

St John's CofE School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126367
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	315520
Inspection date	17 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Susan Orpin

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	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shiela Wurr
Headteacher	S Humphries
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2004
School address	Boreham Road Warminster BA12 9JY
Telephone number	01985 213446
Fax number	01985 216053

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St John's is a small primary school where pupils are mainly White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils arriving and leaving before Year 6 is high.

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 Primary School provides its pupils with a good standard of education and is an improving school. Pupils are confident, enjoy learning and care for each other well. Achievement is good, and has improved very well in recent years, especially in Years 4 to 6, so standards in Year 6 are above average. Provision is good in the Foundation Stage. Standards on entry are below those expected for their age and children learn well. Progress through Years 1 and 2 is more variable and standards remain below average by the end of Year 2. Throughout the school, pupils' reading is better than their writing, although recent developments have resulted in improved progress in writing.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. They are enthusiastic and have positive attitudes to school, but attendance is only satisfactory because some families can only take holidays during term-time. Pupils know how to stay healthy and safe, readily expressing their opinions and undertaking responsibilities within school. They behave well and work together well as a team, making a good contribution to the local community, especially through fund raising. In better lessons, pupils are able to demonstrate independence in learning, but in other lessons, they are too reliant on teachers.

Teaching and learning are good. Relationships are good and teachers provide good encouragement so pupils want to learn. Adults provide a strong model of teamwork and many have a passion for learning that contributes to pupils' enthusiasm. However, some teachers use a narrower variety of approaches and the pace of their lessons is slower so pupils do not progress as well as those in better lessons. Teachers' assessment procedures and records are good and used effectively, although there is less consistency in the way that pupils are informed about how they can improve and how to become involved in discussing their targets.

The curriculum is good and developments in writing have made a difference to pupils' achievement. They benefit from outstanding enrichment, through numerous trips, visitors and clubs after school. Although planned, there is not yet a comprehensive approach to making links between subjects throughout the curriculum. The pastoral support for pupils is a strength of the school and has had a notable impact on their personal development and well-being. Academic guidance is good, but is more effective in some classes than in others.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides a clear lead on developing the positive culture in the school and a very constructive partnership with parents. There is a strong team of middle managers. They are enthusiastic, deeply committed and are making a difference in improving the school. Monitoring is rigorous and comprehensive and there is clear evidence of the impact of the actions taken. However, middle managers do not influence teaching sufficiently to ensure that all lessons are good. School targets are accurately based on pupils' achievement, with a suitable level of challenge. The governance of the school is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's standards are below those expected for their age when they start school. Their skills in personal and social development are close to those expected for their age. Children make good progress in the Reception class, so that by the time they join Year 1, most are achieving

the goals expected across most areas of learning. Children enjoy school because they feel secure and successful. Teaching is good and planned well. It ensures that all children's differing needs are met across most areas of the curriculum and that they are able to develop some independence. Leadership and management are good, with a clear understanding of how to improve further. Opportunities for improving children's physical development are more limited but there are plans to develop the outside play area.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching and learning by developing a wide variety of opportunities in all lessons and making the pace and level of work consistently challenging.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Over recent years, standards by the end of Year 2 have been consistently below average with variable progress through Years 1 and 2. However, the better achievement in the Reception class and Year 1 is now providing a good foundation for improvement further up the school. Progress accelerates as pupils move through Years 3 to 6 and achievement is good. Consequently, standards are above average. In recent years, standards in Year 6 have improved well in English, mathematics and science. Throughout the school, standards in writing are lower than reading. However, the achievement in writing matches the good achievement in other subjects, given that pupils began with lower starting points. This is because the recently introduced story-making project has improved the teaching of writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy learning. Despite their positive attitudes towards school, their attendance is only average because some families can only take holidays during term-time. Pupils' awareness of healthy eating and the need for exercise is good. They eagerly take part in physical activities in lessons, at playtimes and in after school activities and understand how important it is to improve their fitness.

Pupils' behaviour is good and they work and play together extremely well. Relationships and teamwork are a strength of the school. Around the school and in lessons, pupils are very concerned for the safety and welfare of others and themselves. They make a good contribution to the school community, for example, older pupils help younger children complete questionnaires for school surveys. Also to the wider community, for example, through fund raising for the local Disabled Children's Riding Fund. In better lessons, pupils are able to develop independence in learning, for example, by contributing to discussion about their targets. However, in other lessons, there is too much reliance on the teacher. Pupils' ability to work well in teams and their good progress in literacy and numeracy mean that pupils are well prepared for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In the Reception class, children are given specific tasks that meet their differing needs well. Consequently, they make good progress and develop positive and enquiring attitudes to learning. Throughout the school, teachers are encouraging, and relationships are a positive feature. Adults work together well. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' progress, working effectively with individuals or groups. A number of teachers have a passion for learning that is infectious and pupils find the work irresistible. They use different approaches that fire the enthusiasm of pupils in a variety of ways and lessons move at a brisk pace so pupils have no time to become distracted. However, a small proportion of teaching is not as good as this. When this happens, teachers do not use such a wide repertoire of approaches and at times, the pace of the lesson and pupils' progress slow. These lessons also give less opportunity for independence so pupils tend to think less for themselves. Pupil assessment is good and recorded well. Most pupils are well informed about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve through regular marking and discussion with teachers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is planned well. The new story-making project has already improved achievement in writing through a more stimulating approach that engages pupils well. The programme of personal, social and health education is effective and has improved pupils' self-confidence and teamwork. Links between subjects are made wherever possible, making topics, such as the Vikings, more interesting. However, although planned, there is not yet a whole school approach to making links between subjects throughout the curriculum. A wide range of group or individual activities is monitored carefully, making sure that pupils' differing needs are met. The curriculum is enriched by an outstanding range of after school clubs and activities such as dance, art, athletics and sewing. There are also frequent trips and visitors to the school, such as a trip to a synagogue, interviews with Sikhs and a residential trip. There are effective links with local organisations, such the local secondary school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is a very caring community where pupils feel very safe and secure. They know who to go to if they have any worries. As one pupil said, 'There are lots of people to look after you.' Adults provide good examples of enthusiasm and teamwork. Procedures to ensure pupils' safety are robust and safety checks are regular. Close links with parents help children settle quickly into the Reception class and Year 6 pupils are well prepared for secondary education. The procedures for helping individuals joining and leaving the school at different times are particularly well developed, with individualised support where needed. The pastoral care of pupils is a strength of the school and their academic guidance is good. Most pupils know their targets and many are involved in discussing them, although this is more effective in some classes than in others. The school does all it can to continue to improve attendance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides clear vision, successfully developing the positive culture of the school. Adults and pupils feel well supported and valued. Partnership with parents is good and the questionnaires demonstrate parents' overwhelming support for the school. There is a strong team of middle managers who are enthusiastic and deeply committed to the school. Together with the headteacher, they have a secure and accurate grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and a passion to continue to improve the school. The effects of school actions are evident in the good improvement in Year 6 over recent years. The school's use of targets is good, based on a secure analysis of pupils' attainment and incorporating suitable levels of challenge. The monitoring undertaken is rigorous and comprehensive, so there is a clear and up-to-date picture of all pupils' progress. Teaching is regularly monitored and staff are provided with useful feedback. Although middle managers are involved in supporting and helping staff, they do not yet influence teaching sufficiently to ensure that all lessons are good. The work of the governors is good. They are highly committed, supportive and very well informed. The chair has a secure grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and as group, governors provide a good level of challenge. The school's capacity to improve is good.

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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 ¹ reached by learners	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

18 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's CE Primary School, Warminster, BA12 9JY

Thank you for making us so welcome in your school. We enjoyed talking to you and were very impressed by how friendly, polite and confident you are. Your school is giving you a good standard of education.

These are some of the good points we found out about your school.

- You make good progress, especially as you get older, and reach standards that are better than average.
- You enjoy school, behave well and take good care of yourselves and others.
- You are taught well, especially in some classes where your teachers are inspirational.
- Teachers assess your work well and then make sure lessons help you learn, and most of you know how you can improve your work.
- Your writing has improved well because of the story-making project.
- Adults at the school take good care of you.
- The school is led well, adults are enthusiastic and know what to do to make the right improvements.

To help your school get even better, we have asked your teachers to:

- improve teaching so that it is good in all lessons by making sure there are many different tasks and that work is never too easy for you.

Your attendance is satisfactory, but you can make it even better by making sure you do not miss school unnecessarily.

Yours sincerely

Sue Orpin Lead inspector

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Lead inspector