

St John The Baptist Church of England Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102911
Local Authority	Richmond Upon Thames
Inspection number	308161
Inspection dates	27–28 January 2009
Reporting inspector	June Woolhouse

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend David Lund
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Sawyer
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2005
School address	Lower Teddington Road Hampton Wick Kingston Upon Thames KT1 4HQ
Telephone number	020 8977 4114
Fax number	020 8977 6960

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average-sized school serves the local area. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than average for schools of its type. A few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. There is a below average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; these are mainly dyslexia, moderate learning and social and emotional difficulties. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is below average. The school has the Activemark Gold and The Healthy Schools awards. There is on-site provision for pupils before school and extended school provision for them after school, both of which are managed by the governing body.

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 The Baptist Church of England Junior School is outstanding. A large majority of parents enthuse about the quality of its education, which was captured in the comment of a parent, 'This school is a gem and deserves praise and recognition.' The pupils were even more succinct, 'You get a very good education and it's fun.'

The school community succeeds at this high level because of the passion and energy of the headteacher in delivering her vision of excellent learning. In very effective partnerships with all staff, governors, parents and the diocese in particular, everyone supports her drive to make learning interesting, practical, rich and enjoyable. As a result, pupils reach high academic standards but also achieve highly in sport, drama, art and music. Only the best will do for these pupils. This includes recruiting highly qualified and successful teachers who have, themselves, reached high standards in different areas of learning or have a wide range of very successful experiences outside of education. Together these add considerably to the quality of provision.

Standards are exceptionally high in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6 and achievement is outstanding given pupils' average starting points. Exemplary pastoral care and the support and guidance given to all pupils are the foundations on which pupils' outstanding personal development is established. Pupils really know how to be healthy and keep themselves very safe. They say 'there's no bullying here' and show their exceptional enjoyment through excellent behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning. Teachers are actively encouraged to plan a creative curriculum that links practical subjects such as art, music and physical education with the teaching of key literacy and numeracy skills in English, mathematics and science. This succeeds because outstanding teaching enables pupils to be active in lessons and work together as they explain their ideas and support each other to achieve. They are prepared for the next stage in their education through rich, real-life, activities that consolidate their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, for example when they engage in business enterprises and give their profits to charity.

The pervading Christian ethos underpins all the school's endeavours and promotes its strong sense of community where everyone matters and is cared for. This is a very inclusive school that makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Senior leaders and governors are aware that pupils need to have an even greater knowledge of cultures and communities different from their own and that reaching out further is part of this development. The school is already justly proud of its links to a school in Africa. As part of the extremely strong drive for improvement the school has started a Japanese club which not only involves learning the language but embraces the culture more precisely through pen friend exchanges and cooking activities.

The senior leaders are reflective of the school's performance and analyse pupil progress accurately. As a result, plans for future developments are well founded. All teachers lead in their particular subjects, and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching guarantee pupils' enjoyment and outstanding achievement. Some key senior members of staff have been absent in the past year, resulting in temporary appointments. Therefore the school's capacity to improve is good because staffing is not back to full strength.

A strong team spirit permeates the school because everyone is fully behind the idea of a creative curriculum and the belief that pupils learn and succeed best when a lot is expected of them and when all subjects of the curriculum are given equal weight. Praise and encouragement give

pupils self-belief and confidence as learners. The headteacher is very clear that staff must continue to question closely how a creative curriculum should be planned and taught to assure a balance between taking risks and maintaining high standards in English, mathematics and science.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the creative curriculum further, continually evaluating its impact on pupils' learning and personal development.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Standards are exceptionally high in English, mathematics and science, which represents outstanding progress from broadly average starting points in Year 3. There has been an upward trend for the past five years but there was a significant decline in mathematics in 2007. This was quickly recognised and addressed by the school. The timely action and modification of planning and teaching resulted in significant improvement. Standards of attainment have now been restored to their previous very high levels. Overall performance is affected by pupils joining the school at different times. However, those pupils who are in school from Year 3 show very good progress over time. There is no difference between the performance of groups when point of entry to school and when a pupil's first language is not English are taken into account. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make very good progress, and their achievement continues to improve. This is because their needs are diagnosed quickly, teaching is effective and extremely rigorous steps are being taken to ensure they achieve as well as other groups. Virtually all pupils reach very challenging targets and swift intervention for those who start to fall behind ensures they catch up quickly.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding because these aspects are at the heart of the school's work. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are taught very effectively to respect each other and everyone who may have different backgrounds from themselves. Christian values are very well explained in assemblies and lessons so pupils are in no doubt about how they should behave towards each other and why. As a result, school is a harmonious place where pupils genuinely delight in their learning. Pupils' excellent attendance is a reflection of how happy they are to come to school and how much they enjoy all that it offers. Their extremely positive attitudes start early because lessons are interesting and exciting. The very well-established attitudes to being healthy have led to receipt of the Healthy Schools Award for a second time. A wide range of clubs and residential trips enhances these experiences, contributing very effectively to pupils' personal development. Pupils learn how to become responsible and articulate citizens by the time they leave and have excellent role models in their teachers to guide them. They are proud of their school and can explain why it is successful. They like being with their friends, cooperate well in lessons and show consideration and kindness to each other. They discharge their social responsibilities very well, for example through being influential members of the school council, peer mentors, house captains or reading buddies.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The pupils' outstanding progress owes much to the excellent teaching. The majority of lessons observed were outstanding. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Their inspirational teaching brings learning to life and the reasons for learning are clearly explained. Lessons are briskly paced, the tasks are stimulating and the pupils' widely differing needs are extremely well met. Pupils are encouraged to assess their own learning and this is developing well, especially when they are given clear statements to guide them. Teaching assistants provide very good support and this enables all learners to make rapid progress, including those with learning disabilities and difficulties and those who are at an early stage of learning English. Teachers manage pupils very well and relationships are excellent. The pupils have positive attitudes to learning and they rise to the challenges set. They have very good team working skills and are rightly proud of their achievements. One pupil confidently explained how her choice of sparkling materials for her weaving reflected that she was feeling 'happy and excited'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and lessons provide a wide range of experiences that meet both the academic and personal needs of all pupils. Pupils enjoy learning and the considered references made in planning to make links across subjects, enable pupils to connect their learning successfully to real-life experiences. Statutory requirements are met so that a good breadth and balance are maintained. However, senior leaders acknowledge the need to monitor all curriculum plans to find ways to guarantee that pupils' skills are developed systematically in all subjects. There is excellent provision for literacy and numeracy and the grouping of pupils across the year groups, according to their needs, is very effective. Focused reading and number sessions such as 'Beat the numbers', have been particularly successful in promoting very good progress for learners with difficulties and to bring their progress in line with other groups. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the wealth of activities available to them both during and beyond the school day, such as cooking, gardening and drama clubs. They also thoroughly enjoy visits into the community such as going to the local allotments. The school has been re-awarded the Activemark Gold sports award and the array of supporting activities delivered by professional coaches and staff is impressive. Pupils are encouraged to be risk-takers and Year 6 pupils have the confidence to manage mini-enterprises such as running the school tuck shop and setting up a nail varnish salon that makes a profit.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school is a safe and welcoming place for everyone because a high priority is given to securing pupils' health, safety and welfare. Pupils express great confidence in their teachers and support staff, knowing that any problems they face will be dealt with successfully. The school has excellent links with specialist agencies and is effective in providing support for all pupils and their families, including mid-year admissions and the most vulnerable. Provision for pupils who are new to learning English is excellent. As one pupil remarked, 'It takes about a week to settle in at this school and belong.' These pupils soon gain confidence and are able to access all

aspects of the curriculum. Pupils with learning difficulties, including those with a statement of special educational need, have very good learning programmes to enable them to achieve. A very close check is kept on the progress of different groups of pupils and staff set very clear learning targets. Pupils fully understand their improvement targets, and their progress towards them is checked frequently throughout their time in school. Marking of work at its best informs pupils about what they do well and what they should do to improve but there are still some minor inconsistencies.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding because the headteacher, governors and staff understand what the school should provide for all its pupils so they thrive and learn effectively. This is borne out by the pupils' outstanding achievement and how they enthusiastically describe why they enjoy their schooling. The headteacher's passion for high-quality learning experiences is infectious and she has transmitted it effectively to all her staff. All teachers are leaders in their subjects and their individual in-depth knowledge results in very effective and creative planning. There is a comprehensive tracking system enabling senior leaders to monitor pupils' progress across the whole curriculum each term. Any indication that progress is not as good as it should be, based on the very challenging targets set for all pupils, leads to rapid intervention and extra support. This rigorous monitoring also pinpoints any gaps in teachers' performance which leads to planned professional development opportunities. Consequently, senior leaders accurately evaluate provision and constantly plan improvements, grounded in real-life experiences that lead to higher achievement. Governors are very supportive and ready to accept a greater role in checking the quality of provision. They support local and national community projects, for example when pupils wrote to the Prime Minister about local issues that affect their community. They recognise the school's responsibility to prepare pupils to be the global citizens of tomorrow. New staff take on extra responsibilities willingly. The school gives outstanding value for money and there is a constant drive to attract more resources to improve provision further.

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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	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
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
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?	1

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

10 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John The Baptist Church of England Junior School, Kingston Upon Thames, KT1 4HQ

I am writing to thank you for all your valuable contributions to the inspection we carried out last week. Your views are very important and have helped us to explain more clearly everything that goes on in school. We talked to many of you during lessons, around the school and then with all the school council in the library. My colleague and I had such a good time finding out about what you learn and we experienced being very well looked after in just the way you are by Mrs Sawyer and all her staff.

You are fortunate to be in such an outstanding school and some of the reasons for that are down to you and your parents. We were impressed by your excellent behaviour and the consideration you show to each other. No one is left out and that is very important, especially when someone new joins a class later in the year. You make excellent progress in your work because your teachers make learning so interesting for you. This enables you to do extremely well in the national tests in Year 6. You understand about healthy lifestyles and are keen to eat healthily and take exercise. Your headteacher, teachers and governors are very good at thinking of ways to improve your school.

To make your school even better, your teachers are going to do some research on the curriculum and make sure you continue to succeed in all your learning. You can help them by doing some of your own research into subjects that you find interesting but need to know more about.

I hope you carry on working hard and enjoying all the activities that are available to you. Good luck on your learning journey.

Yours faithfully

Mrs June Woolhouse

Lead Inspector