



St John The Baptist Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108263
Local Authority Wakefield
Inspection number 288056
Inspection date 30 January 2007
Reporting inspector Linda Murphy

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Beckbridge Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Normanton
Age range of pupils	3-11		West Yorkshire WF6 2HZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01924 302580
Number on roll (school)	242	Fax number	01924 302580
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr David Ward
		Headteacher	Mrs M Haley
Date of previous school inspection	15 October 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is of average size and serves a mixed area of council-built and private housing. Most pupils are White British. The proportions of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, who are from minority ethnic backgrounds, who are learning English as an additional language or who have additional learning difficulties and/or disabilities are all below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This excellent school promotes academic attainment exceedingly well and at the same time provides outstanding opportunities for pupils' personal development. The pupils are very happy and joyful, are highly independent and thrive in the atmosphere of high expectations and very strong support. Pupils say, 'St John's pushes us to the limit but is always there to help us and always wants the best for us.' Pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes to work and play and their very regular attendance add greatly to their readiness to learn. They eagerly take on extra responsibilities and complete these maturely and with empathy for the people they are with. The outstanding care the school gives its pupils helps them become kind, confident and outgoing young people with a very good sense of their responsibilities in the school and local communities. Pupils greatly understand the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. They know they need to eat healthy food, keep fit and active and maintain their emotional and spiritual well-being. Parents speak very highly of the school and the level of care it provides.

These attributes together with teaching of outstanding quality enable pupils to achieve their very best at school. They enter the Foundation Stage with levels lower than typically expected for their ages. They make good progress and attain the goals set for their age by the time they start Year 1. This firm foundation is built upon exceedingly well so that by Year 6 standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. They are high in information and communication technology. This, together with their excellent personal qualities, sets pupils up very well for their next school.

The arrangements in the Foundation Stage are good and bring about some fast learning. The good quality curriculum in Years 1 to 6 has a clear focus on English, mathematics and information and communication technology. An outstanding range of extra-curricular clubs broadens pupils' interests. Because the school expects much of itself it is always looking for ways to improve. It has made an early start in linking the learning in different subjects together. This has yet to become fully effective in using pupils' skills in one subject to help their learning in another.

Leadership at all levels is outstanding. It starts with a vision to be a 'welcoming, caring school, a family community, working in harmony, and offering a high quality education for life'. In this it succeeds very well indeed. It is an Investor in People as well as an Investor in Pupils. The highly respected headteacher gives a wonderfully clear lead to the school, sets high expectations and empowers others. Dynamic support is given from all levels of leadership. The governing body provides excellent challenge and support and ensures that the school has a complement of highly effective staff. The school rigorously monitors and evaluates its work but is somewhat over-cautious in judging its success. This is because it always strives for the very best. This high performing school has improved very well since the last inspection and has an excellent capacity to continue on the road it has set. It provides excellent value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Link subjects through curricular plans so that pupils develop and use their skills to achieve their best.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils achieve so very well because of their year-on-year progress. They move from below average levels on entry to the Foundation Stage to above average standards by Year 6. Challenging targets are set, monitored and met. This rapid progress is best in mathematics where pupils thrive because they have basic numeracy facts at their fingertips. They enjoy the challenge and opportunities to use their initiative in solving quite difficult mathematical problems. In writing, standards are high because the school took prompt action to enliven teaching and learning. The school has a strong partnership with parents and carers that provides good help to pupils' reading. The breadth of reading provided at the school and the excellent teaching enable pupils to achieve highly.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are excellent at working together in teams and with partners. To do this, they draw on their outstanding personal qualities. They make the most of the school's guidance to live a healthy, safe and fulfilling life. The Active Mark reflects the school's commitment to healthy lifestyles and sporting achievement. Pupils say that adults listen to them really well, take their views into account and act upon them. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. For example, the superb relationships mean that pupils are at ease and contribute freely to discussion. This supports their writing where spirituality is often tangible: a Year 5 pupil wrote, 'I could hear the tension of the moment through my heart.' Pupils' thorough enjoyment of school is illustrated in their good attendance, which is above average despite the significant number of holidays taken during school time. Generous and successful in their fundraising, pupils help people in their local and wider community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Much high quality training underpins the strengths of teaching and learning. This, together with very clear organisation and preparation, means that the pace of lessons is very well matched to pupils' needs. Staff have a very good understanding of the subjects they teach and this promotes highly effective questioning. Staff are confident in giving pupils the opportunity to work in groups and develop their independence -

all skills which set pupils up very well for their future lives. Pupils say they like to 'put their heads together' to share ideas and solve problems. Pupils are very attentive, thoroughly enjoying their learning and relishing opportunities to find out about new things. They soak up their learning quickly.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A well chosen balance between teacher-led activities and those for children to select themselves enhances the curriculum in the Foundation Stage. These good arrangements are spreading to Year 1 and Year 2 where pupils are given many practical tasks to complete. A focus on basic skills is always a high priority and is reflected in the school's award of the Basic Skills Quality Mark. Information and communication technology (ICT) is woven into many subjects and pupils use it as an everyday tool in their learning. The curriculum has yet to be fully reviewed to make sure that other subjects are woven together just as well. The curriculum is tailored to the academic and personal success of all pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Exceptional care and guidance supports pupils' all-round development exceedingly well. For example, the individual education plans for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are excellent and give extremely helpful guidance in supporting teaching and learning. Assessment is very secure and is used exceedingly well to direct teaching and enable learning. Arrangements for health and safety, including those for safeguarding pupils, are fully in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school continues to improve because of the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, who is determined that the school does not rest on its laurels. Other leaders in the school, including governors, fulfil their key responsibilities very well. The work towards a host of national awards is the icing on the cake in helping the school ensure that pupils' achievement is as good as it can be. Very effective arrangements for tracking pupils' progress include challenging targets that are monitored with great care. This means that all pupils have equal opportunity to do very well. Highly effective links with many external agencies promote pupils' welfare and progress. The school's self-evaluation is rigorous and identifies where any improvements are required. These are acted on swiftly and successfully.

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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?	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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?	1
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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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	1
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

St John's is a brilliant school!

All members of the school community work so very well together to ensure that you learn quickly and that you thoroughly enjoy your time at school. The leadership of the school and the teaching and learning are outstanding. Staff care for you very well indeed and always want the best of everything for you - as described in this poem that one of you wrote:

'The teachers change the way of the play

The rocking rugby

The fun football

The super sports day

The included kids.'

You understand the importance of working with and helping others and have a really good understanding of how to play an active part in school. Thank you for contributing to the inspection by showing me how well you are doing and sharing your views with me. You are very grown-up for your ages and have an excellent understanding about keeping healthy and safe.

To make the school even better the teachers are going to think of more exciting ways to link all the subjects together. So - what can you do to help? I know that your parents and staff are very proud of you and that you take great pride in all you do. Please continue to do your best - that is all we ask.