



St John's Stonefold C of E Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119453
Local Authority Lancashire
Inspection number 291425
Inspection dates 7–8 November 2006
Reporting inspector Keith Bardon

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Rising Bridge Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Accrington, Lancashire
Age range of pupils	4–11		BB5 2SW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01706 216706
Number on roll (school)	132	Fax number	01706 230682
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Father Roger Smith
		Headteacher	Mr Stephen Oldfield (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 7–8 November 2006	Inspection number 291425
--------------------------	--	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school serves an area with broadly average social and economic characteristics. All pupils are English speaking and, with very few exceptions, are from White British backgrounds. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children's attainment when they first start school varies from year to year but is average overall. There has been a complete change of senior management in the last 18 months and the deputy headteacher is currently the acting headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school, which is undergoing important changes within its senior management. Achievement, teaching and learning are satisfactory. As a result, pupils make steady progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills and leave at the end of Year 6 with broadly average attainment. The quality of pupils' English, and their writing in particular, is good. Most write clearly, spell and punctuate accurately and use a good range of words. Standards in mathematics are too low. Many pupils lack confidence with numbers and have considerable difficulty solving mathematical problems. Provision in Reception is satisfactory and most attain nationally expected standards by the time they enter Year 1.

Pupils make clear and sustained progress in their personal development. They enjoy warm relationships with their teachers and take pride in the many new things they learn. Pupils are cared for well by all staff and feel safe and secure, happy in the knowledge that there is always someone to turn to if they need help or advice. Attendance figures are better than in many other primary schools nationally. Most pupils behave well and treat others with respect and kindness.

English is taught well. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to provide lessons that are challenging and enjoyable. Mathematics lessons lack the same impact. They are less stimulating and do not develop pupils' knowledge and skills well enough. Pupils respond well to teachers' instructions and questions and try hard in lessons. Teachers make regular assessments of pupils' work and track their progress systematically. They use the information productively to guide their lesson planning but do not always tell pupils clearly enough what they must do to improve and how to go about it.

The school's procedures for checking how well it is performing are satisfactory, although self-evaluation tends to focus on what it is being provided rather than what pupils are achieving as a result. School development plans target the most important issues but at times lack a cutting edge because the information on which initiatives are based is not detailed enough. An exception is in English where well planned development has resulted in a marked rise in standards, particularly in writing. There have also been improvements in information and communication technology (ICT) but standards in mathematics have fallen. Since his appointment, the acting headteacher has made a number of constructive changes and strengthened links with parents. Funding is spent efficiently and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics.
- Sharpen systems for:
 - evaluating how well the school is performing
 - teasing out the root causes of any weaknesses
 - planning for improvement.
- Strengthen pupils' understanding of what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are average. Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception class and by the time they move into Year 1 their attainment meets expectations for their age in all the areas of learning. Pupils' progress in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory. Although results have yet to be fully verified the performance of Year 2 pupils in the national assessments in 2006 was average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. The test results of Year 6 pupils followed a similar pattern, above average in English, average in science but below average in mathematics. The school has successfully raised standards in English since the last inspection and pupils' writing is much better. Many pupils write interesting pieces of text in different styles with fluency and confidence. Standards in mathematics have declined in the last two years. Pupils' understanding of number systems is below expectations and they have considerable difficulty applying what they have learned to new situations, particularly when solving mathematical problems. Although there are year by year variations, there is no difference overall in the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, similar to that made by other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They develop into confident, responsible individuals with a strong sense of social responsibility. Older pupils readily give up their time to play with younger ones and to help them with their reading. Reception children settle to school well and make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Pupils of all ages are well behaved and friendly. They clearly feel safe in the school's pleasant atmosphere and regard bullying as non-existent. They show confidence in adults with one pupil commenting, 'Any time you do not feel comfortable, the teachers will sort it out.' They laugh and smile readily and take obvious pleasure from being with other pupils and their teachers. Attendance is good and consistently above average. Pupils hold strong views on the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy physical activity, know what constitutes a healthy diet and recognise the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and drug abuse. There are plans to establish a school council but at present pupils have few opportunities to contribute to the decisions the school makes. Year 6 pupils feel well prepared for what life at the secondary school holds for them. They acquire good literacy and ICT skills but weaknesses in numeracy are a disadvantage.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory; although, the teaching of English is much more productive than that of mathematics. English lessons have focus and pace because teachers have a clear understanding of what pupils need to learn and challenge them constantly with well judged questions and stimulating activities. Mathematics lessons, on the other hand, are not as well tailored to the needs of the pupils or taught with the same confidence and drive.

Most lessons are planned carefully and managed well. Any incidents of inappropriate behaviour are addressed quickly and effectively and lessons progress smoothly. Pace is often judged well but on occasions teachers move on too quickly before pupils have had time to gather their thoughts and consolidate their ideas. Most pupils concentrate for long periods and apply themselves fully to the tasks they are set. The contribution they make to lessons varies between subjects. In English, they are keen to put forward their ideas and share their work with others, but in mathematics they are far more reticent. Pupils admit that they enjoy literacy lessons but find mathematics hard. Teachers in Reception interact frequently with the children, helping them to develop key communication and personal skills. Teaching assistants work closely with class teachers and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Pupils are provided with a satisfactory curriculum. All the required subjects are covered and older pupils are given an early introduction to French, which they thoroughly enjoy. Due attention is paid to pupils' learning in literacy and they receive regular opportunities to read and write in all subjects. The positive effect this has is clearly evident in the good standards pupils achieve in English. The curriculum for mathematics is not as well planned and does not promote key skills, such as number dexterity and problem solving, well enough. Better programmes for ICT, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship have been put in place since the last inspection. Pupils of all ages have regular opportunities to develop computer and other skills and to examine and understand important matters which affect their lives and those of other people. Reception children are provided with enjoyable activities covering all the areas of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Pupils receive a good quality of care from staff who know and understand them well. The school safeguards pupils carefully and the required procedures are in place. The support and guidance provided

for pupils' personal development are effective. Pupils are given regular opportunities to develop interpersonal and life skills and to understand the contribution they can make to society. The academic guidance pupils receive is satisfactory but does not extend far enough. Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly and praise them for what they have done well. They set year group targets for improvement but these are too general and do not provide individual pupils with sufficiently clear objectives. Pupils' ability to judge how well they are doing for themselves is under-developed. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are monitored closely and provided with the support they need to participate fully in lessons and school life.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The acting headteacher is settling into the task of leading the school and has correctly identified the areas that need further development. Staff have adapted well to the change of management and the school is running smoothly. Parents have made positive comments on the improved communications between school and home and their increased involvement. The ethos of the school is positive, staff work closely as a team and care is taken to ensure that all pupils have the same opportunities to learn.

There has been a steady rate of improvement since the last inspection and the school's capacity for further improvement is satisfactory. Procedures for checking how well the school is performing provide an accurate overview but not the detailed information senior staff need to sharply target improvement. Evaluation tends to focus on how well provision has been implemented rather than on the impact it is having on pupils' achievements and learning. An exception is in English where effectively planned and implemented initiatives have resulted in a marked improvement in pupils' writing. In contrast, the plan to raise standards in mathematics is too broadly based and does not hone in on exactly what teachers and pupils need to do better in order to raise standards. Governors play an active part in the life of the school and have an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses. They have yet to develop a strategy for evaluating its performance for themselves. Finances are managed securely and efficiently.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

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?	3
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	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	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?	3

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?	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	3
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 Stonefold C of E Primary School

Rising Bridge Road

Accrington

Lancashire

BB5 2SW

7 November 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for the very friendly welcome you gave me when I visited your school. Although I was with you for only two days, I thoroughly enjoyed finding out about all the interesting things you do, and special thanks to those who talked with me about the school.

There were lots of things I liked about the school. It is clear that you are happy at school and enjoy lessons. I was very impressed with the quality of your writing but felt that you could learn more in mathematics. Teachers tell me that you behave well and that was exactly what I found. Everyone gets on well and you quite rightly feel safe and well cared for by your teachers. Your attendance is good and I was pleased that you felt you could go to any member of staff if anything was bothering you. You have a good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy and I like the way older pupils willingly give up their playtimes to help younger ones.

While I was in school I pointed out a few things that I felt would help to make it even better. These are the sorts of things I suggested:

- Help you to improve your mathematics.

You can help by always thinking hard in mathematics lessons, trying to work things out for yourselves, not being afraid to experiment with numbers and learning your multiplication tables and other number facts.

- Give you a clearer understanding of how to improve your work.

You can help by giving careful thought to the targets teachers set and trying your best to achieve them as quickly as possible.

- Make sure everyone is clear about how to make the school even better.

Keith Bardon

School inspector