

# St John's CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105504
<b>Local Authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	308873
<b>Inspection date</b>	7 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sarah Drake

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	365
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev Ian Gomersall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Karen Mortlock
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 May 2004
<b>School address</b>	Clarence Road Longsight Manchester M13 0YE
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 2247752
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 2485248

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the impact of teaching, including the use of assessment, marking and targets, on pupils' progress and the standards achieved; the impact of the leadership and management on improving the school's effectiveness, with a particular focus on writing and communication skills; the provision for and use of information and communication technology (ICT); the quality and provision in the Foundation Stage. Evidence was gathered from: national published assessment data; the school's self-evaluation, assessment records, policies and minutes; observation of the school at work, including lessons; discussions with a governor, members of staff and pupils; the questionnaires returned by parents. Other 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, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This large school serves an area of significant social and economic disadvantage to the south of the city centre. The proportion of pupils eligible to receive free school meals is around twice the national average. The overwhelming majority of pupils belong to a variety of minority ethnic groups. Around one third is of Pakistani heritage and another third of Bangladeshi heritage. Around two thirds of pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Although the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is smaller than average, above average numbers have a statement of special educational need. The school acts as a resource centre for pupils with hearing impairment and also has a significant number with difficulties that fall within the autistic spectrum. The school has achieved the silver Healthy Schools Award (2007) and an achievement award for participation in sport for each of the past two years.

At the time of the inspection the school's deputy headteacher had recently taken over as its acting headteacher due to the illness of the substantive headteacher. She was being supported by the headteacher of a neighbouring school with whom a federated headship is being arranged.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school in which pupils work and play together harmoniously and achieve well. It is a school that successfully nurtures an atmosphere of respect for others, for self and for the environment, and where pulling together is central to the creation of a happy and effective learning community. Although the headteacher was absent during the inspection, his presence is very evident throughout the school. He is a major, much loved influence on pupils, staff and parents alike, and on the success of the school that he has led for many years.

Children join the Nursery with very low skills. In response to careful analysis of their needs and well targeted support, pupils make good progress throughout the school. By the end of Year 2 standards are below average and by the end of Year 6 they are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. They are now also broadly average in ICT, due to improvements in provision since the last inspection. The Key Stage 2 results in 2007 were particularly impressive as over one quarter of pupils had learning difficulties and/or disabilities and only 10% spoke English as their first language. Both these groups of pupils achieved very well. Pupils speaking English as their first language reached standards well above those attained nationally by similar pupils. Pupils of Pakistani heritage reached standards above those reached by pupils of this ethnic background nationally, with particular success in mathematics.

Current pupils are working at similar levels to those achieved last year. There is evidence that the recently introduced, highly focussed teaching of reading and writing skills is beginning to raise standards, especially among younger pupils.

Pupils' good achievement is the result of good quality teaching, a curriculum that builds well on their different experiences, needs and interests, and high quality pastoral care that helps them to grow in confidence. Many parents and pupils commented on the helpful way in which staff listen to concerns and work hard to resolve them. The school is well resourced with extra staff who support the very varied needs of its pupils discreetly and very effectively. Lessons are interesting and move at a good pace. Teachers give clear directions and use the interactive whiteboards well to provide visual clues, clarify important points and help sustain pupils' interest. They skilfully exploit opportunities to develop pupils' communication and other skills. For example, in a lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 the teacher displayed the magnified image of a woodlouse, which grabbed pupils' attention from the start. Referring to the school's strategies for sound recognition she helped a pupil to work out how to pronounce the word 'louse' accurately. She provided time for a discussion about the need to care for living creatures, prompting pupils to consider how they would feel if suddenly removed from their environment. Then she moved seamlessly on to helping pupils to outline the requirements for planning a scientific investigation. All this took place in little more than five minutes. Teachers provide pupils with good quality guidance in lessons and mark their work supportively, but do not give enough prompts in their marking to help pupils understand what they need to do next to move their learning forward.

Pupils' outstanding behaviour and positive attitudes to learning mean that lessons run smoothly and playtimes are happy. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school's strong emphasis on praise and the valuing of each individual ensure that pupils grow in self-esteem and form good quality relationships with staff and each other. Pupils of all ages are very conscious of the importance of food choice and physical activity to remaining healthy. The good range of sporting after-school clubs is popular, as are the varied and enjoyable daily

lunchtime activities provided by trained coaches. Pupils understand how to keep safe. They are keen to contribute to the community, for example as school councillors, members of the Green Team who keep an eye on litter and recycling, or when taking their turn to care for the guinea pigs. Pupils leave the school with well developed skills to enhance their future lives. Attendance levels are below average, largely due to extended term-time holidays. This is despite the school's extensive efforts working with parents to support their children's regular presence at school.

Good quality leadership and management ensure that the school runs smoothly and effectively. Procedures are in place to promote child protection, and health and safety. Staff are enthusiastic and determined to provide the best they can for pupils. Their good teamwork and obvious respect for the acting headteacher, combined with a clear understanding of expectations and school practices, mean that the quality of provision is not reduced during the absence of the headteacher. However, the systems for recording and tracking pupils' progress are difficult to use, and do not readily provide information to show individuals' relative strengths or weaknesses. Also, it is only recently that subject leaders, and others with responsibility, have begun to use assessment information, take the initiative in the management of their subjects, and contribute to whole-school improvement. There is room for further development in this area. The commitment of all staff, and the improvements already made in, for instance, the Foundation Stage and pupils' communication and ICT skills, point to the school having good capacity to improve further. It provides good value for money.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

On entry to the Nursery, the great majority of children, including those who speak English as a first language, have few communication skills, little knowledge and understanding of the world and tend to choose to play on their own rather than with others. Good leadership, strong teamwork and a good understanding of how young children learn help to create a stimulating environment in which children of all abilities make good progress. Although access to the outdoor area is restricted for Reception children, staff are making increasingly good use of it to promote learning in all areas. They interact well with children and use their observations of children's developing skills to tailor the provision to meet individual needs. Above all, learning is fun. In a short session in the Nursery, children enthusiastically identified and sequenced numbers because the resources being used were photographs of themselves, taken outdoors. They were also keen to practise writing numbers on the interactive whiteboard because their efforts emerged not in a wobbly line but in glorious stars! Children join Year 1 as highly sociable and very willing learners although their skills in all areas are below those expected for their age, especially their ability to read, write or calculate.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Create assessment systems that are easy to use and track pupils' progress effectively from the end of the Foundation Stage onwards.
- Develop the role of staff with responsibilities so that they use assessment information regularly and help to guide school improvement.
- Ensure that teachers' marking helps pupils to understand what steps they need to take in order to raise the standard of their work.

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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?	2
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?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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?	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**

Inspection of St John's C of E Primary School, Manchester, M13 0YE

Thank you for your very warm welcome when I inspected your school recently. I enjoyed my time at St John's and was pleased to hear from you, and to see for myself, that you enjoy being pupils there. Particular thanks go to those of you I spoke with in lessons and on the playground, and also to the school council members who gave up some of their lunchtime to talk with me.

I agree with you that yours is a good school, and it is certainly a healthy and sporty one! Congratulations on your awards. The reason your school is good is because it is well led and everyone on the staff works hard to make you feel well looked after, so that you can concentrate on learning. The children in the Nursery and Reception years get off to a good start to their schooling and older pupils build well on this. Your behaviour is excellent and I was glad to see how well you all get on together, whatever your ethnicity, beliefs or abilities. Your teachers give you clear directions and choose interesting topics so that you pay good attention in lessons and make good progress. This means that by the end of Year 6 you reach standards that are broadly average for all schools in England - well done!

The way that your work is marked doesn't always make clear what you need to do in order to reach the next level of working. I have suggested that your teachers think about how this can be improved, so you can take more charge of your own learning. I have also suggested that the school develops systems which will make it easier for teachers to monitor your progress. This will help them to identify quickly if someone is falling behind or racing ahead, and make sure that teachers give pupils the right level of work. Finally, I have suggested that the teachers with responsibilities play more of a leading role in helping the school to improve.

Your jobs will be to continue to enjoy learning and working hard - and to try your best to attend school regularly.