

St John The Baptist Church of England Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116314
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312255
Inspection date	22 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Brian Evans

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	321
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs S Moore
Headteacher	Mr S C Morrison
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Solomons Lane Waltham Chase Southampton SO32 2LY
Telephone number	01329 833141
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector gathered evidence from lesson observations, looking at pupils' work, assessment information, documents, interviews and discussions. He evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated links between the following aspects: standards and achievement, teaching and learning and pupils' personal development and well-being. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found much evidence to confirm that the school's own evaluations are justified, and these have been included.

Description of the school

St John The Baptist is larger than most primary schools and is over subscribed. Most pupils are White British. There are few ethnic minority pupils and few who do not have English as their first language. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is very much lower than that usually found. A well above average number of pupils have statements of special need; however, the proportion of pupils who have learning needs or disabilities is below average. The school achieved the Healthy Schools Award in 2007.

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 is an outstanding primary school. All pupils make significantly better progress than expected in Years 1 and 2 and acquire well above average skills in reading, writing and numeracy and in information and communication technology (ICT). Standards in national tests by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science have been consistently well above average, and remain so. Challenging targets are consistently exceeded, and pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are on course to achieve highly and exceed their targets this year. This consistent success stems from the vision and leadership of the headteacher, whose skill is complemented by the attention to detail of the deputy headteacher. They have behind them a team of talented, hard working teachers, support assistants and administrative staff. Adults model very high expectations of work ethic and this underpins a real learning 'buzz' throughout the school. Exemplary work on display in classrooms and around the school further illustrates teachers' high expectations. The school accurately perceives its immediate priority as meeting even more fully, the curriculum needs of many pupils in Years 3 and 4 so that the good progress they make matches the generally excellent progress made in other year groups. A high proportion of parents, nearly two thirds, returned questionnaires and the following written comment was typical of a great many. 'This is a fantastic school. My children are very happy and the school is always coming up with new ideas to improve children's experiences and learning.'

Teaching and learning are excellent. Teachers work together closely in teams, and use assessment data very effectively to support achievement. All leaders pick up quickly on indicators that an individual pupil is under-performing and respond effectively by calling upon a wide range of remedial strategies, including booster classes. Pupils enjoy their learning in all subjects and their very good listening and speaking skills enable them to contribute sensibly to group discussions. Well-trained support assistants and adult volunteers work very well in partnership with teachers to provide small group support. The ten pupils who have statements of special need, and those with learning difficulties, make impressive progress. Two carefully trained Emotional Literacy Support Assistants provide additional counselling when needed.

The curriculum has responded most effectively to a key issue in the last inspection, which noted that pupils had insufficient opportunities to learn about the wider multicultural society outside their semi-rural environment. Pupils from Reception to Year 6 learn from visitors to the school from different faiths and cultures and from an extensive range of learning resources. Impressive progress in ICT has been made since the last inspection. Teachers have very good ICT skills and use their electronic boards imaginatively in their planning. Pupils are skilful in using a wide range of computer software. During lunchtime, three older girls were planning and editing this term's computer-generated school magazine with great skill and enjoyment.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding and provide a strong base for the school's high academic standards. Staff show very high levels of care, support and pastoral and academic guidance for each pupil. Attendance is well above average and behaviour is excellent. Pupils enjoy happy relationships with their peers and adults. School councillors feel strongly that they play a vital role in shaping aspects of school policy. For example, 'share a problem' boxes were successfully introduced to each classroom, and pupils continue to make suggestions for new apparatus and encourage new games in the 'active playground' area. Participation rates in clubs and activities are high with music, art and sport - including girls' football - as particular favourites. Pupils are keen to adopt healthy lifestyles.

Pupils confirm that they feel safe and secure in school. No pupils reported that they had been physically bullied or received racist remarks. Exclusions are extremely rare. Occasional disagreements between pupils are resolved very quickly by the pupils themselves or by teachers. Younger children were full of praise for the mature way older pupils as 'buddies' and 'play leaders' carried out their responsibilities to ensure that no-one was left out or felt unhappy during play times. Pupils involve themselves extensively in the life of the school and the wider community. Groups of children take the initiative to raise funds for various causes out of school hours. Good work habits in school and high academic standards give pupils confidence in their approach to everyday economics.

Leaders at all levels work brilliantly with each other to sustain a continuing rise in standards based on accurate self-assessment procedures. The headteacher and governors expertly combine great professional support for teaching and support staff with very high expectations of them. In turn, they respond ever more fully to the needs of the pupils. The progress the school has made since the last inspection confirms that the school has excellent capacity for yet more improvement in standards from an already very high base.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The Foundation Stage provides a very effective start to children's education. Parents are very appreciative of the leadership of the teachers and their experienced support assistants. A parent commented 'I am particularly pleased that the children are learning so well through their play'. Every opportunity is taken to give the children experience of exploring the local area. A recent activity included a visit to the Post Office in the company of the Community Police Officer. From starting points that are typical for their age the children move on at a rapid pace to exceed the levels expected in all areas of learning by the time they start Year 1. Staff are constantly seeking to ensure good transition for pupils into the Revised Primary Strategy for teaching phonics and early reading skills. Major improvements have been made to extend resources for outdoor activities since the last inspection. Reception children have 'all weather' overalls, which allow them outside access to a covered area and shaded space in rainy or hot weather.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in Years 3 and 4.

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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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

04 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John The Baptist Church of England Controlled Primary School, Southampton, SO32 2LY

I am writing to let you know how much I enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful. I really enjoyed talking to you and appreciated the help you gave me during the day. You will be pleased to hear that I think that St John The Baptist is an outstanding school that achieves high standards. You are making excellent progress in your work. Here are a number of things I like about your school.

- You get an excellent start to school life in the Reception classes. I was very impressed with your imaginative 'active play' areas.
- You are keen to come to school, work hard for your teachers and enjoy learning.
- You are keen to follow a healthy lifestyle and make an excellent contribution to the life of the school.
- You take on responsibilities very well and in a mature manner. For example, younger children especially appreciate the work of older pupils who act as 'buddies'.

I have asked your teachers, with your help, to raise standards even further by looking at arrangements which will help pupils in Years 3 and Year 4 to improve on the good progress they are already making.

Once again, my thanks to all of you for making my day at the school so enjoyable.

Yours sincerely

Brian Evans

Lead Inspector