

# Kingsley St John's CofE (VA) Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111317
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cheshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	288926
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Derek Aitken

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	63
School	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev D Gilpin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Ann Griffiths
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 September 2002
<b>School address</b>	Hollow Lane Kingsley Frodsham Cheshire WA6 8EF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01928 788536
<b>Fax number</b>	01928 787600

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This small school is located in a pleasant village setting. The social and economic circumstances of the pupils are generally more favourable than is usually the case. All the pupils, apart from the children in Reception, are taught in mixed-age classes. No pupils are of minority ethnic origin and there are none at an early stage of learning English. Very few pupils have learning difficulties. The school became part of a federation with a neighbouring primary school in September 2006 under the leadership of the headteacher. The school has been re-accredited with the ArtsMark (Silver) Award and achieved the National Healthy Schools Award in May 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

'Our child cannot wait to get to school in the morning. The staff are always willing to listen and adjust to each child's needs, often in the light of changed family circumstances.' This is typical of the way parents and carers view the school. It reflects how successfully the school fulfils its mission to be 'a thriving school at the heart of its village community'. It also captures accurately the judgement that this is a good school where pupils' personal development is outstanding. The school's curriculum is good. Despite the small size of the school there is a good range of opportunities for pupils to develop their talents. The curriculum is particularly successful in promoting pupils' personal development, which gets off to an excellent start in Reception and continues to flourish in the following key stages. Pupils mix happily with each other and are confident, articulate and lively. They are very committed to their school and enjoy all aspects of school life. They particularly welcome the individual attention they receive from their teachers. They feel safe and appreciate the encouragement they receive to lead healthy lives.

Achievement is good and standards are above average. Children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 to 6 make good progress. Their progress is effectively monitored. Relative weaknesses in pupils' performances are identified and swift action taken to address them. For example, there was a dip in achievement in reading and writing in Year 2 in 2006. The school has improved the quality of its support programmes and these are helping pupils to improve their standards in reading in Year 3. Current pupils in the Year 1 and 2 classes are more able and their progress is being accelerated by exceptional teaching. Staff have focused on extending the range of pupils' writing in all years. Impact on standards in this respect has been more limited as the importance of good handwriting skills is not emphasised or reinforced enough in the teaching. This is reflected in untidy presentation and some needless mistakes in other subjects in the work of pupils in Key Stage 2. The otherwise good teaching enables pupils to make good progress in reading, mathematics and science. In the best lessons pupils make very good progress, as a result of detailed planning and exciting practical activities. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are average because opportunities for its use are restricted. The presentation of marking reduces the impact of the constructive comments made. A recent initiative, designed to involve pupils more in assessing their written work through 'smiley faces', does not engage them fully enough in the assessment of their work.

The school benefits from experienced staff who are ably led by the hard-working and clear-sighted headteacher. A great deal of effort has been expended to ensure a successful launch for the new federation. The sharing of resources and expertise between the two schools has benefited pupils by increasing the range of extra-curricular activities and the repertoire of the staff's teaching skills. The school has tackled successfully the key issues of the previous inspection and is well placed to improve further. Value for money is good.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the skills of handwriting and presentation are taught more effectively, both to raise standards in writing and to improve the accuracy of pupils' work in other subjects.
- Make better use of assessment so that pupils in Key Stage 2 have a clearer idea of how to improve their work.
- Provide more opportunities in the curriculum for pupils to improve their ICT skills.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

On entry to Reception children's skills and knowledge are usually above average, but this varies as the year group has only a small number of children in it. They make good progress in this class, because of the excellent relationships and the individual attention they receive. By the time children join Year 1 almost all have attained the expected early learning goals. Thereafter pupils build well on their earlier attainment and usually reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. They make good progress in reading, mathematics and science. Achievement in writing is satisfactory. This difference is because teachers do not give the skills of handwriting and presentation enough emphasis and reinforcement. Results in national tests at the end of Year 2 were average in 2006. The current, more able, group in Year 2 is making good progress due to high quality teaching. Results in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2006 were above average. Improved tracking procedures are ensuring that standards in the current less able Year 6 class are now above average and pupils are on course to meet the school's challenging targets. Effective programmes to support those who find learning difficult enable these pupils to make good progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils greatly enjoy school, as reflected in their exceptional attendance, and make good use of opportunities to develop their talents to the full. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They have a real sense of their own worth, but also a very good understanding of the needs of others. The former is reflected in their self-confidence and powers of expression. The latter is shown in the friendly way they engage with adults and other pupils. For example, two children in Reception brought in their books about 'vehicles' for their classmates to read and discussed these in animated fashion. Pupils contribute generously to charity, helping to raise funds for the partner school in Soweto. They are exceptionally aware of the importance of healthy lifestyles, reflecting the national award the school has received. They know very well how to stay safe both inside and outside school. The school council has recently helped finance the purchase of new wooden playground equipment. The fast-growing 'Green-fingered Gang' (Eco-group) enables pupils to contribute actively to improving the school grounds. Above average standards in most of the basic skills ensure pupils are well prepared to meet the challenges of later life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils make good progress because work is effectively planned to match the range of needs within the mixed-age classes. Questioning is of a good standard and encourages the steady development of thinking skills. Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to expertly exploit pupils' curiosity and thirst for learning. Friendly relationships in the classroom ensure little time is wasted. In the best lessons, detailed planning and well-structured activities, combined with good assessment, ensure pupils are fully engaged in their work. On a few occasions, when less effective direction is provided for pupils' practical work, the pace of learning drops a little. Pupils make good use of opportunities to

work with others to develop their understanding and skills. Teaching assistants work effectively, often on a one-to-one basis, to ensure no pupil falls behind. Marking provides useful guidance but opportunities are missed to involve pupils' more effectively in the assessment of their work.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum provides pupils with a good range of learning experiences and enables them to achieve well academically and highly in their personal development. It is reviewed regularly and is flexible in meeting the needs of pupils. For example, pupils can move up (or down) a class in numeracy for extra challenge or support. In spite of limitations in the accommodation the curriculum for the children in Reception is good. A strong emphasis on arts education offers pupils good opportunities to develop their creative skills. Imaginative links are made between subjects to capture pupils' interest and to widen their global understanding. This was clearly evident in the work of Year 5 and 6 pupils on the Indus civilisation and in their use of mind-mapping techniques. The well-established link with Soweto supports topic work usefully in all years. Pupils, especially those in the younger years, have too few opportunities to use ICT to support their learning. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits, visitors and residential stays that make a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. Procedures for health and safety are thorough. Pupils feel safe in school. They trust the staff implicitly. Routines are consistently applied, within a relaxed air of informality, and pupils are quick to comply. Staff know the pupils very well and respond to their needs promptly and sensitively. Effective use is made of outside agencies to ensure pupils receive any additional help they need. Child protection procedures and those for safeguarding pupils are in place and meet current requirements. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported as management systems have improved and support programmes are more effectively focused. Transition arrangements are secure and enable older pupils to settle down quickly when they move up to secondary school. Parents and carers contribute well to their children's welfare at school by supporting their learning at home and in school, for example, by joint involvement in the Eco-group. Tracking systems are effective in ensuring pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science. The use of targets and assessment is not sufficiently well developed to promote higher attainment in science and the foundation subjects.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The good leadership is securely focused on improving quality in all aspects of the school's work. Monitoring is effective and, as a result, leaders have an accurate understanding of strengths and areas for further development. Staffing is stable and experienced. Recent appointments have added extra quality to both management and teaching. This is reflected, for example, in higher standards in Key Stage 1. Leadership roles have been allocated thoughtfully to ensure all staff have an important role to play in ensuring continued success and to cope with more complex demands required under the new federated structure. These are bedding in well, but their impact has yet to be reflected in all areas of the work of the school. Whilst arrangements to monitor the performance of the school are good overall, the monitoring of teaching and

learning through lesson observations does not indicate how improvement points for individual staff will be followed up. The School Strategic Plan is comprehensive and linked well to pupils' personal development. Governors are closely involved with the work of the school and provide a good measure of support and challenge.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
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	2

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

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

I visited your school recently to find out how well you are learning. Thank you for making me welcome and being helpful when I talked to you. I was lucky to have the opportunity to speak to some children at greater length at a lunchtime meeting and see how well the 'Green-fingered Gang' contributed to the committee meeting.

Your school gives you a good education. You have lots of opportunities to develop your skills and talents. All this helps you to enjoy school and develop exceptionally well, both personally and socially. I agree with you that the staff look after you well. They know each of you as individuals and this helps you all to get along very well with each other. Your teachers ensure that you learn many useful things and make your learning interesting and up-to-date, for example, through the link with your partner school in Soweto. Your teachers are experienced and work well together as a team. They set you a good example, by preparing your lessons carefully so that all of you are kept busy learning. As a result you make good progress throughout your time in school, especially in reading. The headteacher works very hard for you and is always looking for new ways to make things better for you.

There are three things that I have asked the headteacher and staff to do to make your learning better. First, I want them to make sure that your handwriting and presentation improves so that you reach higher standards in English and cut down on mistakes in your other subjects. You too can play your part in this by taking more care in the way you set out your work! Second, I want them to ensure that you reach the highest standards you can by giving you better opportunities to contribute to your own learning. This will involve you more in assessing how well you are doing and working out, with the help of your teachers, how you can improve further. Third, I have asked the headteacher to give you more opportunities to use ICT to help you learn better.