

# St John's CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122748
<b>Local Authority</b>	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
<b>Inspection number</b>	292497
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Dorothy Bathgate HMI

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 controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	304
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Lesley Peebles
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Ian Halfpenny (Acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 March 2002
<b>School address</b>	Raymoth Lane Worksop Nottinghamshire S81 7LU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01909 481 540
<b>Fax number</b>	01909 481 540

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St. John's is a larger than average size primary school. Almost all of the pupils are of White British background. Socio-economic circumstances are challenging for many families. Children enter the school from a very wide variety of local Nursery providers and their levels of skill, knowledge and understanding are well below expectations. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below the national average. The school is currently undergoing a major building and refurbishment programme.

Following the resignation of the headteacher in July 2006, the deputy has been the acting headteacher. A substantive headteacher will take up post in September 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St. John's is a good school which successfully nurtures a strong family ethos amongst its large community of pupils. The acting headteacher provides visionary leadership that fosters an ethos where staff are keen to try new ideas and adapt their skills to new ways of working for the benefit of the pupils. Leadership and management are good and there is a strong commitment from all staff and governors to provide children with the best education possible.

Children make very a positive start in the Foundation Stage because the setting is lively and well managed. The development of their personal and social skills is excellent and consequently children develop very positive attitudes towards learning. Children continue to make good progress through Key Stage 1. Results in national tests at the end of the Year 2 are broadly average and show an upward trend in recent years. Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average. Progress through Key Stage 2 has improved significantly in the past year because of the use of a wider range of teaching strategies and styles. However, this needs to be developed further to ensure that some boys in particular are challenged and motivated, and achieve at least as well as the girls.

The school enjoys the overwhelming support and confidence of parents. As one parent wrote, 'I could not wish for a better school for my children.' Excellent relationships with parents are being further developed through involving them in home activities during themed weeks and through curriculum evenings. This is effectively enhancing the children's well-being and achievement. Pupils are happy in school, enjoy taking responsibility and get on extremely well with each other. The richness and variety of the curriculum, combined with good teaching, mean that learning is highly enjoyable and consequently behaviour is good. Using the newly introduced tracking procedures, teachers check the progress of their pupils and set them some targets for improvement, but they do not systematically record progress against targets or involve pupils sufficiently in the process. Consequently, academic guidance is not as effective as the other elements of care, guidance and support for pupils, which gives a high priority to pupils' safety and welfare.

The success of the school's work in promoting and developing healthy lifestyles is confirmed by its achievement of the Healthy Schools award for emotional and social health and the Sports Activemark. All children are encouraged to respect and value themselves and to make the most of their individual talents and skills in preparation for future learning and adult life.

The school has recently developed new systems to evaluate its own practice more rigorously and is now highly reflective about its effectiveness in raising standards. The significant progress being made currently confirms that the school has the capacity to carry out all its plans and to continue to go from strength to strength.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement for some boys to ensure they make at least as good progress as the girls.
- Further develop and refine systems and procedures for target setting by involving pupils in knowing their targets, by ensuring targets are specific and measurable and by sharing success criteria clearly with all learners.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils achieve well and make good progress. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage in all areas of learning, with particularly good progress in personal, social and emotional development. Pupils make rapid progress throughout Key Stage 1 and results of national tests in 2006 at the end of Year 2 indicate that standards in reading and writing are broadly in line with national averages, and are above average in mathematics. Pupils' current work in Year 2 indicates that the pattern of gradual improvement evident in recent years is set to continue. At the end of Year 6 standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average. For many pupils, given their very low starting points, attaining these standards means they have made good progress. This is particularly true of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, who receive high quality support from all staff. However, throughout school, some boys do not achieve as well as the girls. Significant steps have been taken since September 2006 to address this issue, but there is still much to be done to narrow the gap.

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

### **Grade: 2**

St. John's is a happy and welcoming school, where strong relationships exist at all levels within the school community. Personal development and well-being are good. The youngest children make rapid progress in their social development and are soon able to share and work with others. Most pupils understand right and wrong, and show courteous and thoughtful behaviour that contributes much to the positive climate of the school. Pupils thoroughly enjoy lessons and are enthusiastic in their work. They have good regard to safety. Increasingly, pupils realise the importance of taking exercise and know how to make wise choices in eating. Many pupils contribute willingly to the school community and older pupils take their 'buddy' responsibilities seriously. Pupils' self-esteem develops very strongly. Most collaborate very well with others in a variety of activities and acquire a good foundation of skills for their future well-being. Indeed, some pupils are developing excellent life skills because their involvement in the gardening club is providing them with excellent experiences of organisation and enterprise through the growing and selling of seedlings and produce at the Worksop charity market.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their spiritual and cultural development is promoted effectively through strong links with St. John's church, the school's Christian values and through art, music and their work on other religions in the humanities. Attendance is below average but the school does everything within its power to ensure that pupils attend.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is outstanding and the pupils develop a wide range of skills by experiencing well-planned, stimulating activities taught confidently and rooted in high expectations. The calm and supportive manner in which teachers manage the pupils and organise their tasks is a consistent and dominant feature of teaching throughout the school. As a result of this important strength, pupils feel secure and work conscientiously. However, recently introduced initiatives such as

brain gym, thinking skills and accelerated learning techniques could be used more extensively to improve motivation and encourage pupils to strive to achieve greater success. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the teaching and learning throughout the school. They are effective in delivering a range of intervention strategies including 5 minute box, accelerread and accelerwrite.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is of good quality. Foundation Stage children enjoy a rich and varied diet of activities both indoors and outdoors. Across the school there is a strong emphasis on developing the pupils' self-esteem through an extensive programme of activities including residential visits, where children develop confidence in an atmosphere of trust and are encouraged to 'have a go'. This is complemented by a wide range of clubs and sporting opportunities during the year and the school is rightly proud of its sporting successes both at local and national level. The mainstream curriculum covers all the required subjects with a notable strength in music. Many pupils enjoy the opportunity to learn a musical instrument and play in the orchestra. The school choir is popular with pupils. Recently introduced themed weeks, for example, Festival of Flight, are successful in involving parents in their children's learning and in improving motivation for boys. There has been significant improvement in the art curriculum since the last inspection.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school has a high regard for pupils' welfare and safety. Child protection procedures are securely in place and staff properly trained. Reception staff work very effectively with parents to ensure that children settle well when they first arrive at school. Transition arrangements at all stages ensure that children have good opportunities to familiarize themselves with new staff and surroundings. Consequently, children are confident about change and approach new challenges with eager enthusiasm. Teachers know their pupils well and new tracking procedures are being used effectively to identify pupils who need additional help and support. However, although some target setting is in place, targets are not always measurable or specific enough. However, they are not yet having an impact on pupils' progress because too many pupils are unaware of their targets and whether or not they have met them. Good use is made of intervention programmes. For example, extremely positive results from a six week intensive accelerread course indicate that some pupils increased their reading age by at least six months. Parents appreciate the homework guidance which they receive for each year group.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The acting headteacher is well supported by the senior management team and together they are providing highly effective leadership for the school. They have been successful in setting a strategic direction for the school in this transition period and determining clear priorities for future development. A key to their success has been the strong emphasis placed on tracking pupils' progress and attainment, and on identifying areas for development. A good example of this is the successful drive to raise standards of writing and the introduction of Big Writing Days. Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate. Subject leaders are very well informed about standards and the quality of teaching and learning in their

subjects. They monitor provision carefully. Governors have had difficulty with recruitment recently, but are confident that current vacancies will be filled by September 2007. They understand their roles and responsibilities clearly, are highly perceptive, and have been extremely influential and pro-active in securing funding for the current building improvement work. The school demonstrates good capacity for sustained improvement and provides good value for money.

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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	3
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	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>	3

<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

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

24 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St. John's CofE Primary School, Worksop, Nottinghamshire, S81 7LU

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit very much and enjoyed talking to many of you in your lessons, at lunchtime, in the playground and in small groups.

We were impressed by your very good behaviour in lessons and around school. You all get on well together and respect each other's views and opinions. The teachers and other staff take good care of you and help you to feel safe and secure in school. The children in the Foundation Stage are good at sharing things and taking turns. Older children act responsibly and take pride in their school. You have many opportunities to participate in after-school clubs and we are pleased that so many of you join in. We were particularly impressed with the gardening club which is helping many of you to learn valuable life skills. We also very much enjoyed your lively singing and the confident way in which some of you played your musical instruments in assemblies.

Another reason why your school is good is that it is very well led and managed by Mr. Halfpenny, in partnership with the senior management team and governors.

Most of you enjoy your lessons and work hard, but some boys could work even harder and enjoy their learning even more. We would like your teachers to make sure that everyone makes good progress and that the work you have to do is exciting and challenging. Your teachers can also help you make better progress by involving you in setting targets which are checked regularly. You can help your teachers by suggesting topics to study which really interest you and by helping them to set and check your targets for improvement.

Your parents are rightly pleased that you attend a good school. I enjoyed my visit very much and thank you for talking to me.

With best wishes

Dorothy Bathgate HMI