

St John's CofE Aided Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125184
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	293220
Inspection dates	17–18 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Beryl Richmond

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Norman Lingard
Headteacher	Mrs Angela Harper
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2001
School address	Barford Lane Churt Farnham GU10 2JE
Telephone number	01428 713216
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Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St. John's is a small oversubscribed infant school. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. They come from a wide catchment area. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. A well below average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. Few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St. John's provides its pupils with an outstanding education. The school has a strong Christian ethos and is at the heart of the local community. Standards and achievement in reading, writing and mathematics are exceptionally and consistently high, pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding and the curriculum is excellent. Pupils work regularly outside in the fresh air because of the extensive covered areas adjacent to each classroom, where they learn in an active and practical way. Outstanding links with many organisations, including local schools, Guildford Diocese and St. John's Church, promote learners' well-being and achievement. Parents value the education that their children receive and contribute very well by supporting their children's learning and by generously supporting Parent Teacher Association (PTA) fund raising events. As one parent said 'We feel so happy with the school. It's very warm and friendly and provides the children with an excellent start to schooling'.

Leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher's outstanding leadership has had a positive impact on pupils' personal development and well-being, their achievement and care and particularly on their opportunities to learn and play in the fresh air. The school is not complacent and seeks to improve further. For example, although pupils' personal development and well being is outstanding, the school is seeking to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills to further improve their social interactions. The work of the governors is outstanding in terms of supporting the school and holding it to account.

Pupils' achievement is excellent in both the Reception class and Key Stage 1 classes, because pupils' progress is tracked well, effective help is provided for pupils who need to catch up, teaching and learning are consistently good and the curriculum is excellent. Pupils particularly enjoy being practical active learners. The core curriculum is planned well to meet all pupils' needs with many varied opportunities for enrichment and a good range of clubs. One parent said, 'The range of activities the children get involved in is tremendous, especially for a small school. The assemblies, church services, nativity, party in the park, school trips and involvement of parents in activities such as reading, music and craft, make the school an amazing place to be'. Pupils' understanding of how to stay healthy is excellent.

Care, guidance and support are good overall but there are still areas to be developed in academic guidance. Although pupils have reading, writing and mathematical targets to improve their learning, these systems are relatively new and not fully embedded and consequently pupils are not making full use of them to improve their achievement even further. Pupils have begun to self and peer assess their writing but are not working in this way in other subjects. Pupils' work is marked regularly but it does not always explain to pupils well enough how they can improve.

The school has evaluated its work very well, is focusing on the correct areas for improvement and is in a good position to improve further. Improvement has been good since the last inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Involve pupils further in their learning through peer and self assessment and more rigorous use of their targets for reading, writing and mathematics. Mark consistently and effectively to show pupils how they can improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

By the end of Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are exceptionally and consistently high. Pupils' achievement is excellent. For the last four years at least reading, writing and mathematics scores were significantly higher than the national average. The exception to this was in 2006 when there was a relative dip in mathematics standards. The school acted quickly to address this by focusing on investigational mathematics and providing booster classes for pupils who needed help with common misconceptions. Pupils achieve very well because their progress is monitored rigorously, teaching and learning are good and parents are supportive of their children's learning. There is currently no significant difference in the achievement of different groups of pupils.

Children start school with above average standards although there is a wide range of starting points, with some children below average in their social and emotional development. Progress in Reception is very good and most children attain at least average standards or above. Their needs are addressed well through the provision of stimulating activities and a focus on language, personal and social development. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve as well as other pupils because they receive focused support. The school sets challenging targets for improvement, which they meet.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They have good self-esteem and are confident when talking with adults. Good assemblies and good teaching and learning ensure that pupils' enjoyment of school is excellent. Attendance is good. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy by drinking water, eating fruit and vegetables and by taking plenty of exercise. They enjoy healthy midmorning snacks. Parents and pupils are very satisfied with the quality of the healthy school dinners. Pupils participate in a wide range of enjoyable sports and other activities. The 'walking bus' successfully encourages families to walk to school whenever possible. Teachers are good role models and have created a caring environment where pupils feel secure. Their views are valued and taken into account, including through the School Council and in planning for topics. Pupils suggested the valued 'friendship stop' so that no one feels lonely in the playground. Pupils say they have an adult to talk to in school if they are troubled and that they know the fire emergency drill. They learn well about other cultures through a multi-cultural week, which had good parental involvement, a link with a Ugandan school, a geography topic of an Asian child living in Leicester and through the creative curriculum. Pupils are actively involved in fund raising and a wide range of other community activities. Bearing in mind their excellent personal and basic skills, pupils are prepared very well for their future life as adults.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers and pupils enjoy good relationships. Pupils work well independently and usually cooperate well although the school has identified improving social interactions as an area to focus on. Teachers are enthusiastic and manage behaviour well so that pupils engage with their

learning effectively. Teachers make good use of the extensive covered outdoor areas to give pupils enjoyable opportunities to work in the fresh air and in a practical way. They focus well on key vocabulary in lessons and consequently pupils learn to use the correct terminology quickly. Most lessons move along at a brisk pace and contain a good mix of teacher directed and independent work, including in Reception. Teaching assistants support pupils' learning well, particularly in focused group work. There are some missed opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills through discussion and posing and answering questions, particularly in whole class sessions. Teachers mark books regularly but the effectiveness is variable and consequently pupils are not always sure how to improve. Communications between home and school to support pupils' learning are good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Each classroom has an extensive outdoor covered area and in addition there is an exciting 'Outdoor Classroom', so that pupils have exceptional opportunities to work in a practical way in the fresh air. A range of well-attended clubs, visits, for example, to Marwell Zoo and creative weeks such as Africa Week, makes pupils' learning interesting and exciting and raises their awareness. Pupils' needs, including those with learning difficulties, are usually met well and consequently they usually make good progress. The school caters well for the needs of gifted and talented pupils by planning for their needs in lessons and by offering them specific learning opportunities at the junior school. Effective action has been taken to address the relative weaknesses identified at the last inspection in art and design, information and communication technology (ICT), history and music.

The Reception class curriculum is responsive to the children's needs. It is very well planned and supported by a wide range of appropriate resources. The school provides well for pupils' personal and social education and consequently the outcomes are very good. Provision for health education is excellent.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care and support are good but there are still areas to be developed further in academic guidance. Pupils' welfare has a high priority and the school carries out risk assessments. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are good and proper checks are made on people who have regular contact with pupils. Arrangements for the transition of Reception children to Year 1 are good. Pupils with learning difficulties and those that need some help to catch up are catered for well, including in the 'Tigger Group' that is valued by parents and pupils, and consequently their progress is good. The school has good links with outside agencies so that all pupils' needs are met effectively. Pupils talk positively about how staff help them and this has a positive impact on their learning. Verbal feedback in lessons is generally good but marking does not always show pupils how to improve. Pupils' have targets for improvement but the systems are relatively new and consequently the full impact of this work is yet to be realised. Pupils peer and self assess their writing, with good effect, but this strategy is not yet used in other subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher's leadership is exceptional in creating exciting and enjoyable outdoor learning environments. She monitors pupils' progress very well in conjunction with class teachers and consequently achievement is excellent. Effective action is taken if pupils need help to catch up. Staff and governors work together as a cohesive team who are not complacent and who seek to build on what they have already achieved. The impact of the work of the leadership team on pupils' personal development is outstanding.

The school has evaluated its work accurately, although a little modestly in some areas, and seeks to improve in areas that have been identified as relatively weaker. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is rigorous and consequently pupils benefit from good teaching and learning. Parents' views are sought regularly, including through the use of questionnaires. They value the education that the school provides for their children.

The governing body is excellent. It supports the school well and acts as an effective critical friend by monitoring the work of the school, for example, by regularly checking on standards achieved by pupils and how well pupils with learning difficulties are progressing.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

1 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of St John's CofE Aided Infant School, Farnham, GU10 2JE

Thank you for your help during the inspection, especially by talking to me about all the interesting things that you are able to enjoy at your school. I think that your school is excellent. You are learning very well.

Here are some of the things that I liked best about your school.

- You enjoy school because you learn in a happy place. Your behaviour is good and you are keen to learn.
- Adults in your school make sure that you are safe and well cared for.
- Outside learning areas are excellent. You learn through taking part in many different enjoyable activities.
- You are taught well and you work hard. This means that you are learning very well many skills that will help you, as you get older.
- You know how to stay healthy by eating the right food, drinking water regularly and by taking plenty of exercise. You enjoy healthy school meals.
- Your headteacher and staff have improved the school very well and are always trying to make it better.
- Your teachers and your parents work together very well to help you learn.

Here is something that I think could be better.

- Teachers' marking should explain in more detail how you could improve your work. Your targets for reading, writing and mathematics could be used better to help you to improve your work. You could be more involved in checking on how well you are doing in your work in the same way that you are already doing in improving your writing.

I enjoyed my visit to your school and would like to send you my very best wishes for your continued success.

Yours sincerely,

Beryl Richmond

Lead Inspector