

St John The Baptist CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120230
Local Authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	313560
Inspection date	16 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Helen Barter

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	445
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Tobin
Headteacher	Jatinder Sembi
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	East Avenue Leicester LE2 1TE
Telephone number	0116 2709932
Fax number	0116 2709932

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Pupils attend this large primary school from across the City of Leicester. Slightly less than half of the pupils are of White British heritage. One in five of the pupils are of Indian heritage and there is a wide range of other minority ethnic groups represented in the school. One in three pupils speaks English as an additional language although few are at the very early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is lower than the national average. Children's attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage 2 class (Reception Year) is broadly average. Around 20% of pupils leave the school at the end of Year 5 and transfer to local selective and private schools. The headteacher joined the school in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. This is because pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they reach standards that are broadly average by the end of Year 6. Not enough attention has been given in the past to ensuring that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve as well as they can right from the time they start school. This has caused standards to decline in the past three years and they are only now beginning to show signs of improvement.

Through rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance, the headteacher has quickly grasped the root cause of the declining standards and has taken decisive action in implementing rigorous procedures for tracking pupils' progress. This is helping teachers to gain a more accurate understanding of pupils' learning needs and to use the information to help them do better. While teaching and learning are satisfactory, they are not consistently good in all classes, resulting in pupils making uneven progress as they move through the school. There is still more to do in all year groups if pupils are going to reach the standards of which they are capable and have more than satisfactory basic skills to help them in their future lives.

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is inadequate. While children settle well and make good progress in their personal, emotional and social development, not enough are meeting or exceeding the goals expected of them in other areas of their learning. This is particularly the case for their writing skills which lag significantly behind the level expected for their age. Although highlighted as an area for improvement at the previous inspection, not enough progress has been made in improving the provision and use of the outdoor area to enrich children's learning.

The school has a strong, established ethos of care and concern for its pupils and this is seen in their good personal development and well-being. Pupils enjoy school and attend well. They have good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and their good behaviour and smiling faces makes the school a happy place to be for everyone. Good quality care, guidance and support and positive relationships with adults ensure that pupils feel safe, secure and confident. The school provides a good quality curriculum which is very well enriched with a wide range of additional activities in music, art and sport and greatly appreciated by parents and pupils alike.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher has a strong commitment to helping pupils perform to the best of their ability. In the new senior leadership team, staff are developing their monitoring and evaluation skills and improving their accountability and responsibility for the school's performance. This responsibility has yet to be accepted and developed amongst all levels of leadership and management. Accurate self-evaluation has led to a school development plan which is sharply focused on the most important priorities for taking the school forward. Accurate information about pupils' performance is helping the governing body to have a better understanding of how well the school is doing. There is good capacity to build on these processes and, with staff, governors and parents working together, to bring about further improvement. 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.

What the school should do to improve further

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- Improve the provision for children in the Foundation Stage.
- Raise the quality of teaching so that learning is consistently good in all classes and enables pupils to make the best progress possible.
- Develop a shared responsibility amongst all levels of leadership and management, including governors, to work together to improve the school's performance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

As pupils move through the school, they make satisfactory, if uneven, progress and achieve satisfactorily overall. Foundation Stage children make good progress in their mathematical and physical skills and develop well personally, but their creative skills are underdeveloped and not enough meet or exceed the early learning goals for writing. At the end of Year 2, standards are broadly average although writing continues to lag behind reading and mathematics. Standards at the end of Year 6 declined following the previous inspection. Although there was improvement in 2006, with standards in English being above average, those in mathematics declined further. Pupils of all abilities underachieved in the subject and the school failed to meet its targets.

Well planned interventions to support Year 6 pupils at risk of underachieving have enabled them to make good progress this year. While standards remain broadly average, pupils' achievement is beginning to improve, with more pupils working at the higher levels in English and mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and the few who are at an early stage of learning English make satisfactory progress in line with their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good personal development contributes well to the school's atmosphere and is much valued by parents. Pupils' moral and social development is particularly good. 'The school makes you socially confident' and 'It's a place where you have lots of friends and learn to get on with others', are the sorts of things that pupils say. They get on well with others from different backgrounds and value the wide range of cultures in the school. They know that eating well, drinking water, taking part in regular exercise and paying attention to personal hygiene are important factors in leading a safe and healthy lifestyle. Pupils are good members of their school and local community. They help each other with tasks, support younger children at playtime and are keen to help others through their fund raising efforts. The school council are highly committed to seeking other pupils' views and articulately describe how they work together to make improvements, such as developing a bird feeding rota. Pupils are developing into sensible and responsible young people and are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall, but the quality varies between different classes and this limits pupils' achievement beyond a satisfactory level. Throughout, relationships are good between adults and pupils, behaviour is well managed and pupils are encouraged to have positive attitudes to learning. Good quality teaching happens where information about pupils' learning is used effectively to plan work for their different abilities, supporting those who need extra help and

stretching those who are capable of reaching higher standards. Imaginative activities linking subjects together, such as pupils' use of computer animation to recount the life cycle of a frog, engage pupils' interest and help them to learn well. However, these good quality activities are not consistent in all classes. The pace of learning is often too slow because assessments are not sufficiently accurate nor used carefully enough to plan work for pupils' different needs and challenge them to do better. There is insufficient emphasis on developing pupils' learning through challenging questions, opportunities for problem-solving and activities that encourage them to think and learn for themselves.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum makes a considerable contribution to pupils' personal development and is the feature of the school which parents most appreciate. Pupils' lives and enjoyment of school are enriched well by their keen participation in a wide range of additional activities in sport, art, music and drama. There is a full programme that helps pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy, for example through developing cycling proficiency. Visits and visitors considerably enhance the curriculum and help to bring it alive for pupils with first hand experiences. Good use is made of partnerships with other schools, the Church and wider community to broaden pupils' horizons and develop their social and community awareness. The curriculum for Foundation Stage children requires improvement to ensure that they have full entitlement to a range of indoor and outdoor activities that promote all areas of their learning, especially their writing skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are cared for and supported well and describe the school as 'a place where I feel safe'. Procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety and safeguarding their welfare are securely established. In discussion with pupils, they say how much they enjoy school because pupils are helped to behave well, bullying is only occasional and always dealt with and teachers are there to help them. The improved tracking of pupils' progress is starting to help pupils to become more aware of how well they are doing and what their targets for improvement are. While pupils say they are 'encouraged' to do well, there is still some way to go to ensure that pupils of all abilities and needs receive consistent academic guidance, for example through good quality marking of their work, so that they achieve as well as they can. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils were taking their tests and expressed great appreciation that the headteacher had sent them a card encouraging them 'to do your best'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Through good monitoring and accurate self-evaluation, the headteacher has helped the school to analyse its strengths and weaknesses, to see that there has been past underperformance and to understand the need to raise standards. The headteacher and assessment co-ordinator have worked hard to introduce good systems for tracking pupils' progress. Although there is still more to be done to achieve consistency across the school, improvements are already being seen in the quality of teaching in some classes and the improved progress of Year 6 pupils. The senior leadership team understands its responsibility to raise pupils' achievement. Subject

leaders in English and mathematics are developing their roles well in this respect and the leadership of other subjects is beginning to be tackled. Through the leadership of the headteacher, governors are beginning to better understand the school's data and hold it to account for its performance.

Some staff, governors and parents report being unsettled by the change in leadership. A very small minority of parents report a loss in confidence in the leadership of the school. Nevertheless, despite some negative comments about management style and lack of consultation about changes, such as to the school newsletter, the majority of the questionnaires demonstrate good support for the school's work. 'I am extremely happy with the new headteacher who has brought about positive change and really values all the pupils' is a typical example of other comments made.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

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 behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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?	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?	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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
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

18 May 2007

Dear Pupils Inspection of St John the Baptist CofE Primary School, Leicester LE2 1TE

It was a pleasure to meet you all when I came to visit your school recently. Thank you for being so welcoming and friendly and helping me when you talked to me about your school. At the moment, your school is providing you with a satisfactory standard of education. There are some things that are good and there are other things which need to be improved if you are all to do as well as you possibly can. These are the main things I found:

- During your time at school, you make satisfactory progress and reach standards that are broadly average.
- You are growing up to be mature, sensible and confident young people. You behave well and try hard to get on with everyone around you. Well done!
- Teaching is satisfactory. You learn best when you are given interesting activities that are planned at exactly the right level for you and make you think hard.
- All the adults in the school care well for you. You say that you feel safe and happy at school because everyone gets on well together.
- The school makes sure that you get a good range of activities in and out of the classroom. I know how much you enjoy team sports, playing musical instruments and going on visits and your parents think these things are very important too.

Your headteacher and the other staff are working hard to find out what works best in your school and what needs to be improved. To help them, I have asked them to:

- make sure that children in the Foundation Stage are provided with the activities they need, both inside and outside, to help them learn well, especially in writing
- check how well everyone in school is learning and set work which is neither too hard nor too easy but which makes you learn as well as you can in everything you do
- make sure the adults, including the governors, keep checking on how well the school is doing so that they can work together to make your school even better.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Helen Barter Lead inspector