

St John's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101788
Local Authority	Croydon
Inspection number	307808
Inspection date	11 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter McGregor

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tim Cattell
Headteacher	Mrs Martina Martin
Date of previous school inspection	30 June 2003
School address	Spring Park Road Shirley Croydon CR0 5EL
Telephone number	020 8654 2260
Fax number	020 8239 7134

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	11 December 2007
Inspection number	307808

© Crown copyright 2007

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 one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, personal development and well-being, teaching and learning, curriculum, care guidance and support and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and documents. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. Some aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

Description of the school

St John's is an average sized primary school. The proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals and of those for whom English is an additional language are below average, but rising. A higher proportion of pupils than usual come from backgrounds that are favourable, economically and socially. The context of the school has changed; the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds has been increasing for several years and is well above average in the classes of younger children. Staff turnover has been high in the past two years. The headteacher, who has been in post for just over a year, has established a new leadership team this term.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St John's is a satisfactory and fast improving school with a number of outstanding features, particularly the personal development and well-being of pupils, and the quality of pastoral care provided for them. The headteacher is providing a very clear and appropriate path forward. For example, monitoring has led to improved teaching which is already contributing to rising standards and achievement levels. She has the full support of her staff, governors and parents.

Progress through the school is satisfactory overall, and getting better as the quality of teaching improves and support strategies succeed. Standards by the end of Year 2 have been above average in national assessments for the past two years. Writing was a strength in 2006 and mathematics in 2007. Standards in the current Year 2 are above average, indicating good achievement. In Year 6, results have been average over the past two years. Results in English were higher than in mathematics in 2006 and 2007. Measurements of pupils' progress from Year 3 to Year 6 indicate that achievement, for these pupils, was satisfactory. The pupils' work seen at the time of the inspection shows a satisfactory and improving picture of achievement in Years 3 to 6 as the impact of recent initiatives takes effect. This includes those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Pupils are mature, articulate and confident. They have excellent appreciation of the need for healthy living. Their support for one another, whatever their backgrounds, and their behaviour, are outstanding. Physical exercise, eating properly, being sensible and enjoying their time at school are all very important to them. A Year 6 pupil commented, 'We all care about each other. If new people come we welcome them and make friends'. This typifies the excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. Older pupils refer to younger ones 'looking up to us, we are examples for them'. Year 6 pupils also enjoy their role as 'reading mates' with younger children. Their outstanding personal development is seen in their great enthusiasm for learning and a preparedness to work hard. They are responding exceptionally well to the new whole-school teaching focus on providing more challenge during lessons. Attendance is excellent. The elected class and school councils take their responsibilities very seriously. They know they are listened to by staff and governors and understand that alongside their rights they also carry responsibilities. Pupils are very involved with the local and more distant communities, developing some excellent links with the elderly and with a school abroad. They raise significant sums for charities, for example supporting the efforts of one pupil's father in rowing across the Atlantic for Cystic Fibrosis research. Pupils' positive attitudes and their good information and communication technology (ICT), literacy and numeracy skills mean they are well prepared for the next stages in their lives.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and the proportion of good lessons is rising. Pupils' behaviour is invariably managed well by teachers, and relationships are very good. Recent initiatives to improve writing, such as allowing more uninterrupted time for pupils' extended writing, are proving successful and reflect the impact of leadership. Computer equipment is used effectively; for example, interactive whiteboards aid the sharing of learning intentions. Teaching assistants support teachers well. The new assessment and tracking systems allow for the quick identification of individual pupils' progress, so that the school can provide the required additional support. The system has also helped to identify a number of areas for improvement. For example, the school's analysis showed weaknesses in problem-solving which are now being addressed in mathematics. This is making mathematics more interesting and enjoyable for pupils and is contributing to higher standards. Assessment information for English and

mathematics is being well recorded, but the school realises the need to extend this to other subjects, particularly science. The useful data is not yet used to its full extent to review how teaching is affecting learning. For example, it is not used well enough to set work that is sufficiently matched to pupils' needs. Higher attaining pupils are amongst those not always sufficiently challenged.

Curriculum planning has improved this year in response to the drive for higher achievement, particularly in mathematics, and this is having a positive impact on standards. The curriculum has good breadth and includes French in Years 3 to 6. All pupils in Year 5 are taught to play a musical instrument through the 'Sound Start' initiative and a strong cross-curricular approach ensures that pupils are taught about the importance of living healthy, safe and enjoyable lives. Some variation between classes in the way time is allocated to subjects means that the curriculum balance is not yet consistent across the school. Enrichment weeks, such as 'Christmas around the world', help pupils to better understand religious and cultural diversity. Good residential visits and visitors add extra dimensions to the children's education, as do the wide range of popular clubs and activities available at lunchtime and after school.

Care, guidance and support are good overall. Staff show a very high degree of care towards their pupils. Pupils appreciate this and respond with extremely positive attitudes. Adults and pupils have mutual respect for one another. Policies regarding attendance and anti-bullying are understood by all and followed through, resulting in excellent outcomes. A national scheme on 'beating bullying' involving the Prime Minister was initiated at St John's earlier in the year. The Christian base of the school, actively promoted by senior leaders and governors, provides a strong emphasis for an inclusive community where all pupils are valued equally. Older pupils know their targets in English and mathematics, but are not aware of their National Curriculum levels.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's accurate judgements on the quality of teaching and learning in each class are providing a firm foundation on which an improvement in standards is being achieved. In-service training, and the involvement of Advanced Skills Teachers to provide guidance, are having a beneficial impact on the quality of teaching. Inexperienced staff feel well supported and are aware that their practice is improving. Effective monitoring and extremely accurate evaluation ensures that senior managers have a very clear picture of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Subject leaders are new to their roles this year and remark that they have 'started on a journey', although some sharing of good practice has already taken place. Governors are very knowledgeable and have a clear and accurate view of the school. They are aware that the school has still to make improvements in order that pupils achieve higher standards. The school has made substantial progress in recent months and has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most, but not all children enter Reception with the expected levels of skills and knowledge for their age. By the time they enter Year 1, good teaching overall has resulted in many achieving their early learning goals, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. Other strong areas are their communication, language and literacy and mathematical development.

Strengths in teaching include a very good focus on oral work and careful questioning. The indoor and outdoor areas are equally suitable in providing a good learning environment.

Opportunities for structured play are very good and children enjoy the role play areas. The teaching team work very well together, generating useful assessment information which is used to adjust future planning. Staff have identified the need to adapt their practice so that the children, who are from very diverse backgrounds, are all supported and challenged by the teaching and learning programme. The Foundation Stage is well managed and led.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use assessment information more effectively to improve pupils' achievements, particularly in mathematics, through ensuring that the work set is more closely matched to all pupils' needs.
- Improve standards by ensuring that the monitoring and evaluation role of subject leaders is fully developed.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

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.

Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	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	2

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?	2
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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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

21 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's CofE Primary School, Croydon, CR0 5EL

Thank you for making me feel so welcome. I very much enjoyed talking to you and seeing what was going on in your school.

Your attendance and behaviour are excellent and you told me how much you appreciate the way staff care for you. You all get on together really well and enjoy coming to school. You take your responsibilities very seriously, such as being elected members of the school council, and know that you are listened to when you want to make improvements. Those of you in Year 6 are very helpful, for example as 'reading mates' for younger pupils. Many of you raise money for charities and are very involved in the local community, helping the elderly. You know a lot about living healthy and safe lives, you speak well and use numbers and computers confidently.

You greatly enjoy your lessons and like the way teachers treat you with respect. You make satisfactory progress in your work, doing rather better in English than maths. You work very well by yourselves, particularly when tasks are challenging. Teachers have started to record how well you are doing and use this information to make sure you are making good progress. More of this is going to happen in the future. I have asked the headteacher to check that teachers challenge you enough, especially in maths. You are given really good and interesting things to do, including lots of fun learning activities in the Reception class and residential visits for older pupils. Many of you go to the wide range of clubs available at lunchtime and after school.

The headteacher is doing her job very well. She knows exactly what needs to be improved and is given lots of help by the staff and the governors. Teachers in charge of subjects are beginning to give advice to other teachers and this will help you to do better. You work and play in a very happy school where Christian values matter a lot.

Best wishes,

Peter McGregor

Lead inspector