's is a good school with some outstanding features. It has recovered very well from a period of difficulty when there was staffing instability. This included the departure of the previous headteacher and a number of experienced teachers. The senior management, under the exemplary leadership of the headteacher, swiftly identified what they needed to do and put effective strategies in place to raise standards for all pupils. As one parent said, and;quot;It has made a tremendous differenceand;quot;.

Standards in the Foundation Stage are good and, taking into account their starting points, children make good progress. Inspection evidence, including provisional results from the 2006 national tests, shows that standards are high by the time pupils leave in Year 6 and a significant proportion of pupils reach the highest levels, particularly in English. Although standards are high in mathematics and science, they lag behind those in English. Pupils achieve well throughout the school because teaching is good, their behaviour is excellent and they have very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and, those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress.

The school is very successful in promoting pupils' outstanding personal development and good levels of care and support. There is a good ethos and pupils really enjoy coming to school. As one pupil said, and;quot;I really like the school and I don't want to leaveand;quot;. The school has a good reputation in the area and parents think very well of it.

The headteacher and his deputy provide outstanding leadership and both are excellent role models. They have developed and communicated a clear vision for the future, which is shared by all stakeholders. The school motto, 'Faith, Excellence and Enjoyment', permeates all aspects of school life. Self-evaluation is accurate and built securely on good tracking systems and information from school and national tests. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers, some relatively new to the school, work together well as a team to provide a good curriculum. A very able team of classroom assistants supports teachers very effectively. However, teachers' marking does not consistently guide pupils in showing them how they might improve further.

Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the previous inspection and there is good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics and science to those levels achieved in English.
- Ensure that teachers' marking gives more specific guidance to help pupils understand how they can improve further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are high. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well because teaching is consistently good. By the end of the Foundation Stage, pupils reach the expected learning goals in communication, literacy and language and exceed these in all other areas of learning. Standards at the end of Year 2 are above average and pupils' language and literacy skills have improved significantly. Standards in Year 6 are high and given pupils' starting points, they make good progress. The more stable staffing situation, the appointment of subject specialists and the school's strong leadership, has had a significant impact on pupils' achievement.

The more able pupils achieve well and provisional indications from the 2006 national tests show more than half of the pupils in Year 6 reached the highest level in English. However, in 2006, analysis shows that, in science, results were close to average. Very effective support from classroom assistants complements the good teaching so that pupils with learning difficulties and, those for whom English is an additional language, make progress similar to that of their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. They feel valued and appreciate the rich cultural diversity within the community; one pupil commented, 'We respect other cultures and religions. It is fun learning about other people'.

The school encourages pupils to take responsibility for their actions and their behaviour is outstanding as a result. Pupils enjoy coming to school. This is clearly reflected in their attendance rate, which has improved significantly. It is now above average. This, along with their very positive attitudes to learning, contributes well to their achievement.

Pupils feel that the school is a safe and secure place. They develop a clear sense of community through various fundraising activities and visits from members of the local community. They adopt healthy lifestyles and have made a very effective contribution to the school's healthy approach to lunchtime meals. They take part in a wide range of sports and physical activities, including swimming and aerobics.

The school council enables pupils to take on responsibility for improving the school. For example, it is now working towards establishing book and homework clubs. The acquisition of very good basic skills by the end of Year 6 prepares them very well for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good across the school. Teaching is continuing to improve as new staff increase in confidence and competence. In most lessons, teaching is well paced, learning objectives are shared and activities are planned that capture pupils' interest. Work is matched well to pupils' abilities and learning preferences. Consequently, pupils are focused in lessons, their enthusiasm is challenged positively and they make good progress. These characteristics reflect the good work undertaken by the leadership to raise the quality of teaching and enhance learning through the closer tracking of pupils' progress and the appointment of subject specialists. Pupils share their ideas well in paired activities and speak confidently in whole class discussions. They collaborate well and show high levels of concentration and perseverance. A skilful team of classroom assistants supports teachers very effectively and the school has increased their ability to support pupils through targeted training. Marking is not rigorous or consistent enough to give pupils a clear idea of what they need to do to improve their learning further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and is enhanced significantly by a wide range of clubs, educational visits and visitors to the school. The pupils speak very highly of the activities and experiences that the school offers. There are strengths in history, art, modern foreign languages, music, design technology and physical education. Promoting a healthy lifestyle through the medium of sport is outstanding. The curriculum is very well matched to the needs of all pupils and, particularly, for pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities. Basic literacy, numeracy and information communication technology (ICT) skills are very effectively developed through other subjects, helping to prepare pupils well for their future adult life. Teachers' use of ICT to improve pupils' learning is developing strongly as they become more proficient with the use of resources such as interactive whiteboards.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school places great importance on support for personal development so that each individual pupil feels safe and happy. All health and safety issues are addressed; risk assessments are in place and child protection procedures are well established. Close links between the local church and the school strengthen the pastoral support available for pupils and their families. Pupils receive appropriate guidance in their learning through target setting in English and mathematics. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good. The good induction of children into the Nursery and Reception is thoughtfully planned, as is the

support given to those pupils who arrive later in their education. This ensures pupils settle in quickly and make good progress. The school works well with parents and a variety of external agencies to support all pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and his deputy provide outstanding leadership, which has had a significant impact on the high standards that pupils achieve and their outstanding personal development. They set high professional standards for the work of staff and have established a strong sense of purpose across the school. The headteacher has steered the school successfully out of its difficult time. This has led to a significant improvement in the school's performance over the past three years and has restored parents' confidence in the school.

The effective partnership between the headteacher, staff and governors gives added boost to achieving important changes, such as establishing a new management structure and managing staff changes. The newly constituted leadership structure, including subject leaders, has clearly defined roles but there has not been sufficient time, yet, to see the impact of this on the school's work. The coordinator effectively leads the Foundation Stage, giving children a good start to their education.

The school monitors its effectiveness well and regularly encourages and acts upon parents' views. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning ensures that teaching is consistently good. Information from tests is analysed carefully and used effectively to plan for improvement. As a result, standards are high.

The governing body fulfils its responsibilities effectively and is committed to continued improvement. Governors have a range of useful experience, which they bring to the open, frank, challenging dialogue they have with leaders and managers.

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Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

You will remember that we visited your school recently for two days. I am writing to tell you what we found out about your school. We would like to thank you for making us feel very welcome. We were very impressed with the comments you made. It is very clear that you think very highly of your school and that you enjoy your learning enormously.

The things we think that are special about your school are:

- the good progress you make through the school and the high standards you achieve by the end of Year 6
- Mr Gunn is an outstanding headteacher who, with the support of his staff, leads a good school with some excellent features
- your school provides you with lots of very interesting and exciting things to do, including after-school clubs, visits and special opportunities like learning French, Italian or Russian
- the adults in school look after you and help and support you; you told us that you feel safe and happy in school and that you know the adults will always help you if you are upset or worried
- this is a very happy school and your parents and carers speak highly of it.

We think your school could be even better if your teachers:

- help you to reach even higher standards in mathematics and science
- through their marking, help you to understand how to improve further.

We are confident that you will continue to enjoy life in your lovely school and that you will continue to help your teachers as much as you can.

Yours sincerely

Gordon EwingLead inspector