

# St James CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116885
<b>Local Authority</b>	Herefordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	290670
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Hazel Callaghan

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	204
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Towner
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ann Mundy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 April 2002
<b>School address</b>	Vicarage Road Hereford HR1 2QN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01432 273961
<b>Fax number</b>	01432 273961

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Whilst most of the pupils come from a White British background, an increasing number of pupils come from different countries and are of minority ethnic groups. Similarly, a small but growing number of pupils start school while in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average. Eight different pre-school groups send children to St James. Pupil's range of knowledge and experiences is varied but overall attainment on entry to Reception is below that expected for children of this age. Over the last year, the school has taken part in a teacher exchange with one of the North American states and there have been two other recent changes in the teaching staff.

## 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 school with a strong Christian ethos that underpins all of its work. Care, guidance and support of the pupils are good and provision for their personal care and support is outstanding. Many parents commented on the special attention given by staff to ensuring pupils are well cared for, which results in their high levels of self-esteem and confidence. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Very effective leadership has promoted this strong provision for pupils' pastoral care. Good attention is given to pupils' academic progress. Many strategies for improvement are still fairly new but they are already having a positive impact. This can be seen in the rising standards of English and in mathematics but this improvement is not fully consistent through the school. Achievement overall is good but there are some inconsistency in pupils' progress. This is partly because of the newness of some strategies and partly because of changing staff.

Standards are broadly average in Year 2 and in Year 6. Teaching is good overall but inconsistent because not all lessons provide the challenge required for good progress. There are particular strengths in the support provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The provision in the Reception class is good and children of all abilities make good progress in their learning. Good progress is also evident in Year 5 and Year 6, especially in mathematics, because teachers pay effective attention to helping pupils understand how they can improve their work. Attention to introducing the new national literacy strategy has diverted teachers' focus a little from improving pupils' writing and, although standards are broadly average, writing is the weakest aspect of pupils' learning. Pupils' interest is stimulated by a good curriculum enriched by a wide range of additional activities that effectively extends pupils' knowledge and skills. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' interpersonal skills, and improvements in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) prepare pupils well for the next stages of learning and the world of work.

Leadership and management are good. A good variety of strategies and procedures has been developed to monitor the work of the school and to identify the personal and academic needs of pupils. Data on pupils' progress identifies where pupils need greater attention but it is not analysed with sufficient rigour to identify aspects of teaching that need greater support so that there is consistently good achievement through the school. Governors are well informed and involved in school development. They work well with the staff and there is a united commitment to further improvement. Good progress has been made since the last inspection, such as in the rising standards in Year 2 and in pupils' greater achievement, and the capacity for further improvement is good.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by ensuring there is a consistent use of effective strategies to further develop pupils' skills.
- Use data about pupils' progress to identify more clearly any weaknesses in teaching so that support is given and pupils are enabled to make consistently good progress through the school.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Standards in Year 2 have risen over the last two years and are now broadly average. Writing, although improved, remains the weakest aspect of pupils' learning. Standards in Year 6 are also broadly average. In 2006, standards in English rose to above average, because of teachers' effective strategies that year. The unconfirmed data about this year's national test show that, although higher than expected, standards in English are not as high because this group of the pupils are not as capable in their writing skills as the those pupils in the previous cohort. However, standards in mathematics have improved to above average because of teachers' successful focus on addressing the weaker elements of the mathematics curriculum. The school has also paid effective attention to challenging the abilities of more able pupils, which has resulted in a greater proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 than in the past, especially in mathematics.

Achievement is good. Good achievement is clearly evident in the Reception class where children make good progress. Many achieve the standards expected by the time they start in Year 1. Achievement is also good in the oldest classes and in those lessons where the effective strategies for promoting pupils' knowledge and understanding are having their greatest impact. Pupils who have very little knowledge of English are well supported and they make satisfactory progress in their learning under the staff's sensitive support. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress from their relative starting points. They are well supported by a variety of skilled staff who give them great encouragement and support.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils get on well together and feel safe in school. They are aware of dangers and act in a responsible manner to minimise risk, such as when moving large apparatus or using the internet. Most are happy to come to school and enjoy their lessons and activities. Pupils' attendance is improving and is now good. Pupils are usually considerate of each other and behave well, although a small minority find it hard to meet the school's standards. Any misbehaviour is dealt with quickly and appropriately, so it rarely interferes with learning or causes undue worry to other pupils. Pupils are keen to adopt healthy lifestyles. Many pay good attention to healthy eating, and are keen to take part in exercise, both during school and in extra-curricular activities. All pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6, for example, have taken part in exercise in an extra-curricular club. Pupils play an extremely active part in the local community. The school council makes many contributions to improving the life of the school and older pupils also take on various responsibilities, such as helping to look after reception children in their playground. The part pupils play in the community is commendable, for example, as part of the excellent Teddy Bear Project, involving the elderly from the nearby Day Care Centre.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching stimulates good learning overall but it is not consistent through the school. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. Adults respond well to pupils' needs, and activities are well

matched to the pupils' level of maturity, abilities, knowledge of English and interests. This results in pupils' enjoyment of learning and encourages curiosity about the world they live in. Where teaching is effective in other classes, teachers continue this process well. Activities build successfully on what pupils already know and provide a positive element of challenge so pupils' understanding is successfully extended. However, this is not always the case and this is why progress is inconsistent across the school. Good attention has been given to the teaching of mathematics this year. Previous weaknesses in learning have been targeted as aspects for improvement, with the result that standards have risen. This improvement has also been evident in English but not consistently so because teachers have changed and positive strategies for pupils' learning are not always effectively employed. Teaching assistants are usually used effectively, especially to support the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This was seen demonstrated well in a Year 6 class when the less able pupils extended their understanding of money through the enjoyment of a shopping activity.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school's curriculum successfully meets the range of pupils' needs, particularly in mathematics. There is extensive use of additional activities, visits and visitors to extend pupils' knowledge and skills. Good use is made of other schools and outside agencies to enrich the curriculum, for example visits to the secondary school for scientific work. Appropriate links are made between subjects, particularly with ICT, which stimulates pupils' interest and develops their research skills. They have many opportunities to learn about other cultures around the world from teachers who have first-hand experiences of other countries. This broadens pupils' knowledge and understanding. There has been less focus on developing pupils' awareness of the multicultural mix of English society, which is satisfactory. There is a good provision for personal development, including the promotion of healthy lifestyles. The range and take up of extra-curricular activities is outstanding, particularly for physical activities. The school is becoming well known for the quality of its skipping team.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides outstanding care and guidance for pupils' personal development, enabling them to feel safe, happy and confident. The work of the special needs co-ordinator and learning and behaviour mentors is particularly beneficial for pupils with a variety of problems. Pupils feel confident to discuss matters and these conversations support their personal development and build their self-esteem so they tackle work more positively. Arrangements for child protection are rigorous and known by staff; risk assessments are comprehensive and thorough. Procedures for pupils' transfer into the Reception class or on to secondary school are managed well. Academic guidance is good especially for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This, together with involvement of parents and other agencies, enables these pupils to make good progress. Regular assessment of all pupils' work leads to targets for the next stage in learning so pupils recognise how to improve. This work is still new, however, and is not consistently applied throughout the school.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Good leadership and management have enabled many improvements to be made since the last inspection. The headteacher and governors have responded quickly and effectively to meeting potential problems caused by changing staff. Systems for monitoring the work of the school are effective. The accuracy of the school's self-evaluation is good overall and has led to many improvements, especially in raising standards and levels of achievement. New initiatives and strategies are effectively evaluated so that adaptations can be made if required. A wide range of data is collected about individual pupils' standards and progress. The information is used well to identify those who need additional support so that effective intervention strategies are employed. The data is not yet analysed with sufficient penetration to provide a clear overview of strengths and weaknesses in aspects of teaching and learning. Many of the reasons for inconsistencies in pupils' progress have been identified and are being addressed, such as in mathematics, but not yet as consistently in the strategies to improve writing. Meeting the needs of each child is of paramount importance to the staff, who are all committed to meeting this goal. They are working towards the greater consistency of achievement in English which has been achieved in mathematics. The staff work together as an effective team and are well supported by a strong partnership with parents.

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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	3
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>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	2
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	3
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

Dear Children

Inspection of St James Church of England Primary School, Hereford HR1 2QN

I am writing to say thank you for making us feel welcome in your school and for helping us with our questions. We really enjoyed chatting to you and found what you said very interesting. I thought you would like to know what we found out about your school.

What we liked about the school:

- It is a good school where most of you are happy and enjoy your lessons.
- All the adults look after you exceptionally well and help you feel safe.
- You get on well with each other and most of you behave well and are very friendly and kind to each other.
- You try hard to do well in your work.
- Teaching is good overall and you make good progress in many of your lessons but not all.
- You understand the importance of keeping healthy and safe and you make positive choices about exercise and what you eat.
- You are good at taking responsibility and enjoy helping others. You have worked extremely hard to help all sorts of people in the community.
- The school is led well by your headteacher and the senior teachers.

What I have asked the school to do now:

- Help you to reach higher standards in your writing.
- Help teachers ensure you make consistently good progress in your work.

Thank you again for being so polite and helpful.

Mrs Callaghan