

# St John's Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123065
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314475
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Enid Korn

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	193
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs V Hemming
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs J Forder
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 May 2004
<b>School address</b>	St John's Road Wallingford OX10 9AG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01491 837305
<b>Fax number</b>	01491 837217

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St John's Primary School serves an area of both private housing and social housing in the market town of Wallingford. The uptake of free school meals is below average. Children aged four years start in the Reception class in September. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Around one fifth of the pupils have moderate learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) and this is above the average. No pupils have a statement of special educational need.

## 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. The determined leadership of the headteacher and senior managers has brought about good improvement in achievement over the last four years, since the previous inspection. This has been accomplished by improvements to the quality of teaching and learning, the curriculum and the care, guidance and support that the pupils receive. These changes have been made whilst retaining the headteacher's philosophy of educating the 'whole child'.

Standards are now broadly average and this represents good achievement given pupils' starting points. The trend has been one of gradual improvement in achievement and this accelerated in 2007. School records show all groups of pupils making good progress by year 6. Overall, in 2007, standards were average at the end of Year 6, with above average standards in English. The current Year 6 pupils are well on track to attain broadly average standards overall, from a lower starting point in Year 2. In Key Stage 1, pupils achieve well. Standards in 2007 improved significantly to be above average by the end of Year 2, particularly in mathematics.

There is good provision for personal, social and health education. This, together with good relationships between adults and pupils are significant factors that contribute towards the pupils' good personal development. Pupils mainly treat each other with respect and willingly respond to the many opportunities to accept responsibility. Outstanding links with the local community expand pupils' understanding of a healthy lifestyle. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. They feel very happy, safe and secure and most are confident learners.

Pupils achieve well because teaching and learning are consistently good. Leadership has focused on teachers' rigorous use of assessment, ensuring that lessons are well planned with support for all ability groups. Pupils with learning difficulties benefit from the good support of teaching assistants, working in small groups. Activities are interesting but at times too directed by teachers. This limits the opportunities for pupils to work independently and to use their initiative. Pupils reflect well upon their learning at the end of lessons. They enjoy reviewing each other's work and say that they would welcome more of these opportunities.

The curriculum is good. Effective changes are helping to raise achievement and promote pupils' enjoyment. The Year 1 curriculum now provides good continuity from Reception. In mathematics and science, there is increased emphasis upon investigations but there remain missed opportunities. The numerous school clubs provide some outstanding enrichment activities, such as 'pond dipping'. These promote a healthy lifestyle and extend pupils' interests and experiences.

Care, guidance and support are good. Pastoral care is outstanding. Pupils have targets that guide their learning well. The marking is now informative, making clear to the pupils what they need to do to improve. These factors contribute well to pupils' achievement and enjoyment of their learning.

Leadership has focused on using assessment and tracking information more rigorously. The school's self evaluation procedures are effective at identifying the pupils who are not making expected rates of progress, enabling support to be provided quickly. Leaders have appropriately identified the need for the teaching of phonics and reading to be organised into small ability groups. The school is starting to reap the benefits of these actions; achievement in English has improved. The school recognises that the next step in self-evaluation is to use assessment information to help staff and governors have a clearer view of the impact of the school's work and from this, to develop a more detailed strategic view for the school's future development.

Governors contribute effectively, forging good links with the parents, and parental support is strong. The school's capacity for further improvement is good.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children make a good start to their learning in the Foundation Stage and this helps them to settle quickly and happily into school life. They enter with abilities below those expected for their age in literacy and numeracy skills. They make good progress and achieve well. This is because within a caring and supportive environment they receive good teaching. Assessment information is used well to provide work that is carefully matched to their individual learning needs. More opportunities for children to select their own activities would further enhance their learning. The curriculum is well planned, frequently around a well known story and this increases children's enjoyment of their learning. Leadership is good, and there is a particularly smooth transition into Year 1. The use of assessment data to analyse trends is at an early stage of development.

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

- Continue to raise standards by providing pupils with more opportunities to use their initiative and develop independence in their learning.
- Secure the recent improvements to the school by sharpening procedures for future strategic planning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

When children enter Year 1, most have social and personal skills above those expected for their age and with abilities appropriate for their age in literacy and numeracy skills. Last year, pupils in Year 6 achieved well, attaining average standards. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) varies from year to year and this is reflected in the 2007 standards at the end of Year 6. In 2007, the highest attainment was in English, reflecting the school's recent and successful focus on writing. Current Year 6 pupils are meeting their challenging targets, are achieving well and are on course to attain broadly average standards overall. Pupils with identified LDD are making good progress towards their specific targets. By the end of Year 2, in 2007, standards were above average, particularly in mathematics. The current Year 2 is also on track to reach above average standards. This represents good achievement from when they entered Year 1.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils attend very regularly. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Most, but not all are confident, independent learners. Pupils behave well and most respect and support each other well. There is an exceptionally strong sense of community and pupils are very proud of their school. For example, pupils take extra responsibilities by joining the school council and the Eco group so they can make a real difference to their community. They grow their own organic vegetables and the school's work on re-cycling and reducing the use of plastic bags is on display in the town centre. The school's success in developing sound levels of literacy and numeracy by the end of Year 6 prepares pupils satisfactorily for later life. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and staying safe.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teachers use assessment information well to plan work for pupils of different abilities and to identify those requiring additional support. Lessons are carefully structured so that teachers and their assistants can work with small groups and individuals, helping them to achieve well. Lessons are made interesting and pupils enjoy their learning. For example, younger pupils are thrilled to discover their key words buried in the outdoor sandpit. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to reflect upon their learning and older pupils use mature self-assessment techniques. However, learning for pupils is, on occasions, too teacher-led. More opportunities are needed for pupils to utilise their capabilities for independent learning. Pupils' comments underline this. As one girl stated, 'This would give us an opportunity to find out what we really want to know'.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school's good curriculum successfully promotes the pupils' all-round development and their enjoyment of school. Tasks and activities build well on previous work, and provide good levels of challenge for all groups. This is a significant factor contributing towards the school's improving profile of achievement. Planned opportunities for pupils to develop as independent learners and to use their initiative would enhance this further. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. The increase in the use of computers to support learning is appreciated by pupils, who say it is 'really helpful', challenging and enjoyable. In the newly designed curriculum for Year 1, subjects are linked together well; for example pupils develop their numeracy, art and scientific skills within the context of a florist's shop.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The care provided for pupils is outstanding. Pupils know who they can turn to for help and support. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities or identified as vulnerable are very well cared for and there are very good links with outside agencies to provide additional support and guidance. Academic guidance is good. Good use of target setting is helping pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work. Some of the older pupils would like even more opportunities to self-assess. They believe this would help them become even more analytical about their own performance.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 2

The headteacher, ably assisted by the senior managers, has successfully led the drive for a rise in achievement. The effect can be seen in the improved procedures for tracking the progress of all pupils in English and mathematics. This data is analysed well and guides future development as well as aiding pupils. However, the tracking of cohorts and groups of pupils within them is not analysed sufficiently rigorously. Better evaluation would enable leaders to identify trends more quickly and allow the planning of more sharply focused targets for future

development. There is good distribution of responsibilities; for example, the process of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning is shared amongst the staff. Governors fulfil their statutory duties and support the school well.

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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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	3

### 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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
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	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**

09 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's Primary School, Wallingford, OX10 9AG

The inspectors were very pleased to visit your school. The school provides you with a good education.

Thank you for making us feel welcome and we really enjoyed talking to you and visiting your lessons during the two days.

You all work hard with your teachers and we agree with the many parents who say that your school is good and that you are very well looked after.

We were impressed by the many clubs and other activities that you have. We enjoyed your good playing of recorders in assembly and your 'walk to school' breakfast. You are keen recyclers and we have noticed your commitment to the local community. We like your campaign for making Wallingford a 'supermarket plastic-bag free' zone. We also noticed how much you all enjoy your school. Your teachers make the lessons interesting for you and plan work that is well-matched to your individual needs and abilities.

We have asked the teachers to give you more opportunities to work independently. We also think that your teachers need to make sure that you continue to do well. We are asking them to do this by looking more carefully at how well you are doing and to use this information to plan for the future.

You can all help by making sure that you continue to work as hard as you can.

Well done, and I wish you all the very best.

Yours sincerely

Enid Korn

Lead Inspector