

St John's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106451
Local Authority	Wigan
Inspection number	309133
Inspection date	23 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Janette Corlett

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	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Parfitt
Headteacher	Mrs S Hewitt
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2004
School address	Fleet Street Pemberton Wigan Lancashire WN5 0DT
Telephone number	01942 222133
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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: achievement and standards; care, guidance and support; and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation; national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records; policies and observations of the school at work; discussions with staff and pupils; and the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but there is no evidence to suggest that the school's own evaluations were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This smaller than average school is situated in an area of some social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The majority of pupils are White British. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils entering and leaving the school at other than the usual times is in line with the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The school holds National Healthy Schools Status and the Excellence in Work-Related Learning Award.

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 a good school. It has a warm and welcoming atmosphere which encourages pupils from their earliest days in school to learn and play happily together. There is a strong caring ethos which nurtures pupils' good personal development. Pupils' behaviour is good because they enjoy coming to school and find lessons interesting. Teachers and support staff have excellent relationships with the pupils, gaining their confidence through sensitive support, good humour and plenty of praise. Consequently, pupils learn that it is perfectly acceptable to make mistakes or admit to finding work difficult. Help is always at hand, and pupils know this. They say that the best thing about school is the teachers, who are all very kind but who expect them to work hard! Attendance rates are satisfactory. The school does everything it can to promote good attendance, and the great majority of pupils are rarely absent. Parents speak highly of the school and appreciate the way in which all teachers are approachable, quickly responding to any individual concerns they may have and making them feel welcome.

Pupils make good progress throughout the school and achieve well. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards that are marginally below average in reading, writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 6, standards are securely in line with the national average in mathematics and science and above average in English. In recent years the school recognised that not enough of the more able pupils were reaching the highest levels in national tests and teacher assessments. School leaders tackled this successfully by ensuring that all pupils have appropriately challenging targets for improvement and that the activities and tasks in lessons are closely matched to pupils' individual needs. As a result, the standard of work produced by the more able pupils has improved. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress from their individual starting points.

Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and their written comments give pupils good guidance on how to improve their writing. Pupils do not always, however, have enough information on the next steps in their learning in mathematics and science. The quality of teaching and learning in lessons is consistently good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and this enables them to explain new concepts clearly and methodically. They use skilful questioning to engage pupils of all ability levels in their learning and to check their understanding. This means that their future planning is securely based on pupils' prior learning. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support groups and individuals in making progress.

Pupils enjoy a well balanced curriculum enriched by a variety of interesting outside visits and visitors to the school. The good range of after-school clubs is much appreciated, particularly those for sporting activities. Pupils love physical education lessons, and comment on how this helps them keep fit and healthy. They also enjoy learning French and having the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument.

There are many opportunities for pupils to take part in the wider community through fundraising for charities and taking part in local events. Pupils also benefit from links with local businesses which support them in learning about future adult life and the world of work. Older pupils take on responsibilities in the school, running a successful healthy tuck shop and supporting younger pupils in playtime activities. They are well informed on how to keep themselves safe and healthy, and say that very little bullying takes place. On the rare occasions this occurs, they feel that teachers deal with it quickly and effectively. School councillors have an active role in the school, and their suggestions for improvements are considered and acted on where possible. This has

led to better equipment for playground activities and a good selection of games and activities to be used during wet playtimes.

Leadership and management of the school are good. School leaders at all levels know the school's priorities for improvement and work as a strong and enthusiastic team to raise standards in pupils' academic and personal development. They ensure a high standard of pastoral care and support for pupils and their families. Although they collect extensive information about pupils' progress and standards, they do not make the fullest use of it to account for the school's overall effectiveness. The information held on the progress of the different groups of pupils is not easily accessible to teachers. This reduces the capacity of teachers and support staff to make full use of it to evaluate the impact of the ways in which they help all groups of pupils reach their targets for improvement. The school has improved well since its last inspection and has good capacity to improve further. This is demonstrated by the rapid success of the school's recent strategies to raise standards in English.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The effectiveness of the provision in the Foundation Stage is good. The Reception classroom is well resourced and children are provided with a varied range of practical activities which engage their interest and develop their skills well. There is a good balance between activities where children can choose and follow the path of their own learning and those directed by teachers and support staff. Relationships are good; children work and play well together and have very good attitudes to their learning. The outdoor area is not used enough throughout the day to extend the children's learning experiences.

Children's skills on entry to the Reception year are generally low in comparison to national expectations. As a result of effective teaching and support, children make good progress from their individual starting points. By the end of the Reception year, most of them are working well within the early learning goals, although standards are below those expected nationally.

The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. There are strong links with the pre-school provision that shares the school site. These enable information and resources to be shared easily. They also contribute to the good induction systems which ensure that children settle quickly and happily into school routines. There are good partnerships with parents. Parents feel that the Foundation Stage gives their children a secure start to their education in a safe and nurturing environment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the marking of pupils' written work in mathematics and science so they understand the next steps in their learning and how to achieve them.
- Make full use of the assessments of pupils' progress to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies to improve pupils' learning.
- Make better use of the outdoor environment in the Foundation Stage to enhance provision in all areas of learning.

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 ¹ 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	2
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	2
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

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	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

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

Inspection of St John's C of E Primary School, Wigan, WN5 0DT

Thank you for making me feel so very welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed spending the day with you, and was most impressed with your good behaviour and helpfulness. A special thank you to the school council members who gave up their lunch break to tell me how much you all enjoy learning and playing together. You obviously care for one another a great deal, and try to help other people as much as you can.

I think you have a good school and are right to be so proud of it. You are very lucky to have so many friendly and helpful adults making sure that you are safe, happy and healthy. They also expect you to work very hard and this means you are all making good progress in your learning. I was very pleased to see that you take part in so many exciting activities both during and after school. You also visit many interesting places, and the older children enjoy their trip to Cumbria where they take part in some very adventurous outdoor challenges.

I've asked your teachers to make some small changes to help you improve even more quickly. These are:

- to give you more detailed suggestions about the next steps in your learning when they mark your work in mathematics and science and how to achieve them
- to make sure the Reception children can learn and play outdoors as often as possible.

I have also asked teachers to make more use of the information about your progress to check if the extra support some of you receive helps you to improve your work well enough. You can help by going to school on time every day unless you are ill and by continuing to work very hard in your lessons.