

St John's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102589
Local Authority	Kingston Upon Thames
Inspection number	323661
Inspection date	25 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Jane Chesterfield

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	236
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Martland (interim)
Headteacher	Mrs Janet Tuck (interim)
Date of previous school inspection	5 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Portland Road Kingston Upon Thames KT1 2SG
Telephone number	020 8546 7179
Fax number	020 8549 8612

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors:

- evaluated achievement in Years 1 to 6
- looked at strategies to improve writing and mathematics
- investigated the impact of leaders on the school's performance.

Evidence was gathered from performance data and other documentation; discussions with senior staff, pupils and governors; sampling of lessons and of pupils' work; observations of children and adults around the school, and parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is average-sized, and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is just above average and the number learning English as an additional language is in line with the national picture. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is just below average. These difficulties are mainly specific learning difficulties. The number of pupils with statements of special educational needs is below average. The school has gained a number of awards, including the Healthy School and the ECO awards. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is offered in the Nursery and Reception classes. The interim headteacher has been at the school since October 2008 and will take over the post permanently in April 2009. The interim chair of governors took up his role in January 2009.

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 Church of England Primary is a good school where pupils achieve well and get a good start to their education. It is very highly regarded by pupils and parents alike. One parent commented, 'St John's is a lovely school and all the children seem to be very happy.' Another said that 'St John's has a great community spirit', while a third felt that 'St John's is more akin to a local village school than one in outer London'.

Pupils make good progress across the school. They enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with a level of skills which is broadly in line with expectations for their age. Thanks to good improvement in the Early Years Foundation Stage provision since the last inspection, they make excellent progress during their time in Nursery and Reception and now enter Year 1 with skills which are well above expectations. They make good progress in Years 1 and 2, moving into Year 3 with standards which are consistently well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 to 6. By the time they leave the school, pupils in recent years have consistently reached above-average standards in English, mathematics and science. This represents good achievement for these cohorts from their starting points. Achievement is improving throughout the school. Last year's end of Year 6 test results, for example, showed good improvement in science and in writing, because of an increased focus on developing skills and making the curriculum more interesting and relevant to all learners. The school has identified that not all of the more-able pupils are achieving as well as they might in mathematics in Years 3 to 6, and so is providing targeted groups of pupils with additional support to help them reach their potential. There are encouraging signs of improvement in Year 6 this year, which the school now wants to consolidate in Years 3, 4 and 5.

Pupils achieve well because they are taught well. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and are skilled in matching their teaching styles and methods to the needs of the class. They use resources well to make lessons lively and interesting, and offer lots of pace and challenge to motivate pupils. Teachers evaluate pupils' learning carefully to decide on the next steps to be followed. Pupils also benefit from an outstanding curriculum which makes learning memorable and helps them develop as independent learners and well-rounded individuals. Literacy is enlivened through activities such as balloon debates and plenty of drama activities, both of which are thoroughly enjoyed by pupils. 'I think drama is the most exciting lesson that we have', declared one. Numeracy is made more relevant through practical applications, such as measuring the football pitch to learn about perimeter in Year 4, and through links across the curriculum, for example using computers to plot coordinates in Year 6. Good use is also made of computers for research, for example in a Year 2 science lesson where pupils were finding out about animals' habitats. The school adds extra dimensions to its everyday curriculum to maximise pupils' experiences. Pupils have the chance to learn a brass instrument in their music lessons, for example, and to try their hand at sculpture or origami in their art lessons. The school's current International Week has provided outstanding opportunities for creative and imaginative work, and has contributed greatly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have enjoyed, for example, French conversation workshops, South African mask-making, Greek, Russian and Spanish dance, and talks about life in Japan. The range and take-up of clubs is high, from chess to cheerleading. Pupils enthuse about the school, and those interviewed could not think of anything that it could do better.

Pupils feel very secure and confident at school thanks to the outstanding care, guidance and support available to them. Pastoral care is very well organised and all safeguarding requirements are fully met. Daily routines run smoothly. Pupils say they feel very safe and know what to do if they have any concerns. Support for pupils who have specific learning difficulties or who are learning English as an additional language is well organised, so that they make similar progress to their classmates. Target-setting is very well established, and marking is very helpful to pupils, especially in Years 3 to 6. There are very good examples of teachers developing a dialogue with pupils in their books about how to improve their work. Marking gives pupils clear indications of what to do next to make more progress.

Thanks to the outstanding care, guidance, support and curriculum opportunities, pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. From being alert, attentive and polite in Year 1, they develop into mature, self-motivated and independent learners by the time they reach Year 6. Their behaviour is excellent in class and around the school, and relationships are very strong between pupils of all backgrounds and ages. Many parents commented on how well pupils mix and how well older pupils support younger ones. One said, 'I think this caring attitude stays with them even when they leave St John's.' Pupils are boundlessly enthusiastic about taking on responsibility, acting as school councillors, buddies, peer mediators, team captains, healthy food monitors or recycling monitors. They are happy to give their time and energy to the school and the wider community, for example helping in a nearby school for pupils with severe learning difficulties. They have a very strong awareness of healthy lifestyles, taking part energetically in the many sporting activities available, and eating well. 'I think a healthy lunch means a balanced lunch', said one. Attendance is consistently very high as pupils do not want to miss school. Pupils' excellent social skills and their above-average standards in literacy and numeracy mean that they are very well prepared for their future.

The strengths of the school are down to good-quality leadership and management. The new interim headteacher has made an excellent start in a short space of time, and has been very capably supported by the deputy headteacher as she has settled in. The new headteacher has carried the pupils, parents, staff and governors with her, establishing clear and inclusive processes for self-evaluation and priorities for development. Subject leaders are very keen to develop their roles, as they have not had the chance to play a full part in monitoring their subjects and being accountable for improvements. Governors carry out their roles well, and are happy to develop their involvement with the school further, for example through the new duty governor scheme. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion at local, national and global levels, and plays an important part in the local community. The headteacher, for example, has recently joined the committee of the town's theatre, benefiting not only the school's access to the performing arts, but also helping the theatre to develop its education service. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection, despite recent changes at the top, and has good capacity for future improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision in the Nursery and Reception classes is outstanding in all its aspects, ensuring that children are given an excellent, enjoyable start to their education and a secure basis for their future learning. Activities are fun and cater for the needs of all children. Especially stimulating is the use of real resources such as vegetables in the sand tray, peas in a pod to count and real ice for the toy polar bears and penguins. Activities such as these engage the children very successfully, and encourage them to become eager, independent learners. They make

outstanding progress thanks to the excellent quality of teaching and very positive relationships between children and adults and the excellent use of space both indoors and outdoors. As a result, the great majority enter Year 1 with a level of skills above that expected for their age.

Outstanding attention is given to promoting children's welfare, including very effective induction arrangements and strong partnership with parents. This means that children settle quickly into routines and enjoy school. They are very happy and confident, and are proud of their responsibilities, such as being special helpers. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are outstanding. Thorough and systematic assessment and planning ensure that the educational, social and emotional needs of each child, including the more vulnerable, are catered for in a caring and holistic way.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the achievement of more-able pupils in mathematics in Years 3 to 6.
- Develop the role of subject leaders to improve achievement in their areas.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

20 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's CofE Primary School, Kingston Upon Thames, KT1 2SG

Thank you for being so helpful and friendly when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you and talking to you. We agree with you and your parents that St John's is a good school, and we know that you are very happy to be there. You are doing well in your lessons because your teachers know you well and give you work that is right for you.

There is an outstanding range of exciting activities going on in your school, and we know how much you enjoy all the opportunities offered to you, both in and out of lessons. We were very impressed with your excellent behaviour in class and around the school, and we saw that you all get on together very well indeed. The staff take excellent care of you, and those of you who need extra help are well supported.

The headteacher and her staff run the school well, and want to make it even better in future. We have agreed that they are going to do more to make sure that all of you do as well as you can in mathematics, particularly in Years 3 to 6. You can help by telling your teachers if you find your work too hard or too easy. We have also agreed that some teachers are going to be given extra responsibility for the different subjects that you learn.

Well done to you all and best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Jane Chesterfield

Lead Inspector