



# St James' Church of England Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 113840  
**Local Authority** Bournemouth  
**Inspection number** 289741  
**Inspection dates** 28 February –1 March 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Diane Wilkinson

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 address</b>	Pokesdown Hill
<b>School category</b>	Community		Christchurch Road
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		Bournemouth BH7 6DW
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01202 426696
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	406	<b>Fax number</b>	01202 433073
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	David Goode
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Susan Margaret Lyonette
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 May 2001		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

St James is a large Church of England primary school. Pupils come from a range of backgrounds. The great majority are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language. Attainment on entry is slightly above that usually found. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average, but varies between year groups.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St James is a good and improving school with significant strengths in some areas of its work. It provides good value for money. A major reason for the school's success is the excellent direction given for the school's work by the headteacher and the very good support she is given by the senior leadership team. As a result, staff and governors are committed to providing the best quality of education for pupils and are working hard to achieve this. Governors are supportive and play an effective role in school development. Leadership and management are good overall. The school has an accurate and comprehensive picture of how well it is doing and has begun to successfully address areas of relative weakness. These strengths give confidence that the school is well placed to improve further.

The school's Christian ethos is evident in the excellent relationships between staff and pupils. There is a strong commitment to provide well for pupils' personal and academic needs and an excellent climate for learning has been created. As a result, pupils enjoy school very much and their motivation to work hard is very good. Parents recognise this; as one commented, 'When I asked my children what they enjoyed about school, the response was "the teachers are kind and friendly and we have fun too", what more could a parent want!' Pupils' personal development, particularly their behaviour, is excellent. Pupils are polite and helpful and are developing maturity and confidence.

Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, achieve well. Standards at the end of the Reception year are above those usually found and by the end of Year 2 are well above average overall and very high in reading. Although above average, pupils' skills are not as good in writing as they are in reading and mathematics, and pupils find it hard to write creatively. By the end of Year 6, overall standards are very high, especially in English where the school exceeded its challenging targets in the Year 6 national tests.

The curriculum is good. It is well planned and interesting and, as well as enthusing and motivating pupils, it also helps ensure that teaching is consistently good in all year groups. Teachers have high expectations of what each pupil can achieve so lesson activities are challenging and well matched to the stage at which different pupils are working. Interesting and practical tasks enhance learning and are raising standards further. Provision for children in the Reception year is good.

Care, support and guidance are good overall. The school pays good attention to pupils' health and safety and all assessments and procedures are carried out rigorously. The school keeps a close check on pupils' progress. Staff set improvement targets for pupils in English, and these have proved very effective in raising standards, but they do not give pupils similar targets in other subjects.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing in Reception and Years 1 and 2, particularly by providing more opportunities for pupils to write creatively.

- Make sure that teachers make the same effective use of pupils' targets in other subjects as they do in English to help pupils improve their work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils achieve well throughout the school and reach very high standards by the end of Year 6. Standards are above expectations by the end of the Reception year and are well above average by the end of Year 2. Pupils make very good progress in reading in Years 1 and 2 and standards are exceptionally high in this aspect of English. Although standards in writing are above average, pupils' skills are not as well developed in writing as they are in reading and mathematics. Pupils' creative writing is the weakest aspect of their work in English, although the school is beginning to work successfully to develop their creative ability.

In Years 3 to 6, pupils make very good progress in English because of high quality teaching and the very effective use of pupils' improvement targets. Results in the Year 6 tests in 2006 were exceptionally high in English where the school exceeded its challenging targets. The number of pupils reaching the higher levels in the tests is much greater than is seen nationally. In English and science, all pupils reached the expected Level 4, although they did not do so in mathematics where progress has been a little slower. Standards in mathematics are, nevertheless, still well above average and progress has improved over the last year.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' outstanding behaviour is a result of their excellent relationships with adults and each other. They display very positive attitudes to work, are attentive to their teachers and to one another and work diligently with little prompting. Pupils' enjoyment of school is confirmed by parents and one commented, 'Children are stimulated and given the opportunity to maximise their potential'. Attendance is above average.

Pupils are knowledgeable about the importance of healthy eating, regular exercise and ways in which they can keep safe. As a result of effective adult supervision, security of the premises and the zero tolerance of bullying, pupils feel safe and secure in school. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibility, for example in helping the school council provide a playground friendship bench and contributing to the local and wider community including through fund raising. The school's excellent work ethic encourages pupils to develop a very good range of skills to help them in future life. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Activities in subjects like music and art help pupils gain a good understanding of a range of cultures. The school's Christian ethos supports pupils' good spiritual development and fosters care and concern for others; for example, an assembly on the subject of 'Friends' enabled pupils to reflect on the spiritual dimension of friendship.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is good in all year groups. Pupils want to do well and they try very hard for their teachers. Individual or group work is well matched to individual pupils' needs and challenges them to do their best. Skilled questioning and probing help pupils understand easily so they confidently explain their answers or identify where they need help. In lessons, teachers give very good advice on how to improve, although marking does not always show pupils how to improve their work. Activities using practical resources or educational games motivate and enthuse pupils and are helping to raise standards, notably in mathematics. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are taught well, especially in reading, although pupils in Reception and Years 1 and 2 are not always encouraged to write creatively. The school's use of staff with good expertise to teach subjects such as music and physical education enhances pupils' learning, and teaching assistants make a positive contribution, particularly for those who find learning difficult.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The broad, rich and interesting curriculum motivates pupils well. Planning meets the needs of pupils in different ability groups effectively, and children in Reception are provided with a good range of activities suitable for their age. Literacy and numeracy planning is good, although pupils in Reception and Years 1 and 2 would benefit from more opportunities to write creatively. A more practical approach to learning in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 is improving progress. Exciting displays reflect the wealth of activities provided in subjects such as art, music and physical education, and pupils have the opportunity to learn French and Spanish. The curriculum is exceptionally well enriched through a good range of well attended clubs, visits and effective links with parents and the local community. Improved provision for information and communication technology is increasingly supporting learning in other subjects such as history.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Underpinned by a strong Christian ethos and the excellent relationships between staff and pupils, the level of care is good. Pupils are very confident that they will be well looked after and one parent described the school as a 'very kind, loving, caring environment for the children to learn in, with kindness and nurturing as well as a high level of academic teaching'. Good attention is given to pupils' health and safety through regular risk assessments and comprehensive procedures for child protection and the vetting of staff. Pastoral care and support are good and the school's systems for supporting good behaviour and hard work are excellent.

Pupils' academic progress is monitored well. Those who find learning difficult receive very good support, particularly through the successful intervention programmes and the vast majority reach average standards by the time they leave. Pupils' targets to help them improve have been used to especially good effect in English, although this approach is not used in other subjects.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Since her appointment in January 2006, the headteacher has provided very effective leadership, so that there is an excellent sense of direction for the school. She is especially well supported by the assistant headteacher and other members of the new senior leadership team who are increasing their effectiveness in monitoring the quality of the school's work. There is a shared commitment amongst all staff to improve the quality of education. The school evaluates its performance well and has accurately identified areas of relative weakness which are beginning to be successfully addressed. As a result, the school is securely placed to improve further.

The school consults well with parents and pupils and has set up productive relationships with other schools and organisations to enhance the quality of education and level of care, for example, in providing a wide range of sports activities.

Although many governors are relatively new, they carry out their legal and other responsibilities well. They have increased their efficiency through an improved committee structure and play an effective part in school development. In particular, their astute appointment of staff has led to the whole school community working productively to improve the quality of education.

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## 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	1
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	2
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	1

### 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.

## 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	1
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**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We were especially impressed by how friendly, polite and helpful you are to visitors and I particularly want to thank the school council who gave up their lunchtime to speak to us. You and your parents think St James is a good school and we agree with you.

This is what we thought was good about the school:

- Your behaviour and your relationships with teachers and each other are excellent.
- You enjoy school very much, are attentive in lessons and work hard.
- Across the school you are making good progress and by Year 6 standards are very high, especially in English.
- You are taught well and the tasks teachers plan for you encourage you to do your best.
- There are interesting activities in many subjects such as art, music and physical education, older pupils learn French and Spanish and you have lots of clubs and visits.
- Staff take good care of you and help you understand how to live healthily and safely.
- Your headteacher and her leadership team are very clear about how to make your school even better and together with staff and governors they are working hard to achieve this.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- Help the younger ones amongst you to improve your writing, especially by providing more opportunities for you to do creative writing.
- Give you improvement targets, as teachers do in English, to help you understand how you can improve your work in other subjects.

You can help to make your work even better by working hard at your creative writing and by checking regularly how well you are doing.

Thank you again for all your help. I wish you all the best for the future.