

St John's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104228
Local Authority	Walsall
Inspection number	286886
Inspection date	7 June 2007
Reporting inspector	George Falconer HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	355
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Harryman
Headteacher	Robert Yeomans
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2002
School address	Brook Lane Walsall Wood Walsall WS9 9NA
Telephone number	01543 452197
Fax number	01543 452956

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	7 June 2007
Inspection number	286886

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

St John's Church of England Primary School is set in its own spacious grounds and takes pupils from wide ranging socio-economic backgrounds. It is extremely popular and larger than other primary schools. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below the national average.

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 a good school with some outstanding features. Parents express overwhelmingly positive views about the school. As one, typically, commented, 'All staff are really friendly and approachable and my son has been really happy in every class. The teachers always seem to go that extra mile and make the school and the lessons really interesting.'

The school is well led and managed. It describes itself as a 'Thinking School', and certainly it is an innovative school that is not prepared to stand still. The imminent introduction to a new and creative international curriculum is just one example of this. Monitoring and assessment of overall provision is good although the monitoring role of the curriculum coordinators is not as effective as it could be. However, there is now a clear focus on this within the school development plan.

Children start school with lower abilities in personal, social and emotional development than in previous years. Often this is accompanied by a lack of basic communication, language and literacy skills. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception Years, so that standards are broadly average by the start of Year 1. Achievement from entering school through to the end of Key Stage 2 is good. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly average. Standards in Key Stage 2 are good overall. The school recognises the need for more focus on boys' writing, particularly in Key Stage 1. The percentage of higher attainers in Key Stage 2 has improved this year but the school is rightly not wholly satisfied that the most able pupils are doing as well as they should.

The quality of teaching is good with some outstanding features observed during the course of the inspection. Personal development and well-being are outstanding in this very inclusive school where every child really does matter. Pupils are happy and very keen to say how much they love coming to school and that the quality of teaching is good. The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding and pupils feel they belong to 'a really super school' where they are well cared for and feel safe and secure. Pupils have clear targets and know what they need to do to improve their work. The curriculum is good with an outstanding range of opportunities for enrichment activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards for all pupils and particularly with boys' writing in Key Stage 1.
- Make sure that more able pupils are provided with work that will stretch their capabilities in all subjects.
- In order to facilitate the two points above, ensure that curriculum coordinators monitor more closely the quality of curriculum provision at the point of delivery in the classroom and use this information to promote even higher quality learning throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good with the majority of pupils demonstrating good progress in relation to their starting points as they move through the school. Children start the Nursery from very wide social and economic backgrounds with attainment that is below the level expected in relation to their ages, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Some also have low social and emotional awareness. Because of the good quality of teaching, pupils respond

well and make good progress. The intake to the Reception class has changed over the last few years and is continuing to change. Purposeful and strategically targeted intervention for those in most need results in good support, and by the end of the Foundation Stage, children demonstrate good progress in their early learning goals.

By the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, although boys' attainment is below that of the girls, and particularly so in writing. The 2006 test results last year for the end of Key Stage 2 showed that the pupils made good progress in mathematics and science where attainment levels were good. The English results were broadly average. As a result of closer monitoring and better tracking systems, the attainment of pupils this year is good overall, with evidence indicating that more pupils are predicted to achieve the higher levels in English, mathematics and science in this year's tests.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding in a school where every child does matter, and this is demonstrated in all aspects of school life including the excellent levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and for their own learning and demonstrate a caring attitude towards each other in a school that promotes inclusion to the full. The school council does excellent work within the school community and has an active voice in decision-making processes. The school enables pupils to appreciate the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and they speak enthusiastically about the many additional sporting activities on offer. The Safety Patrol do a good job in helping pupils feel safe and happy in the school. Pupils are encouraged to help others and much work is done in helping in the community as well as with charitable causes. Learners develop with confidence and adopt safe practices. As a result, they feel well prepared for the next phase in their lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good with some outstanding features. In good lessons that have outstanding features, the pace is fast, expectations are high, the teaching is enthusiastic and pupils are fully engaged in learning, including independent research. Where teaching is good, pupils are working well towards their challenging targets but the pace of learning is sometimes not as quick as it could be. The strategic use of teaching assistants has a very positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning and enables small group work and one-to-one work to be covered with those pupils who require additional support. Pupils say they appreciate their teachers and teaching assistants a great deal and feel that they are well supported towards challenging targets in their lessons. The inspection agrees.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good and the curriculum enrichment is outstanding, with many sporting activities as well as creative activities such as music and drama. All are well attended. The educational and residential visits are greatly favoured by the pupils and have a big impact

on their learning. Visitors to the school play an important role in the wider education of pupils including representatives from the church and the community. The curriculum provides all the statutory requirements and goes a long way towards generating more exciting and more creative elements to encourage the pupils to think more widely about their developing world. All staff work hard to make sure that the curriculum is relevant to the needs of all pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding in a school that clearly thinks carefully about all the pupils and their needs. The school is constantly reappraising its provision in the light of a changing school population. It has established very efficient and effective monitoring procedures for child protection, health and safety, and risk assessments, with checks carried out regularly by trained personnel. Pupils say they are happy in school and that they feel safe and secure with adults who are there to help them if they have any problems. The excellent personal, social and health education programme running through the school is effective and gives very good guidance to pupils. Teachers make sure that pupils are provided with an appropriate curriculum along with challenging targets that are known and understood by the pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good with some outstanding features. The leadership and management of the headteacher are outstanding and provide strong commitment and strategic direction. The strong senior management team works hard to make sure all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and that achievement and standards are as good as they can be. The inclusion of pupils and support staff in the decision-making processes is testimony to the way in which all staff and pupils feel an integral part of this community. School leaders constantly review key strategies for improvement. Curriculum leaders work well but do not fully exploit their roles to the maximum effect. For example, monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning in lessons is not yet robust enough. However, the school's own evaluation states that it is dedicated to pupils achieving the highest possible standards. The inspection agrees with this and supports the view that this school has a very good capacity to improve.

A parent commented:

'Mr. Yeomans and his staff make an excellent team and we consider St John's to be an excellent school.'

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
--	-----------------------

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?	1
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	2
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	2
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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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.

Annex A

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	2
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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's Church of England Primary School, Walsall Wood, WS9 9NA

When I visited your school, it was a pleasure to walk through the door and to see so many smiling faces. The way you welcomed me was very pleasant and I was able to get on with my job immediately because of the great amount of help that you gave to me. I can also say the same of your teachers.

Your school is a smashing place to grow up in and learn about lots of different things. It is smart and tidy and there are lots of stimulating and meaningful displays in the classrooms and corridors. I thought it was excellent how you can use the computers around school so that you can do independent research for your topics. Years 5 and 6 were having a brilliant time outside with the various sporting activities and it was hard to see who was enjoying it the most; the children or the teachers.

It was good to hear how much you enjoy your time in school and how much you appreciate what Mr Yeomans and all the staff do to support you in your learning. It is very clear that the majority of you make good progress. Many of you told me how you liked learning and that you thought your lessons were exciting. You also showed your enthusiasm for the many activities at lunchtime and after school, including the variety of sports.

When I talked with you it was really good to hear that you do your share with helping others too. I think it is particularly good that the school council does so much with all its great ideas to make the school an even better place to be. This is a tall order but you manage it well. All of you take on responsibilities and show how good you are at helping people in the community as well as with fund raising for good, charitable causes.

So what could be better? Mr Yeomans and his staff have some great plans for you with new ways of learning about different things. Their plans also include getting you to work just that bit harder so that you can all achieve a little bit more, particularly in writing for some of you boys in Years 1 and 2. Those of you who are capable of doing more difficult work are going to be stretched in your thinking that little bit more too. Teachers in charge of your subjects are going to have a closer look at what is happening in your classrooms so that they can give you greater support as well as helping other members of the staff. You can all help too by continuing to work hard and do your best.

Once again, thank you very much for helping me and for being so kind when I visited your school and I wish you all the success in the future.

Best wishes George Falconer HMI