

St John the Evangelist CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133532
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	316143
Inspection dates	24–25 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Enid Korn

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	316
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs L Bostock
Headteacher	Mrs P Price
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2004
School address	Bluebell Way Carterton OX18 1JF
Telephone number	01993 843124
Fax number	01993 845546

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Serving the new Shilton Park estate at Carterton, this larger than average school draws around one fifth of its pupils from the RAF base, Brize Norton. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school during the course of the year is above that usually found. Most pupils are of White British heritage. Others come from a variety of backgrounds, a small proportion of whom are at the early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is well above the average but the proportion of pupils with lesser identified learning difficulties and disabilities is lower than usual and many of these pupils have speech, language and communication disorders. The school is in a period of rapid expansion into a two-form entry school, and numbers are more than double those found at the last inspection. The head teacher joined the school eight weeks ago.

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 the Evangelist is a good school and most pupils achieve well. This is despite the disruption to learning that a high turnover of pupils can cause. The school's many awards and the updated curriculum illustrate good progress since the last inspection.

The new headteacher has ensured that the school continues to function smoothly. She is wisely familiarising herself with all aspects of the school's work and holding extensive consultations with parents prior to formulating the new development plan. The school's many strengths have been identified together with relevant areas for development. Following recent assessments the school has introduced focused intervention activities to raise achievement. The headteacher recognises that systems for tracking the progress of the pupils and evaluating the provision by its impact on standards need to be strengthened as the school grows.

A third of the pupils in the current Year 6 have identified learning difficulties, yet the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards is similar to that found nationally. This represents good achievement. In 2007, standards were also about average. In both years, the percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels is below the national figure.

Pupils' personal development is good. The underlying Christian ethos, expressed as care and consideration for others, underpins pupils' good personal development. There is a sense of community amongst pupils who welcome newcomers, building positive relationships. 'Everyone is kind to each other and staff are friendly', said one pupil. New pupils integrate quickly, aided by effective systems of support. Most pupils have positive feelings towards their education and by Year 6 are confident and articulate learners. Pupils have a very good knowledge of how to stay safe and they recognise potential dangers in the home and when on trips. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and have pride in their activities for the community, such as becoming an 'Eco-Warrior' and planting trees.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers make good use of resources to maintain pupils' interest. The well-planned deployment of teaching assistants to work with small groups contributes to the pupils' confidence and learning. Good quality pastoral care contributes to new pupils settling quickly. They are encouraged to reflect on past experiences and this enables others to know them quickly. Pupils are not sufficiently familiar with their personal targets. Teachers often miss opportunities to discuss these or to use them to extend pupils learning.

The school has recently updated its curriculum. The high level of interest planned into it helps new pupils to settle quickly and contributes to pupils' motivation and willingness to learn. Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are integrated well. The curriculum incorporates many good opportunities for developing social skills. The diverse range of experiences provides many pupils with the chance to experience success. Opportunities for research are provided in some subjects. In science and mathematics the curriculum lacks the depth to fully challenge and extend the older, high ability pupils.

Pupils feel secure and valued. Academic guidance is less well developed. On occasions, teachers miss opportunities when marking to make clear to pupils what they need to do to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The youngest children benefit from the rich opportunities in the Nursery which inspire them to learn. The caring and nurturing ethos supports their personal development very effectively. Leadership and management are good. Induction procedures enable children to settle quickly and thoughtful assessments and observations ensure the curriculum is adapted to meet their needs. Children in Reception progress well through the good teaching they receive. Teamwork is good and expectations are consistently high. All staff model language and behaviour effectively and children are eager, happy learners, who trust and respect the adults who care for them. The environment provides a good variety of practical learning opportunities with good links between indoor and outdoor activities. Outdoor learning is less well developed in the Reception class than in the Nursery and this is rightly identified as an area for further development. Children have a broad range of abilities, with many joining with below the expected levels of skills and knowledge. Through consistently effective provision, the children make good progress across all the areas of learning. The majority meet or exceed the goals expected by the end of Reception.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the proportion of pupils who reach the higher level in mathematics and science by providing more challenge for the more able learners.
- Increase the rigour by which the progress of all pupils is monitored and analysed so that the impact of the provision can be more accurately evaluated.
- Involve the pupils more in setting personal targets and ensure that marking consistently enables them to know how to improve in order to meet them.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. School analysis shows that over this year, throughout the school, most pupils have made expected or better progress. Only six pupils in Year 6 were in the school at the end of Key Stage 1 and the school rightly recognises that a judgement on achievement from this starting point is unreliable. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and the few pupils who are newly learning English are well supported, carefully monitored and make good progress. High ability pupils do not consistently achieve as well as they should because too often the work they do lacks sufficient challenge. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are average this year, as they were last year. However, in reading, the proportion of Year 2 pupils reaching the higher level has improved.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are happy and enjoy their schooling due to the good relationships they have with adults and the interesting experiences within the planned curriculum. These positive attitudes are reflected by their good attendance. This, together with their good behaviour helps them to achieve well. Pupils say that they feel safe in school, that there is no bullying and that any incidents are speedily dealt with. They have a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. Many walk or cycle to school, but not all have fully adopted the school's messages on healthy eating. Pupils' knowledge of how to stay safe is particularly strong. For example,

younger pupils recognise the potential dangers of electricity and older ones of the internet. Pupils accept responsibilities well for the school and wider community. The school council has carefully considered how to invest its money for the good of all. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their ability to collaborate purposefully and to express themselves confidently prepares them well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have good class management skills and they maintain a calm and purposeful working environment. Lessons are made interesting and the vast majority of pupils are well motivated and attentive. Classroom assistants are deployed well to support pupils' learning. Adults treat all pupils with respect, developing good relationships and they respond well to their pupils' comments. This encourages pupils to grow in confidence as learners. Teachers have good questioning skills and use resources well. In some classes, ICT is used particularly well, such as when Year 2 pupils observed woodlice magnified onto the screen and classified them according to observable features. Lessons are carefully planned, with three levels of challenge. The higher ability pupils are frequently expected to complete some of the simpler tasks, thereby limiting their opportunities to concentrate on the most challenging work. Teachers' marking does not explicitly reflect pupils' targets or their progress towards them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum meets the needs of the pupils well, particularly through its effective integration of new pupils. All age groups have a broad range of exciting opportunities incorporating cultural development and ecology. The provision for those with learning difficulties and disabilities is specific to their needs, such as language activities for pupils with communication difficulties. Planning is effective, enabling progression in skills from one stage of learning to the next. The curriculum does not challenge the older, more able pupils sufficiently, especially in science and mathematics. Parents value workshops that enable them to help their children at home. Local resources are used effectively and there is a very good range of opportunities to enhance learning through clubs, visits, sports, and art activities. The school is proud of its involvement in a European link, the Comenius project, and achievements in gaining the Arts Silvermark, and the Challenge Award.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support for pupils is good. A strength is the strong pastoral support. This helps pupils to settle quickly and contributes to their good personal development and well-being. A nurture group is particularly successful in meeting the needs of new pupils and those identified as being vulnerable or in need of emotional support. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements, and regular health and safety checks ensure the school is secure, clean and well-maintained. Learning difficulties and disabilities are identified early. As a consequence of good management, these pupils are provided with an appropriate level of support and guidance to ensure they achieve well. Good links with a variety of organisations and professionals provide additional support. Academic guidance is less well developed. The information from assessing

and tracking pupils' progress is not used well enough to guide individual pupils' learning. Some pupils are aware of their learning targets, but this practice is inconsistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The new headteacher has a clear vision for leading the school forward. She recognises that the school needs to evaluate more critically the impact of its work on the achievement of pupils. Senior leaders have successfully supported staff development and they contribute to the identification of future priorities. Staff work well as a team to promote curriculum consistency. Subject leaders have a good understanding of their responsibilities. Not enough is done to involve teachers in monitoring more rigorously the rate of progress of their pupils. Governors are knowledgeable and offer strong support. They fulfil their statutory duties, challenge effectively and have a good awareness of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Parents are generally very pleased with the quality of care and their children's progress. The capacity for further improvement 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	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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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

08 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John the Evangelist CofE Primary School, Carterton, OX18 1JF

We were very pleased to visit your school, and found that it provides you with a good education.

Thank you for making us feel welcome. 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 you are very well looked after.

We were impressed by the many clubs and other activities that you have and the exciting things that you do in lessons. We saw tree seedlings that you have planted, and are pleased that so many of you stay healthy by walking or cycling to school. We have noticed your commitment to each other and how you work well together and we think the school council has spent its money well on extra outdoor climbing equipment for everyone to enjoy. We also noticed how much you like your school. Your teachers make the lessons interesting for you and they ask you some good questions.

We have asked the teachers to give some of you harder work in maths and science. We have also asked them to discuss your targets with you, so that you can use these better to help you improve your work. We also think that your teachers need to keep a careful check on how well you are progressing so that they can challenge you to do your best.

You can all help by continuing to work as hard as you can.

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

Yours sincerely

Enid Korn

Lead Inspector