



St John's CE School Stanmore

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134929
Local Authority Harrow
Inspection number 294224
Inspection dates 5–6 February 2007
Reporting inspector Keith Sadler

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

Type of school	Middle deemed primary	School address	Green Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Stanmore
Age range of pupils	4–12		Middlesex HA7 3AD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8954 3978
Number on roll (school)	427	Fax number	020 8420 7375
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Revd Paul Reece
		Headteacher	Mr Anthony Clarke (acting)
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large, over-subscribed first and middle combined school that serves children from Reception to Year 7. It was created in September 2005 from the amalgamation of the former St John's first and middle schools. Pupils come from across and beyond the borough. About half the pupils come from White British backgrounds and there are pupils from 14 other ethnic backgrounds. Six pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Pupils are from a mix of economic backgrounds. Attainment on entry is slightly above average particularly in communication, language and literacy.

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 an effective school that provides well for its pupils despite having gone through a difficult period since it opened. It provides good value for money. The uncertainty, due to the extended illness and subsequent resignation of the school's first headteacher, could have led the staff to be blown off track. However, this has not been the case. As one parent stated, 'In the regrettable absence of the headteacher, the school has been managed well in difficult and uncertain circumstances'. The acting headteacher has done well to ensure that the pupils' learning and achievement have not been adversely affected. A good start has been made in developing important policies for teaching and learning. This has paid dividends because it has led to consistency in the quality of lessons and this benefits pupils throughout the school. The quality of teaching and learning is good in all year groups. It has had a positive impact on pupils' progress and achievement and has been the key to the school's good overall effectiveness. In addition, the school provides a good quality curriculum that is particularly well enriched by a wide range of activities. The school orchestra is of very high quality and helps to lift everyone's spirits due to the exceptional performance of the pupils.

Many longer term plans have been held in abeyance because it has not been clear when the substantive headteacher was due to return to work. For example, the proposed staffing structure has not been fully implemented. This has meant that additional leadership work has had to be carried by members of the senior leadership team. Although each member of this group is skilled, it has meant that they have been overburdened with responsibilities. In consequence, the school's capacity for further improvement is only satisfactory. Although in some areas, such as literacy, the leadership of teachers with responsibility is outstanding this is not consistently the case. There are insufficient opportunities for teachers to check the quality of provision and pupils' progress in their designated areas of responsibility.

There is a strong sense of community and a supportive and caring atmosphere. Throughout the school there are excellent relationships which support pupils and help them to gain confidence and enjoy learning. As one pupil stated, 'I like my school. I feel safe because my friends are here'. Parents are supportive and almost unanimous in saying that their children are safe and well cared for. Pupils make very good progress in their personal development. Their behaviour is good, attitudes are very positive and their enjoyment is reflected in the high levels of attendance.

Children progress well in the Foundation Stage classes. They make a very good start because of the good provision and as a result they achieve well. However, opportunities for outdoor learning are limited by the lack of shelter when the weather is wet or hot and sunny. Children progress well and by the time that they reach Year 1, most attain the expected goals for their age and a significant minority exceed them particularly in mathematics and communication, language and literacy. Pupils continue to achieve well and they make good progress in all year groups. The current Year 6 pupils are on course to attain standards that are well above average particularly in mathematics and English. Progress in science and information and communication technology (ICT) is

satisfactory because, as yet, staff have not developed a consistent procedure to check pupils' progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in science and ICT by developing the procedures for checking and tracking pupils' progress in those subjects.
- Provide opportunities for leaders to check the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' progress in their subjects.
- Improve the provision for outdoor learning for the Foundation Stage, especially cover for when the weather is inclement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well throughout the school. Year 6 pupils are on course to attain standards that are well above average in English and mathematics. In science they are on course to attain above average standards. This is due to the consistently good teaching and learning in all year groups. Children make a good start during the Foundation Stage. Most children attain the expected goals and a significant minority exceed them when they enter Year 1. After this, progress continues to be good, particularly in mathematics and reading. Pupils' achievement in writing has been strengthened and given good focus in the last year and this is paying dividends throughout the school. In addition the school has focused on the achievement of pupils of Black African and Caribbean heritage as part of a national project. These pupils had not been progressing quite as quickly as their classmates in the past. However, there is now evidence to show that this project, too, is having a positive impact and these pupils achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are happy and view their school as a place for learning and enjoyment. One pupil said, 'Coming to school is so much fun'. Learners feel safe and have confidence in the adults who work with them. The school is a harmonious community and promotes respect and tolerance amongst its pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and reflects the strong Christian ethos of the school. Pupils are good at taking opportunities to reflect and consider consequences. Through the curriculum and the range of sports clubs offered, the pupils develop a good understanding of the importance of regular exercise and healthy eating. They also have a good knowledge of how to stay safe. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to their community with activities such as fund raising for charity and participation in local and national events. Pupils are very well equipped with the skills needed for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Staff and pupils treat each other with respect and consideration and good relationships exist throughout the school. Pupils enjoy learning and respond well to teachers' high expectations and skilled guidance. Interesting and challenging activities, which are well matched to the individual abilities of pupils, provide the opportunity for all to achieve well. Pupils work hard and use the opportunities for small group work well, often discussing issues in a mature and thoughtful manner. In the lessons seen that were outstanding, the enthusiasm and confidence of teachers captured the imagination of pupils and they made excellent progress. For example, in an excellent Year 5 mathematics lesson when pupils were learning how to identify digital roots of the two to 10 times tables, the pupils grasped the concepts very quickly and well. This was due both to the teacher's highly effective explanations and also the ensuing opportunities that he gave for the pupils to discover the number patterns for themselves. Occasionally teachers are less confident with the subject matter being taught, but the good behaviour and positive attitudes of pupils enable them to continue to progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress due to careful assessment together with the provision of suitably adapted learning materials and support by skilled support staff.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, meets all requirements and the needs of the full range of pupils. It makes a strong contribution to pupils' progress because the school has placed a good emphasis on developing the pupils' writing skills in many subjects. They have also ensured that many opportunities are provided to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. A wide range of activities enriches the curriculum, as do the links with the local community. Visits to places of interest and the frequent visitors to the school help pupils to develop their understanding of the wider world. In addition, parents make a very strong contribution to the curriculum by providing considerable additional support particularly in the lower school. The pupils' enthusiasm is seen in their commitment to activities outside lessons. A large number from Year 3 upwards are learning to play chess. There is a wonderful orchestra and a wide range of sporting activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

On a day-to-day basis the care and support provided for pupils is good. Regular health and safety checks help to ensure pupils are safe and secure and child protection arrangements are robust. All staff are well-trained. However, this is only satisfactory overall because the school is still working on meeting a few detailed requirements of

safeguarding procedures, though all of the most important and necessary information is in place. Academic support and guidance are good. Pupils are set appropriate targets: they are aware of these and know what they have to do to improve. Marking provides clear guidance on how well pupils have succeeded and in most cases, informs them of how to improve. The support and guidance for pupils at the early stages of learning English and those who are gifted and talented are good and enable them to make good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The senior leadership team is an effective group. It has rightly focused attention on ensuring that the school's provision, particularly teaching and learning, has been maintained well since the amalgamation in September 2005. Governance is good. Governors have worked hard to ensure that they meet their responsibilities well. They have supported the school effectively. As a result of their continuing contact with the school, they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and the improvements that are needed. This is because they have been directly involved in the checking of progress towards targets in the school's improvement plan. This plan is well founded and clear in most respects. It enables the school to have an effective view of where improvements need to be made. However some teachers with responsibilities have not been given sufficient time to check on pupils' progress in their specific areas.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	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	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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

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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

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?	2
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	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?	No
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 very much for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. You told us that you enjoy school and we can see why! We think that your orchestra is excellent and we were delighted and impressed to hear what excellent musicians there are in the school. Here are the things that we found out:

- your school is good because almost everyone makes good progress and you enjoy all that it offers
- your teachers work hard to make sure that lessons are fun
- your behaviour is good and you have a very positive attitude to school
- Mr Clarke and the deputy headteachers have made sure that your school continues to be successful and, along with the governors, they ensure that your school is managed well.

We have asked your teachers to make three improvements:

- raise standards in science and ICT by making sure that your progress is regularly checked
- give enough opportunities for teachers who have responsibility for managing subjects to check how well you are learning
- provide a large cover outside the reception classes so that these children can have outdoor learning when it is wet and when it is not safe to be out in the sun.

You can help to make the school continue to be successful by working hard and meeting the targets set for you.

With best wishes

Keith Sadler

Lead Inspector