

St John's, Gosport Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116393
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312291
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2008
Reporting inspector	George Rayner

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	393
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Lambert
Headteacher	Mrs Joy Lowman
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2004
School address	Grove Road Gosport PO12 4JH
Telephone number	02392 582404
Fax number	02392 527072

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is larger than most primary schools. The great majority of pupils have White British heritage and very few are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is significantly above average, as is the proportion with statements. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. Several arrive with behavioural difficulties, including some who transfer from other schools. The movement of pupils into and out of the school other than at the normal times is higher than in most schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. The adults who contribute to its work share an aspiration to improve it further and are being increasingly successful. Some aspects of the school are already good and those which are satisfactory are improving. Parents say that their children are happy here. Pupils show this through their good behaviour and enthusiasm in joining in with all that the school has to offer. They get on well together, help to care for each other, are confident and enjoy telling visitors all the good things about their school. These qualities demonstrate their good personal development and well-being and reflect good pastoral care. Academic guidance is only satisfactory. This is because procedures for tracking pupils' progress, while improving, are not yet being used consistently well to set pupils their own targets and help them to reach these.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory as, while many lessons are good, they are not consistently of this quality. Therefore, while pupils make good progress in some years, including Year 6, achievement is satisfactory overall. By the end of Year 6, pupils are showing clear signs that they are attaining higher than in previous years. Although the gap with national averages is reducing, standards remain below average in English, mathematics and science. The biggest gains are in science, where increasing numbers of pupils are reaching expected levels for their age. Teachers are aware that they have not always given pupils effective enough opportunities to write at length, or to use their mathematics skills to solve problems independently. They are working together to improve this, although the full impact of this on standards is yet to be seen. Because their needs are carefully identified and effectively provided for, pupils with moderate learning difficulties make as much progress as their classmates. In the majority of lessons, the most able pupils also make satisfactory progress. Occasionally, however, their progress slows because teachers do not plan additional challenges for them clearly enough.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The good leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy, is setting a clear direction for the school. The school's leaders acknowledge that self-evaluation has previously provided an inflated view of some aspects of the school's performance. Improvements to procedures and better understanding of performance evidence are now providing rigorous self-evaluation. This is giving the school's leaders an accurate view of the areas needing improvement and steps taken are beginning to improve learning. This is seen, for example, in the recent improvements to the curriculum, which is now good. Much work has been established quite recently. For this reason, the impact on standards is still to be fully seen and the school's leaders know that further work is needed in most areas. The school's track record demonstrates a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge which are well below the level expected for their age. As a result of the secure partnership with parents and pre-school providers, the children soon settle into school life. Although they make good progress, due to good provision, many children still fall short of the attainment expected for their age by the end of the Reception year, particularly in their reading and writing skills. The introduction of the 'Letters and Sounds' programme is already speeding up progress in reading. Teaching does not always give children enough opportunities to write in sentences and the school recognises that this is an area for development. The curriculum presents a good balance of opportunities

for child-initiated and adult-directed activities. The indoor and outdoor areas provide a stimulating setting for children to develop their independence and ability to work co-operatively. The recent introduction of 'Community Time' has been particularly effective in making learning fun and introducing children to real life experiences such as eating out in a restaurant, choosing from a menu and ordering their own food. Parents are encouraged to be fully involved with their child's education through such initiatives as the 'Home/School Diary', which gives them a clear on-going picture of how their children are doing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Ensure that the most able pupils are consistently challenged.
- Ensure that pupils are always aware of their targets and well guided on how to reach these.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Although pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science are below average at the end of Year 6, pupils make satisfactory progress from their starting points. Progress is strongest in science. While satisfactory overall, it is becoming good for increasing numbers of pupils, so that more are reaching expected standards. Pupils are becoming increasingly willing and able to carry out their own investigations. While also satisfactory, progress is slower in English and mathematics. Pupils develop a sound vocabulary, but many find it difficult to write complex sentences, or detailed descriptions and explanations. In mathematics, pupils become generally competent in basic skills, but do not use these well to solve problems independently.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are eager to learn and co-operate well together in lessons. They are friendly, confident and enthusiastic about their school. They feel safe and know that they can always talk to staff if they have a concern. Pupils are aware of the importance of exercise and eating healthily. They say that their views are welcomed, so that they make a good contribution to the life of the school. The active school council and eco-committee have helped to improve facilities. One pupil said, 'We've looked at the school and made it safer. We introduced healthy lunches. We recycle everything'. Most pupils attend school regularly. However, despite the very best efforts of the school, a small number are absent more than they should be. Pupils' steady progress in basic skills satisfactorily prepares them for their futures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers often plan enjoyable activities and succeed in promoting good relationships, so that pupils are willing learners. This was seen in a Year 6 lesson, where pupils made mathematical calculations for planning trips to football matches. They enjoyed talking about their ideas with

each other and the teacher and then concentrated very well on their own work. Teachers' good questioning helps pupils to check how well they have understood what they have learned. Teachers and support assistants work together effectively to ensure that all pupils are involved in their work. They also provide additional help to those who need it which means that they can keep up with the pace of the rest of the class. However, lesson plans are not always sufficiently clear about what is expected of the most able pupils, so that their challenges are occasionally not high enough. Teachers use marking well to encourage pupils, but do not always give them clear guidance on how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Following a recent review, good links are being developed between subjects, which are making the curriculum more relevant for pupils. The 'Children's University' held on one morning a week, offers pupils a stunning choice of activities, including flower arranging, photography, Spanish, hairdressing and architecture. This is making learning more enjoyable and interesting for pupils, and is also raising their aspirations. As one said, 'You don't really know you are learning because it's such good fun.' However, the impact on achievement and standards, especially in English and mathematics, of these new initiatives is still developing and has yet to be fully evaluated. Information and communication technology is used well to support teaching and learning. All pupils in Years 3 to 5 have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. Personal, social and health education is well planned and effectively makes pupils aware of staying safe and healthy and of their rights and responsibilities. This contributes to pupils' good personal development. A good range of visitors and trips exists and includes annual residential visits from Year 3 to 6.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Health and safety procedures and child protection measures are well organised and diligently implemented. As a result pupils feel secure. Those with learning and behavioural difficulties are identified early and appropriate targets are set and shared with these pupils and their parents or carers. Good use is made of specialist help from outside agencies whenever necessary. As one parent wrote, 'The home-liaison lady is a real asset'. Pupils who attend 'Rainbow class' are given good support in order to improve their behaviour, social skills and self-esteem, so that they can access the curriculum as well as their classmates. The breakfast club ensures that pupils have the opportunity of a meal at the start of the day. Although assessment procedures are improving, the information gained is not yet being used consistently well by all teachers. Consequently, not all pupils know how they might improve further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

There is considerable unity of purpose between staff working at all levels. This is being further improved by the establishment of staff teams to enhance opportunities for sharing ideas, although some teams are still at an early stage of development. An increasingly shared willingness to be creative is being demonstrated, for example, in the staff's work over the recent exciting innovations in the curriculum. Staff with middle managerial responsibilities play a full role in many aspects of monitoring. However, subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in

evaluating the quality of teaching and learning of their subjects by observing lessons. Governors are well involved in the work of the school, well informed and becoming increasingly effective in challenging the school where necessary.

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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?	3
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	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	3

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?	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

20 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's, Gosport Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Gosport, PO12 4JH

Thank you for welcoming the inspectors to your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and we are grateful for the help you gave by talking to us and showing us your work. We were able to see that yours is a satisfactory school.

You make satisfactory progress in your learning. For most of you, your strongest subject is science. We could see that you enjoy this subject and you are becoming good at finding things out by for yourselves. We have asked the teachers to give you more help to be as good at English and mathematics. This includes helping you to write longer sentences and put more information into your writing. It also includes making sure that, when solving problems, you always use your skills in such things as adding and multiplication well.

We have asked the teachers to make sure that they always give the most able pupils difficult enough things to do. This will help you to always do as well as you possibly can. We would also like them to make sure that you always know what your targets are and have plenty of help to reach them.

Some things about your school are good. The adults give you many interesting activities and we know that you really love 'St John's University' because of all the exciting things you do there. You help your teachers a lot because you work hard and are well behaved. Lots of you came up to talk to us. This was a real pleasure for us because you were polite, cheerful and had many interesting things to tell us. The teachers and other adults are proud of you and care for you a lot. They know how to make your school even better and we know that you will continue to help them.

Thank you again for your help and very best wishes for your future lives.

Yours sincerely

George Rayner

Lead Inspector