

St John's CofE Primary School, Dukinfield

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 106228 |
| Local Authority | Tameside |
| Inspection number | 287449 |
| Inspection dates | 22–23 May 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Allan Torr HMI |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 261 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Paul Nuttal |
| Headteacher | Mrs S Graham |
| Date of previous school inspection | 25 November 2002 |
| School address | Westmorland Avenue Dukinfield Cheshire SK16 5JA |
| Telephone number | 0161 3385821 |
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

St John's is a larger than average primary school in the centre of Dukinfield. Schools in the area have been reorganised and pupil numbers at St John's have fallen sharply since the last inspection; the school is moving towards having one class in every year group. Extensive building work over the last two years has resulted in some disruption to provision. There is a newly built Foundation Stage Unit (Nursery and Reception). Approximately one in every ten pupils is from a minority ethnic group. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is just below the national average and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. A small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. The school has been awarded Activemark by Sport England and the Eco-schools silver 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 school. It has strengths in the good care and support it gives to pupils. While it has moved on since the last inspection, it has not done enough to raise standards in English, particularly in writing, where some pupils, especially in Key Stage 1, underachieve. Staff and pupils make visitors feel welcome in this friendly, happy and secure environment. The Christian ethos, set and maintained by the headteacher, pervades all areas of the school. The headteacher is successful in ensuring that the school's aim for pupils to 'develop confidence in themselves' is fulfilled.

Children enter school with skills that are at or above expectation for their age. In the Foundation Stage, children make satisfactory progress overall. They do well in developing confidence and social skills and they sometimes work at a high level. One boy, for example, was able to explain what symmetry meant and another could use the term non-fiction appropriately. Pupils also make satisfactory progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. By the time they leave Year 6, they attain levels which are broadly in line with or above the national average. Pupils' writing lags markedly behind their reading skills. The progress they make and the levels they reach in mathematics, science and in modern foreign languages are good because teaching is lively and the activities are engaging, practical and relevant. In contrast, in English and some foundation subjects and particularly in Key Stage 1, the tasks set are often mundane, lack sufficient challenge and do not promote the development of pupils' writing skills to develop fully.

The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory but there were some lessons which were good or outstanding, particularly in Key Stage 2. This is because learning was brisk, lively and purposeful. Pupils' writing skills across the curriculum is constrained by teachers' over-reliance worksheets from published schemes. As a result, pupils do not make the progress they could and do not reach their full potential as writers.

Marking of pupils' work is good and sometimes very good, particularly at Key Stage 2. It clearly indicates what pupils need to do to improve. Pupils are well aware of their half-termly targets in English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology (ICT) and how to use these to improve their work.

Pupils lead an active life and make good use of some exciting playground equipment; two Year 6 boys were particularly impressive in their skipping skills. Pupils know what they should do to stay healthy, although too many choose crisps and sweet drinks and do not take up healthy options at break and lunch times. Pupils know how to stay safe, they are aware of hazards and feel free from harassment and intimidation. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and to the local community. They are keen to take up roles and responsibilities such as play leaders, playground buddies, school councillors and Eco councillors. They are generous with their time to raise money for good causes and to represent the school at events and festivals such as the Whit walk. Pupils' attendance has risen sharply this year and is now average. Pupils speak warmly about the school and enjoy lessons, particularly science, foreign languages and mathematics. The curriculum is satisfactory overall; good aspects are undermined by the lack of opportunity for pupils to extend their skills in English. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of out-of-hours activities, well devised visits out of school, and by the good opportunities to speak and learn other languages. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for their future lives. They learn to cooperate, collaborate and develop good ICT skills although their thinking and writing skills are less well developed.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked successfully to minimise the changes in the last few years due to the fall in pupil numbers, the building work and new classrooms. Leaders and managers at all levels have a clear vision, they are aware of what they need to do to improve and take in the views of all stakeholders when identifying priorities for improvement. Actions taken have not yet had enough impact on raising standards in pupils' writing. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection in for example, attendance, marking of work, and the quality of subject leadership. The school provides satisfactory value for money and has satisfactory capacity to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

- Raise the standard of pupils' writing across the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of classroom activities to make them more relevant, challenging and engaging.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress. They enter Key Stage 1 with skills that are at or above expectation for their age. Their ability to read and their creative and physical development are particularly good. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 so that by the time they leave Year 2, their attainment is in line with national expectations. Pupils reach higher standards in mathematics and reading than they do in writing. In 2006, boys in particular did not reach the expected levels in writing and lagged markedly behind the girls. Standards in some other subjects are too low because pupils are not given challenging enough work.

In Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress in mathematics, science and in modern foreign languages. In 2006 almost two thirds of pupils did better than expected for 11 year olds and reached the higher Level 5 in science and almost half did so in mathematics. Progress in English, however, is not fast enough, particularly in writing. Current standards in Key Stage 2 are broadly average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, pupils from minority ethnic groups and pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Pupils are able to reflect, consider and express their opinions articulately and with confidence. They know the difference between right and wrong and take time to consider what could happen as a result of their actions. In one class, for example, pupils explored the motivation and feelings of characters from a book, empathising with them and trying to understand how they would feel in similar circumstances. Pupils behave well and cooperate with others; one pupil summed up the views of others by saying, 'What I like best about school is that people are sharing and fair to each other.' Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall. Their contributions to the school and local community are good. Pupils are keen to take on jobs, for example, organising a bring and buy

sale for a charity and a sponsored run to raise money for playground equipment. Pupils join in with church events, for instance, taking Easter eggs and harvest gifts to residents. Pupils are considerate and show empathy towards others. As a thank you for putting up with the disruption during building work, pupils took plants to neighbours of the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers give pupils clear learning objectives and prepare lessons that are generally well matched to their different levels of understanding and skill. The allocated tasks are not always interesting, relevant or challenging and this results in slower progress, particularly in English. Opportunities to extend writing skills across the curriculum are not always taken which makes pupils' progress slower than it could be. Where progress is quicker, the classroom activities are engaging and make pupils think and extend their understanding and skill. Teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboard and other resources but there is an over-reliance on published schemes. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Relationships are strong and there is a good rapport between pupils and staff. Praise is used well to encourage pupils to do better. Assessment and marking are good. In some classes marking is very good because pupils are shown clearly what they need to do next to improve and these comments are considered and pupils respond with helpful comments of their own. Pupils are beginning to take responsibility for their own learning and for assessing the work of their peers. In some lessons, teachers skilfully use pupils' responses as a basis from which to target their questions and to extend their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with some good aspects. It meets national requirements but gives pupils a narrow experience in English and in particular in writing. Not much is done to develop pupils' skills in writing across the curriculum. Trips, visits and events are well planned to enrich what is taught in the subjects. Personal and social education is built upon in Year 6; for example, by a visit to the Crucial Crew event and visits by the community police and road safety officers who put on workshops in the school. The teaching of modern foreign languages is a strength. Pupils learn to speak French; this linked well in Year 5 to a visit to the local language college to watch a concert sung in French by older pupils. Their knowledge and skills in speaking French are consolidated across the curriculum; for example, counting in French in the mathematics lesson. Pupils also learn Spanish and Year 4 pupils took part in a pilot scheme in Mandarin. Pupils have the opportunity to perform in events and shows. There are strong links with the local sports college to provide sport and activities which stretch gifted and talented pupils and develop basic skills. There is a good range of clubs accessible to all pupils including sporting clubs, art and craft, nature, computers, foreign languages and performing arts clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

A major reason why the school is popular is because parents rightly feel the school is safe and their children are well cared for. All required arrangements for safeguarding, including those

for child protection, are in place. There are robust systems in place to monitor health and safety and supervision levels at break times are high. There are good induction procedures for pupils starting in the Nursery and for transferring to high school. Pupils are given good academic guidance; they are given half-termly targets in English, mathematics, science, and ICT. These along with good advice in marking and feedback in lessons enable pupils to know what they need to do next to improve. In mathematics and science, this is particularly effective. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. Their needs are diagnosed early and the deputy headteacher carefully identifies a range of additional work that will best suit the individual's needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and senior leaders manage and monitor the school well so that it runs smoothly. Satisfactory leadership overall has led to improvement since the last inspection but this has not ensured that all pupils are achieving as well as they can in English. The school's self-evaluation is broadly accurate in identifying strengths and areas for improvement although it is sometimes too positive. While the school has identified clear improvement targets, the development plan lacks a focus on how standards in pupils' writing will be raised across the curriculum. Subject leaders have begun to develop their role in scrutinising work, observing lessons, giving demonstration lessons and improving attainment. There is a great deal of assessment data but the analysis is not sharp enough to give senior leaders and subject leaders a clear understanding of standards and the progress made by pupils in each subject.

There are good systems in place for monitoring the performance of all staff. The governing body gives good support to the school under the excellent leadership of the chair of governors. He is putting his knowledge and expertise in education to good use in challenging the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

| | |
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| <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

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|--|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 2 |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |

Achievement and standards

| | |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 3 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 3 |

Personal development and well-being

| | |
|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 3 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 3 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 3 |
| 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 3 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 3 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 3 |
| 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

As you know, I inspected your school recently with two colleagues. We were impressed with your friendliness and willingness to talk and to share your opinions with us. Overall the school is satisfactory. There are some good things about your school, for example, the opportunity to learn Spanish, French and Year 4 had an opportunity to try Mandarin Chinese.

The school building has changed over the last two years. The accommodation for the Nursery and Reception is very good especially the outdoor area, and the newly built classrooms are good areas for you to learn in. The standards you reach and the progress you make in mathematics, science and in French and Spanish are good. The marking of your work and the setting of targets is well done by your teachers. Your attendance this year has got much better. Keep it up!

I have asked the governors, headteacher and staff to help you learn better. In English, I know that you could make even faster progress and so I have asked your teachers to give you really interesting things to write about in each subject. You can help by telling them what you find interesting to write about and what would make you write even better.

It was good to meet you and a pleasure to see you in lessons. I wish you well for the future.