

St John's Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130870
Local Authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	315636
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Ruth Westbrook

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vivien Mann
Headteacher	Jan Hamilton
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2004
School address	Mortimer Road Kenilworth CV8 1FS
Telephone number	01926 854450
Fax number	01926 857981

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a middle-sized primary school with a nursery class that offers full-time and part-time places. Some year groups include many more boys than girls. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average and very few are at an early stage of learning English. The school has received the National Healthy School Award, Activemark and the Eco Schools Award. The school is part of a primary specialism pilot, with modern foreign languages as its chosen specialism. The school manages a children's centre, which opened on the site in June 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school has improved considerably since its last inspection. The headteacher has very effectively shared her vision of establishing a happy school where pupils can learn successfully and achieve. Together with a dedicated staff, she has created an extremely positive environment where pupils' considerable enjoyment of their education is evident. One pupil summed up the ethos as this 'caring, sharing school'.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's work. They welcome the 'open door' policy, and 'the lovely welcoming atmosphere'. Large numbers come in to school in the morning to visit assembly or to help their child make a good start to the day. Parents value the good care, guidance and support that the school provides. One parent's view of this sums up those of others: 'I am confident that my children receive a good education and are well cared for during their time there and most importantly that they are happy.' The school's tracking of pupils' progress is very thorough. As a result, staff identify lack of progress swiftly and put additional support in place. Challenging targets are set at whole-school level, and this year the school has developed systems for sharing personal targets with pupils. This has raised expectations as pupils are expected to make at least good progress. The evidence from the inspection indicates that the use of challenging targets is contributing significantly to raising achievement across the school.

The good curriculum offers a wide range of enrichment opportunities that contribute to the outstanding personal development and well-being of pupils. Pupils of all ages enjoy school immensely and take part with huge enthusiasm in all that it has to offer. They attend well and participation rates in out-of-school activities are high and contribute to pupils' positive attitudes. Pupils have an excellent understanding of a healthy lifestyle. They choose to be extremely active at break times and are well equipped to be so. As one pupil said, 'There's so much to do.' This helps them build excellent relationships with each other through their play together and contributes towards the good behaviour around school. Pupils talk proudly of their achievements through, for example, the Children's University. A group who gained an award from Severn Trent for their water project are 'proud that they got it for the school'. As a result, pupils develop an excellent sense of community involvement and good social skills.

The school's leaders have focused on raising standards by improving the quality of teaching and learning. These are now good overall, although there are still some inconsistencies in the quality and consistency of marking. Standards by the end of Year 6 have improved to above average. The achievement of pupils is good from their broadly average starting points. Standards in all subjects have improved but most markedly in writing. There is usually a careful match between learning tasks and a pupil's needs but occasionally work set for more able pupils is not challenging enough and, in these situations, expectations of them are not as high as they could be. The school has maintained the good provision in the Foundation Stage since the last inspection. Most pupils enter Year 1 with skills and abilities at the expected level for their age.

School leaders and governors have established effective partnerships with parents, the local community and other external partners to increase the resources and facilities the school has to offer. This has improved the reputation of the school in the local community.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is good and it is outstanding in the area of personal development. Children enter the school with a wide range of abilities but the profile is broadly average overall. Home visits and a staged induction help children to settle quickly into well-thought-out routines. They respond well to adults and the encouragement to help each other. Children soon develop a very strong sense of belonging to the school through the many opportunities to join older pupils at playtime and lunch. Children respond very well to encouragement to be independent, take responsibility and use good manners. The quality of teaching and learning is good and this ensures that children make good progress in all areas of learning. Sessions are organised well, ensuring a stimulating, purposeful learning environment, and a good mix of adult-led and child-chosen activities. There is careful planning of the curriculum that is strengthened by imaginative use of the outdoor area. During the inspection, children used this creatively to travel the world and explore hot places and cold places. They enjoyed the opportunities to write words and numbers in the travel agents when buying their tickets. Regular and thorough assessment ensures that staff match work accurately to individual needs, and parents receive regular information on their child's progress. The headteacher leads the Foundation Stage effectively.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers' expectations and the work they set fully challenge the more able pupils of all ages.
- Improve the quality and consistency of marking by sharing good practice more widely.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

There has been a major improvement in standards since the previous inspection. They are now above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In writing, highlighted as a weakness in the last inspection, teacher training, effective strategies and improved planning have raised standards in all years significantly.

Boys and girls both achieve well. This was not the case in the last inspection. The school closely monitors the achievement of girls and employs strategies well to promote their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because staff plan well for individual needs and teaching assistants and resources are well used. The very small number of pupils at an early stage of learning English make good progress because of effective additional support. The most able pupils attain above average standards and make good progress. However, there are a few occasions when their work does not fully challenge them and they achieve less than they might.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils carry out a range of tasks independently, such as courtyard custodians and librarians. They act responsibly without supervision and, very willingly, make an extremely valuable contribution to the school community. School council members have designed and facilitated the building of a playground shelter that is much appreciated by all. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives through a range of projects like organising a stall at the summer fete and

running a stationery shop where they practise their French. Most pupils behave exceptionally well. A small minority are challenging in their behaviour but the school manages these pupils very well. Pupils feel extremely safe and have an excellent understanding of how to treat each other, including those from other backgrounds and cultures. Consequently, bullying and racist incidents are very rare, and pupils feel confident in adults' ability to help them should they need it. Pupils respond well to the opportunities for reflection in assemblies and circle time. Their thoughts contained in many pieces of writing on display reflect their outstanding moral and spiritual development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in lessons and over time because teaching is good and positive relationships between pupils and adults promote good learning. Teachers use a wide range of strategies to engage pupils actively. Lessons are often challenging, lively and fun. In some cases, however, learning lacks focus and challenge for more able pupils and the pace for them is slow. Teachers' planning is good and demonstrates good subject knowledge. The planning for cross-curricular projects is particularly effective. Teachers assess and track pupils' progress carefully and regularly. Because the system for setting targets is not yet embedded, there are some inconsistencies in the regularity of review and in the links between personal targets and marking. The quality of marking varies. It is more effective in literacy than in numeracy. In the best practice, marking is clear on what a pupil has done well and gives targets for improvement. Elsewhere, there is no clear indication of what a pupil needs to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is reviewed regularly to make sure it meets the needs of pupils well. Well-planned projects that cover many subjects have increased its diversity and the interest and enjoyment of pupils. The key skills of literacy and numeracy are not yet fully integrated into project work but plans are in place to develop these further. The provision for information and communication technology has improved over the last few years and pupils from all years are able to use a wide range of skills to support their learning. The recent development as part of a cluster of specialist primary language schools is providing further enrichment. The introduction of French this year has been successful and is used with considerable enthusiasm by pupils and teachers throughout the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All adults in the school know pupils well and, as a result, the pupils receive excellent personal care and guidance, which underpin their outstanding personal development. There are secure procedures to keep pupils safe and healthy and they are reviewed regularly. Support and provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and vulnerable pupils are extremely effective. The school works very closely with parents and external agencies to ensure that needs are met. There are very effective systems in place to track pupils' progress towards their targets. This leads to additional support when they are not being met. It does not always lead to additional challenge being given quickly enough to the small number of pupils who are

comfortably meeting their targets. There are good links to help parents and pupils to transfer to secondary school and at times of transition within school. The school's on-site 'out of school' club provides good childcare before and after school. Its staff are well trained and parents appreciate the levels of care shown.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and her senior staff work purposefully with governors to improve standards and the school environment. Development plans are clear and the recent involvement of all staff in subject coordination and working groups contributes to a strong sense of commitment. This is providing greater opportunities to share good practice. Effective performance management systems contribute towards improving the more consistent quality of teaching and learning. The governing body is well informed and their active involvement in subject reviews is helping them to make an effective contribution to the school's work, both in support and in holding the school to account for its performance. The school's leadership has a clear view of strengths and weaknesses based on regular monitoring of its work. This effective evaluation of its work and good record of improvement indicate the good capacity of the school to improve further.

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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?	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	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	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

19 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's Primary School, Kenilworth CV8 1FS

Thank you for welcoming us so warmly on our recent visit to your school. I would like to share with you what we learned about your school.

It is a good school that has improved a great deal since its last inspection. You make good progress in your work and reach standards that are above average. The quality of your creative writing is particularly high and we enjoyed reading it. Your headteacher and her colleagues organise the school very well. This is the main reason why it is improving so quickly.

There are some outstanding aspects to the school, including the way that you develop personally. You enjoy school immensely. You attend well and take part in all that the school offers. You make a valuable contribution to the school community in all sorts of ways as librarians, courtyard custodians and school council members. We were impressed by the many ways you choose to keep healthy. You are all very active at break times. You play together very well.

All staff care for you very well, and you care for each other. As a result, you feel very safe in school and feel that there is always someone to help if you need it. Your teachers make lessons interesting and this adds to your enjoyment of school. Many additional activities stimulate your interest, like the children's university and the opportunity to learn French. It is good to see how enthusiastically you take part in this.

Most of you are aiming high but some of you said you could manage more of a challenge in some activities so we are asking teachers to make sure this happens. We are also asking them to give you more information when marking your work on what you need to do to improve. We hope you will respond to these challenges and this information with your usual enthusiasm and commitment so that the school can improve even further.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Westbrook Lead inspector



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Ruth Westbrook
Lead inspector