

# St John's CofE (Aided) Primary School

## Inspection report

---

|                                |                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 110001            |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Reading           |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 325076            |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 24 September 2008 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Wiola Hola HMI    |

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.

---

|  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>  | Primary                         |
| <b>School category</b>   | Voluntary aided                 |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>   | 3–11                            |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>  | Mixed                           |
| <b>Number on roll</b>  |                                 |
| School (total)   | 299                             |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 50                              |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years                                     | 0                               |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>   | The governing body              |
| <b>Chair</b>   | Mr David Langshaw               |
| <b>Headteacher</b>   | Mrs Angharad Brackstone         |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 10 October 2005                 |
| <b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>                              | Not previously inspected        |
| <b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>   | Not previously inspected        |
| <b>School address</b>  | Orts Road<br>Reading<br>RG1 3JN |
| <b>Telephone number</b>  | 01189 015540                    |

---

|                          |                   |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Age group</b>         | 3–11              |
| <b>Inspection date</b>   | 24 September 2008 |
| <b>Inspection number</b> | 325076            |

**Fax number**

01189 015541

|                          |                   |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Age group</b>         | 3-11              |
| <b>Inspection date</b>   | 24 September 2008 |
| <b>Inspection number</b> | 325076            |

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards; teaching and learning; aspects of the curriculum, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and for writing in Key Stage 1; and the impact of leadership and management on improving provision and outcomes for pupils.

Evidence was gathered from: the school's self-evaluation form (SEF) and other review documents; nationally and locally published assessment data and the school's own assessment records; observation of the school at work in lessons and at break times; discussions with staff, pupils and four members of the governing body; and the parents' questionnaires.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail. 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 larger than average. Seven out of ten pupils are from minority ethnic groups and nearly one in four has a first language other than English; these figures are well above the national averages. Other than White British, the largest groups are Pakistani, African or other Black background, and Indian. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average but the percentage with statements of special educational needs is broadly average. The main learning difficulties or disabilities are moderate learning difficulties or speech language and communication difficulties. Stability is better than average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

St John's continues to be an outstanding school. Staff and governors have ensured that staffing changes since the last inspection, including headship, have not dented the school's notable strengths built up over many years. Moreover, there is a refreshed determination to develop provision further for the benefit of pupils whose success and well-being are at the heart of all endeavours. For example, staff are seeking to enrich the excellent curriculum. The curriculum is already successful in enabling pupils to achieve exceptionally well academically and reach standards by the end of Year 6 that are exceptionally high. The curriculum also fosters pupils' personal development extremely well. It is abundantly clear that pupils grow in confidence, courtesy, and in their understanding of the world and its diversity. Community cohesion is tangibly evident and nurtured in this multi-faith, multi-cultural Church of England School where respect, stillness, gentleness, collaboration and acts of helpfulness sit alongside the liveliness of lessons and playtimes. The school council is an important vehicle for change in the school and discharges its duties and responsibilities impressively. Pupils are extremely positive about the school and many speak of how '...everyone helps us.'

Teaching and learning are good overall and include some outstanding work. Teachers set very high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and pupils respond extremely well. A little inconsistency exists, however, in the extent to which teachers check what pupils have learnt. This is done well in most lessons, by careful questioning, so as to build on each individual pupil's previous learning, engage interest and generate much enjoyment. The school has improved its provision for the teaching of writing in Years 1 and 2 although the most recent national test results for writing in Year 2 did not rise from the previous year. Current work in writing does, however, indicate the positive impact of enhanced provision. The school's system of keeping a check on pupils' progress is excellent. Additional help is provided for those pupils who need it for various reasons so that all can make the best possible progress. By the end of Year 2, standards have lifted securely from below average overall to broadly average, after which progress is further accelerated in Years 3 to 6. Pupils know their targets for learning and say, 'They give us something to aim for'. Attendance is satisfactory overall. It is good in most weeks of the year but some families take extended holidays in term time. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and promoted unobtrusively because the excellent climate for life and learning in this school is so securely established. The school has gained the Gold 'Healthy Schools' award and 'Activemark'. Pupils are very well aware of how to lead healthy lives, and of how to stay safe. The school's procedures for ensuring pupils' safety are entirely robust. Links with parents, the local and wider community and with the church are very strong and serve the school extremely well in all that it does.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and most appreciate it greatly. One parent wrote, 'The staff aren't just dedicated but passionate about their work.' and others expressed similar sentiments. Leadership and management, including governance, are excellent and underpin the outstanding educational outcomes. They are visible in the extremely smooth running of the school day-to-day; the clarity of purpose commonly held by all staff working in unison; the vision for the future, based on thorough and accurate self-review; the setting of challenging targets; keeping a close check on the quality of provision and outcomes; and in the total absence of complacency. All members of the school community contribute greatly to the creation of a learning environment that is a delight to be in, including the church within the school, which is used for assemblies and many other routine and special events. The school

site and building, although tight for space in parts, are cared for beautifully. The environment is enhanced with many displays of pupils' work and artefacts that pay tribute to staff and pupils' efforts and achievements.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children make a good start to school. Many enter the Nursery or Reception classes with skills that are below those expected for their ages particularly in language, personal and social development. Very good record keeping shows that the children who left the EYFS last July made good progress in their learning. The school is expecting to speed up progress further this year. Leadership and management of this stage are outstanding. Leaders have an extremely clear view of existing strengths as well as what might be improved. Because of this, significant improvements have been made to provision in the EYFS, particularly in teaching and learning which are now good and sometimes outstanding. Many improvements are recent and have not yet had a full impact on outcomes for children so early in the term. Relationships with parents are excellent and the now outstanding transition process helps children to settle in extremely quickly. In addition, the classrooms, both inside and out, have been much enhanced. They are safe, inviting, bright and stimulating. Activities to develop all the required areas of learning for young children are planned very well and supported very effectively by teachers, other staff and helpers. Children work happily both independently and collaboratively, exercising choice as appropriate, and developing a love of learning and enquiry. Children from many different backgrounds work together extremely well. Children's welfare is paramount and provision for this is excellent. Parents of children in the EYFS are fulsome in their praise for the way in which their children are enabled to flourish.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

In order to bring more lessons up to the quality of the best:

- Ensure more consistency in how teachers probe what pupils have learnt, to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding further.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|----------------|

### Overall effectiveness

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1   |
| 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?   | 1   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements   | 1   |

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

|   |   |
|---|---|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?              | 2 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve?   | 2 |
| 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?  | 1 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 1 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 1 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress                           | 1 |

<sup>1</sup>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.



## Personal development and well-being

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                          | 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  | 3 |
| 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

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>       | 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

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 1   |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1   |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards  | 1   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 1   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated   | 1   |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?   | 1   |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money  | 1   |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 1   |
| 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**

07 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's CofE (Aided) Primary School, Reading, RG1 3JN

I write to thank you for your welcome, helpfulness and courtesy when inspectors visited your school recently. I also write to tell you that your school is outstanding, as it was when inspectors visited it before in October 2005. It is clear that you greatly enjoy coming to this school.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make a good start. The school enables you to make excellent progress in your academic work so that, by the time you leave Year 6, standards are exceptionally high. It helps you to grow as caring, considerate and confident young people who can work in partnership with each other, understanding and respecting each other's views and ways of life. Some of you and the teachers told us how glad you are that so many different nationalities are represented in your school and how this adds to the richness and enjoyment of school life. You behave extremely well, not just in lessons but at other times as well. Your attention and singing in assembly were very moving. The vast majority of your parents feel very positive about the school and value what it offers you. The school cares for you exceptionally well and provides you with a great many excellent opportunities for you to flourish, and to learn how to lead healthy and safe lives. Even though the curriculum is already outstanding, the staff are seeking ways to improve it further because they are so determined to provide you with the very best they can. The school is extremely well led and managed.

Teaching and learning are good and some lessons are excellent. In most lessons, teachers ask questions skilfully to check how well you are learning but sometimes this is not the case. We have asked the school to develop teachers' skills and strategies for finding out how much you already know before a lesson starts, as well as what you learn during it. Most of you attend school regularly and we ask you all to make sure that you miss as few school days as possible.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Wiola Hola

Her Majesty's Inspector