

St James' Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107995
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	324684
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Andrew Swallow

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 controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	95
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 Andrews
Headteacher	Mr D Walsh
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hallfield Lane Wetherby West Yorkshire LS22 6JS
Telephone number	01937 583379
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

This is a much smaller than average sized school. All pupils are from a White British background and most live in the local community. Since the last inspection the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has increased significantly and is now well above average. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal has also risen and is now much higher than found nationally. The school has seen significant changes in staffing recently. The school has the National Healthy School standard and Activemark award.

Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided for children of both Nursery and Reception age in a Foundation Unit.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school. The headteacher has successfully tackled the areas for development arising from the last inspection and standards are rising with pupils making good progress across Years 1 to 6. Outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils lies at the heart of the school's work. Pupils show high levels of support and respect for each other and the adults who work with them. They have an excellent understanding of the different faiths and cultures in modern day society. Parents are extremely supportive of all the school's work: 'The staff are approachable and friendly, and show real commitment to all children.' is a typical response.

Children get off to a sound start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They start Nursery with skills that are below those typical for their age and make satisfactory progress so that, by the end of Reception, the vast majority of children are overall working within the Early Learning Goals. Their writing and mathematical skills are not as well developed as their other skills because the quality of resources and range of learning experiences are not as well promoted as they might be.

Overall, pupils' achievement is good throughout Years 1 to 6. Although year groups tend to be small and standards vary year-on-year, standards at the end of Year 2 are generally broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 6 standards in English and mathematics are average and above average in science, this represents good progress from the pupils individual starting points. Standards in mathematics are improving. Well targeted support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities means that they make the same good progress as their peers. Teaching is good overall. Teachers involve pupils actively in their work and make learning fun. Lessons are interesting with lots of opportunities for pupils to find out things for themselves. Marking indicates how well pupils are doing, but does not always confirm the next steps in their learning.

Pupils' personal development is good. They have an excellent understanding of the importance of keeping healthy and take part in a wide range of sporting and extra-curricular activities. They say how much they enjoy school life. Attendance is average and improving. Pupils' developing literacy and numeracy skills and their good understanding of the world of work prepare them well for their future lives. The curriculum is good, with a range of practical experiences, and a variety of enrichment opportunities that widen pupils' understanding about their own community and the lives of people in different countries. Provision for the arts, especially dance, drama and music, is a strength. The quality of care, guidance and support is also good overall. Pastoral care of pupils is of a particularly high quality.

Leadership and management, and governance, are good. Self-evaluation is accurate and has identified the right priorities to improve the school's work. The committed leadership of the headteacher and governors, and strengths of senior staff, are raising achievement and standards. These factors ensure that the school has good capacity for further improvement and that it provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Although there is a wide spread of attainment, most the children enter the Nursery with skills that are below those expected for their age. Overall, they make satisfactory progress in the

Early Years Foundation Stage, so that, by the end of Reception, most children are working within the Early Learning Goals. However, some still experience difficulties in writing and using numbers and overall these remain below expectations. This is because the indoor and outdoor environments are not sufficiently well resourced, and do not afford as stimulating a range of focused learning opportunities as they might. There are too few opportunities to develop children's skills in writing and mathematics. Additionally, outdoor play does not enable children to practise the skills they have learned indoors as well as it should. As a result children's learning is not always as productive and imaginative as it could be. Nevertheless, relationships with adults are good and staff take good care of the children. By the time they reach Reception, many children are developing an understanding of what they are learning and are beginning to take some responsibility for choosing their own activities. Staff participate enthusiastically in the children's work and play. For the most part, they are confident about stepping back, observing, and allowing the children to learn for themselves. Arrangements to assess children's progress are sound. The recently appointed Early Years Foundation Stage leader is gaining an understanding of what is required for children to develop, but is at an early stage of putting into place a programme of work that enables good rates of progression in all of the areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of learning experiences for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that they make better progress, especially in their mathematical and writing skills.
- Ensure teachers' marking indicates consistently what pupils need to do to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards can vary year-on-year due in part to the small numbers in each year group and depending on the different starting points of the individual pupils. Inspection evidence and school data shows that pupils start Year 1 with overall levels of skills and knowledge that are below average. The vast majority reach challenging targets to leave Year 6 with average standards in English and mathematics and above average standards in science. This demonstrates good progress across the school. Following a dip in standards in Key Stage 1 in 2008, standards are now back on track and current standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2 and pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics.

As a result of the school's well targeted support to help individual pupils develop their calculation and problem solving skills, standards in mathematics throughout Key Stage 2 are rising. High attaining pupils are particularly stretched to reach increasingly high levels. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those with other additional needs, are especially well supported by adults. This means that they achieve well and make good progress. Pupils' achievements in dance, drama and music, throughout the school, are particularly strong. As a result pupils develop confidence in their speaking and listening skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are well behaved, have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. They say that their lessons are interesting and that they really like the many opportunities they have to think for themselves and work with each other. They are eager to talk about their responsibilities, such as contributing to whole school productions, managing stalls at the summer

fayre, or taking one of the many roles on the school council. Good relationships are reflected at every level and pupils feel strongly that they are listened to and encouraged to express their views. They say they feel very safe and clearly understand the distinction between right and wrong. Through their links with the local church, fundraising for a number of different charities, including aid for Africa, and their understanding of Indian and other cultures, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Pupils have an excellent appreciation of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and take part in a wide range of sporting activities, both in and after school. They develop good basic skills to support their future economic well-being and a good insight into the world of business through the many enterprise projects they undertake. Pupils' attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. For the most part, lessons are well planned to incorporate interesting activities, with a strong practical element, and frequent opportunities for pupils to discuss ideas and think for themselves. Relationships are very positive and most pupils are ready to learn. Skilful questioning enables teachers to determine how well pupils are learning and whether they require further explanation to make even better progress. In the best lessons, teachers ensure pupils understand exactly what is expected of them. They do this by showing pupils examples of a good piece of work. Throughout the school teachers mark pupils' work regularly and indicate how well they are doing. However, not all are consistent in advising pupils what they need to do next to improve their work. Teaching assistants are deployed very effectively to ensure that all pupils have the best possible opportunity to learn.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school offers a good range of experiences that capture pupils' interests. High emphasis is placed on the arts. Pupils enjoy painting and music and the many opportunities to sing, dance and perform in front of an audience. Teachers make natural links between subjects so that pupils see relevance in their learning and develop key literacy and numeracy skills through a range of experiences and topics. Increasingly, modern technology is used well to support pupils' learning and to make lessons fun. In addition, there are a wide range of sporting activities and many visits to places of interest that enhance pupils' work. Year 5 and 6 pupils talk enthusiastically about their residential experience at Robin Hood's Bay and all enjoy the many themed days and interesting visitors to school. These stimulate pupils' imagination and help to broaden their horizons. However, not all pupils have an opportunity to learn a modern foreign language.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Adults provide outstanding pastoral care for all pupils. This is firmly reflected in the inclusive ethos evident throughout the school. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are far ranging and meet the latest government requirements. Links with external agencies, including social services and the police, are good. Staff are always prepared to go 'the extra mile' to

support the most vulnerable pupils. Parents particularly appreciate the way in which their children are helped to settle quickly into school and prepared for life beyond St James. Pupils talk proudly of their school and say, 'Everybody cares about you.' and 'There's always someone there for you.' Effective partnerships with a range of providers, including educational psychologists, speech and language therapists and a local special school, help those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to gain in confidence and make good progress. The high standard of support is a significant factor in pupils' enjoyment of school. Academic guidance is good. All pupils have targets and most are confident about how well they are doing. However, when teachers mark their work they do not consistently point out for the pupils what it is they need to do next to improve even further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has created a strong culture in which all adults feel they have an essential role to support all pupils to achieve their potential. St James is truly an inclusive school where the self-worth of all pupils is constantly promoted and highly valued. Senior leaders play a significant part in improving achievement and standards. Increasingly refined procedures to monitor pupils' progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science are enabling earlier and more effective intervention to boost performance where required. Self-evaluation is accurate. Arrangements to enhance community cohesion and promote equality are good. Parents talk positively about how well the school reaches out into the local community. Effective links with local schools and services, together with regular theme days involving people from different faiths and countries, ensure pupils appreciate the importance of belonging to a society which embraces different cultures and values. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are ambitious on behalf of all learners and are confident in holding leaders to account for the progress the school makes.

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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?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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/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?	2
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	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 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

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

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave to me when I came to your school recently. I was very pleased to find how confident you were to talk to me in such a friendly and open manner and especially impressed by how well you all get on with each other. You are really very welcoming to visitors and show high levels of respect for the adults working with you.

I was particularly impressed with the fantastic contributions you all make to whole school concerts and performances. 'Pinocchio' must have been wonderful! You are rightly proud of your roles as school councillors and of the regular sums of money you raise for local and international charities. Many of you talk about the lives of people in Africa and India with real understanding and concern.

I was delighted to hear how much you enjoy your lessons. The standards that you reach by the time you leave school are average in English and mathematics and above average in science. You are making good progress in your work, although some of you could make even better progress, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is good that you all have targets to aim for, but not everyone understands exactly how to reach them, because teachers do not always make this clear when they mark your work. Overall, I think that your school provides you with a good standard of education, but that this could be even better. I am therefore asking the headteacher, staff and governors to do the following things to make sure that you all get the very best out of your time at St James.

- Improve the quality of experiences available in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that the children make better progress, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Ensure teachers' marking indicates consistently what the pupils need to do to improve their work.

I am sure you will continue to work hard and do your very best to help your teachers bring about the improvements I consider are necessary.

Best wishes to you all