

St John's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104894
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	287057
Inspection dates	19–20 June 2007
Reporting inspector	David Blackburne

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev P Green
Headteacher	Mr Daniel Hains
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2002
School address	Rufford Road Crossens Southport Merseyside PR9 8JH
Telephone number	01704 227441
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St John's is a smaller than average primary school situated north of Southport town centre. It is located in an area of housing for rent and owner occupied houses. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils are of White British background and no pupil is at the early stage of learning English. The school has achieved a number of nationally recognised awards including the Eco School Award, The Basic Skills Quality mark, Investors in People, ActiveMark Gold, ArtsMark, Football Association Schools Charter and the National Healthy School full accreditation.

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 outstanding features. A particular strength lies in the outstanding quality of pupils' personal development and well-being, which is achieved because of the excellent care, guidance and support they are given. This helps pupils to grow into confident, happy individuals who are at ease with themselves and in the company of others. It helps them to be responsible young citizens who contribute well to society. Teaching has a particularly strong impact upon pupils' personal development. This encourages pupils to behave well, respecting others and displaying attitudes that reflect a 'we not me' attitude. It enables them to thrive within the class and school community. The school's effective focus on emotional literacy helps pupils learn about themselves as well as helping them to have a better understanding of others. This enables the school to be a happy, caring place in which pupils enjoy their education. One parent summed up the views of many by saying, 'You could not find a more family orientated, happy school.'

As a result of good leadership and management and good teaching pupils achieve well overall, making good progress to reach above average standards by the end of Key Stage 2. However, standards in science for the most able pupils are not high enough.

The outstanding leadership provided by the headteacher is particularly effective in enabling pupils and staff to develop their potential well in an extremely supportive environment. The recently developed senior leadership team has introduced ways of working which have helped pupils raise their standards in mathematics following a dip at Key Stage 2 in 2005. The headteacher has provided stability to the school during recent years of staff changes. Stable and enthusiastic teaching and senior leadership teams are now in place and are beginning to work well together to improve standards for all pupils. Many excellent links have been forged by the school with outside agencies including the local high school, which provides specialist expertise in both sport and the provision of German. The partnership with parents is also very strong. As a result parents are very supportive of the school.

Pupils receive good guidance on what they need to do next in order to improve. They receive a good curriculum which is mostly well suited to their needs. It provides opportunities for them to develop well in areas beyond academic progress. The curriculum has generally been taught as separate subjects but a different approach has recently been piloted in some classes, linking together different subjects to make learning more relevant and enjoyable for pupils. However, this best practice is not yet evident in all classes.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding. Children make very good progress because of the outstanding teaching they receive. When they come to school they are welcomed into a bright, friendly and exciting environment. They are given opportunities to experience a wide variety of activities which promote their learning in a stimulating and highly enjoyable way.

The school has an accurate view of its performance. The good quality of its leadership, including the governing body, and its track record of improving standards means that it has good capacity to improve further. It gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the standards reached by more able pupils in science.
- Develop the curriculum to ensure that it is consistently more relevant and enjoyable for pupils across the school in order to raise standards further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start school with standards that are below national expectations and make rapid progress in the Foundation Stage with most achieving the early learning goals expected of children by the end of Reception. This indicates very good progress. Pupils attain above average standards overall by the end of Key Stage 2 which shows good progress overall from Years 1 to 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the good teaching and support they receive. High attaining pupils are not achieving as well as they could in science due to the lack of challenge they receive in lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is a result of the strong focus on emotional literacy throughout the school. Pupils are encouraged to be aware of the needs of others and to understand their own feelings. Pupils know that they are valued as individuals. This is shown clearly through a display of awards the school has achieved and a framed mirror at pupil height which has a label reading, 'We are very proud of all our awards but the most important frame is this one.' Pupils enjoy school and this can be seen through their good behaviour and the consistently above average attendance rates of most children. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and make very positive choices in the food they eat and the way they choose to spend their time. Many take advantage of the range of activities on offer after school, many of which involve sport or exercise. Pupils' contribution to the community is outstanding. They take on many responsibilities within school including membership of the school council or acting as playground leaders, to help others. The excellent donations to local and international charities, sponsorship of children in the developing world as well as strong links with the local elderly population show a clear commitment to their community. The good standards that they achieve in basic skills, their excellent personal development and their developing emotional literacy prepare pupils well for their future as adult members of society.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils respond well to the high expectations that their teachers have of them because of the good relationships that are a feature of the school. Clear learning objectives, realistically matched to pupils' learning needs are a feature of all lessons. Good planning for different needs leads to pupils making good progress overall. Regular assessment keeps pupils informed of their standards and targets. Pupils regularly work with another child as 'response partners'. This approach stimulates speaking and listening and improves pupils' confidence. Classroom assistants are used well to assist teachers in their planning as well as providing dedicated support for identified learners. Occasionally, lengthy introductions to lessons prompt some restlessness, especially when pupils sit for too long on the carpet. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is outstanding: vibrant, child centred, challenging and enjoyable. Using language linked to their local environment makes children become more literate, aware and confident. As a result they make outstanding gains in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum fulfils all statutory requirements. The provision for Mathematics, literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) are good, with links between ICT and other subjects beginning to be established. The curriculum encourages pupils' personal development very effectively and the whole school focus on emotional literacy is a strength. A good range of enrichment is offered to pupils in the form of visitors into school and school trips, including two residential visits in Year 4 and Year 6. A rich variety of extra-curricular opportunities is offered to pupils to enable them to develop a range of interests, many of them sporting. Science lessons have not benefited from the link with the high school in the way that physical education and German have. As a result lessons have not been as exciting or challenging for the most able pupils. Education for health is a strength of the school and as a result pupils have a well developed understanding of health issues. The recent developments linking different subjects together in the curriculum are not consistent across the school and are not yet embedded as best practice in each class.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school aims to, 'cater for pupils' emotional needs and welfare' and it succeeds in making an outstanding contribution to these. Pupils are well safeguarded and protected in line with government requirements. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are clearly identified at an early stage in their schooling. Support for these pupils is particularly well planned and carried out so that they make similar good progress to their classmates. There are excellent links to outside agencies, which cater for the specific needs of particular pupils. Links with parents are also outstanding, with parents feeling fully informed and involved in their child's education. The school's focus on emotional literacy makes an excellent contribution to the care of pupils and the catering for all their needs. Good academic guidance helps pupils to know their standards and the targets they should aim for. The marking of pupils work clearly indicates how well they have done and tells them what they need to do next in order to improve. Children in the Foundation Stage become increasingly independent and skilful in an atmosphere of great care and enjoyment.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management promote outstanding personal development and good academic achievement. The headteacher is an outstanding leader who has led the school well through the challenges posed by staffing changes in recent years. The recently developed senior leadership team has shown good leadership while developing their own skills and the skills of other colleagues. The school has an accurate view of its performance and its leadership is focussed successfully on raising standards. Pupils' performance is tracked closely to provide challenging targets that help them make good progress. Links with parents and other outside agencies are outstanding and parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and its work with their children. The school is oversubscribed indicating its popularity in the local area. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties well, being fully informed and prepared to challenge the school when necessary.

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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
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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?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
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	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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	2

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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I am writing on behalf of the inspectors to thank you for the special welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. Everyone was very polite and helpful in answering our questions to help us in our work.

We think St John's is a good school and some of the things you do are excellent. You all work hard and learn well and show a lot of care for each other. Your behaviour is good and you know that if anyone has a problem your teachers will help you to sort it out. We particularly liked how hard you have worked to understand your own feelings and the feelings of others. You are all part of a very healthy school where people care particularly well for each other and enjoy themselves. You make many good choices about the food you eat and many of you spend a lot of your time getting plenty of exercise.

Your teachers help you by telling you what you have done well and what you need to do next, when they mark your work. Your targets help you to improve your work further and we felt that everybody is doing well at nearly everything they do. We have asked your teachers to help the children who are particularly good at science to get even better by making the work they are asked to do more challenging.

We could tell that you like your teachers and that they help you to learn well. We feel that you enjoy your lessons but you would enjoy them even more if you could use different skills while you were learning about something that you found really exciting or interesting.

We were very impressed by the way you try to help others by collecting money for charity and entertaining the old people who live near your school. We are sure you are proud of the many awards that you have helped the school to get. Thank you for helping us with the inspection of your school. We hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make St John's an even better school.