

Ainsdale St John's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104903
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	308703
Inspection date	15 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Margaret Lewis

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	5-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs R Wake
Headteacher	Mrs Lesley Deninson
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2003
School address	Sandbrook Road Ainsdale Southport Merseyside PR8 3JE
Telephone number	01704 578427
Fax number	01704 574792

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and inspected the following issues: standards and achievement, personal development and well-being, and leadership and management. This was done by gathering evidence from observing lessons, examining a sample of pupils' work in books and on display, scrutinising school's documentation and questionnaires completed by parents, and by talking with pupils, parents, governors, the assessment and special needs coordinators, deputy headteacher and the headteacher. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected in detail but the inspector found evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were accurate and justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This average-sized primary school is located close to the coastal resort of Southport in favourable socio-economic circumstances. Places in the Reception class are oversubscribed and the number of pupils attending the school is rising. The proportion of pupils who joined the school from the local community over the past year at ages other than the norm is higher than in most schools. This was due to the closure of a nearby faith school. All pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for a free school meal is below average. About 14% of the pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is lower than in most schools. The school has several awards including a national Healthy Schools Award, an Activemark, an Artsmark, and an International School Award. It is a leading practice school for the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme and has extended school status related to its work in this area.

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 is outstanding in all aspects of its work, providing an excellent quality of education. It sets its sights high and at its heart lies a commitment to its vision and values statement of 'Excellence, Warmth and Enthusiasm'. It is extremely successful in living up to these aims within a strong Christian ethos. This enables all pupils to achieve as well as they can, whatever their individual gifts, talents or learning difficulties. As a result, pupils' achievement is outstanding both academically and in terms of their personal and social development. The school's self-evaluation paints an accurate picture of its effectiveness.

The vast majority of parents are extremely pleased with what the school provides. Many comment that it is an exceptional school and feel that they are incredibly fortunate to have their children taught there. St John's is a welcoming, friendly school, with a strong family atmosphere, that envelops all who work there and visit. Pupils are very proud of their school and their work. They take great enjoyment in their education because of the excellent personal development and care, guidance and support they receive. Excellent teaching ensures that the work pupils are given is exciting and motivates and challenges them to learn. As a result, they achieve high standards. In the 2007 national assessments and tests, almost every pupil at age seven and at age eleven gained the nationally expected level for their age in English, mathematics and science. A significant proportion reached the higher levels. Standards in Year 6 have been at least significantly above average for the past five years. They have been exceptionally high for the last two. The school consistently exceeds the challenging targets it sets itself in English and mathematics. Pupils make very good progress throughout the school, including the significant proportion that joined recently. These pupils were helped to integrate into the life of the school quickly. This was commented on positively by the pupils themselves, and by their parents, who appreciate the care and thoughtfulness in promoting friendships and making their children feel welcome.

St John's is full of happy, busy pupils who thoroughly enjoy the very many groups, clubs, events and opportunities they are given. Their excellent attendance bears witness to this. Groups such as the 'Make Our School Safe' (MOSS), the Eco-army which is involved with recycling, reducing and reusing, and the school council, all take their responsibilities very seriously and make a difference to life in and out of school. The school council is involved in school developments such as playground improvements and its ideas are valued and acted upon. Members have worked successfully towards ensuring safe parking outside school and their current campaign is to 'Cut the Carbon!' For example, they are making a strong effort to reduce their own and parents' and visitors' carbon footprint with a welter of information and ideas such as pledges. Pupils know a lot about healthy eating and the need for exercise. This is evident in work displayed around the school and their enjoyment of physical education lessons and clubs. When asked many say they keep a count and know exactly how much fresh fruit and vegetables they eat each day. The pupils regard St John's as a safe school where 'there is no bullying and everyone gets on well together'. They are confident that should they need to discuss anything that worries them, there is always an adult with the time to listen to their problems. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They concentrate hard in lessons, show positive attitudes and take a pride in their work. They work and play together harmoniously and are generous in their willingness to help others.

Teaching is outstanding. Learners make excellent progress. Teachers work hard to raise self-esteem for all pupils. Planning is very good and teaching groups are very well organised

and well supported. Teaching assistants and very good resources, such as a well organised library, computers and interactive whiteboards, play a major part in this. Pupils conscientiously complete homework tasks and this prepares them well for their future education.

The school uses a well devised system to carefully track progress made by all pupils. This is kept effectively up to date and includes all those who have recently joined the school. The analysis of this information is used very well. All pupils are set appropriate work, given additional support where needed, and provided with challenging targets, all of which promote their excellent academic progress.

Leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The school, which is expertly led by the headteacher, is highly successful in promoting pupils' excellent personal development and well-being and ensuring that they all feel special and valued. Managers at all levels have a good understanding of the school's strengths and of those areas it should improve. It maintains very good links with outside agencies and parents. The impact is seen in the rapid progress made by learners and in its deservedly good reputation locally. The governing body works hard and is reflective, involving itself regularly with school improvement. The school's capacity for further improvement is excellent.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The Foundation Stage gives children an excellent start to their education and enables them to make very good progress. It is very effectively managed and organised. Children start in the Reception class, with knowledge and skills that are slightly better developed than is typical for their age, especially in speech and language. All meet and many exceed the early learning goals expected of them by the time they leave the Foundation Stage. Significant and positive features are the good adult to pupil ratio of expert and experienced staff together with an exciting, colourful learning environment.

What the school should do to improve further

- This outstanding school knows itself very well and is already taking the steps it has identified to make it even better. As a result, no issues for improvement are raised.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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 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	1

The quality of provision

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

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 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 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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Ainsdale St John's C E Primary School, Southport, PR8 3JE

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school to see how well you are learning. It was good to hear your views and to find out about life at St John's.

You told me how much you enjoy your school and how there is always heaps to do and what a great place it is to be - and I agree with you! I think your school is outstanding in all parts of its work. It provides you with an excellent education so that you make extremely good progress and reach high standards by the time you leave. Your school cares for you exceptionally well. You respond very well to this, becoming mature and confident young people who have every chance to make the most of your education in your next school. Well done to you all!

So why is your school so outstanding? Well, your headteacher leads your school exceptionally well and is always thinking about 'Excellence, Warmth, and Enthusiasm'. She is extremely well supported by the deputy headteacher, senior teacher, staff and governors. The teachers and teaching assistants teach you extremely well and give you activities which make your learning exciting and memorable. The headteacher and the teachers know each one of you very well. They keep a very close eye on how well you are doing. They know what you are capable of and are determined that you will all succeed. You are happy and proud of your school. Many of you told me about how you are closely involved in making it even better. You know a lot about healthy lifestyles, the environment and keeping yourselves safe. You are extremely well behaved and polite.

I liked all that I saw in your school and think that the headteacher and school staff are doing just what is needed to make it even better. I am sure you will all do your own bit to help your teachers.

Keep up the first-rate attitudes you have to learning and continue to work hard and enjoy school. Oh, the acting and the singing were wonderful in the Celebration Assembly on the environment that the Year 6 children had also performed at Aintree.