

St John the Evangelist Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111331
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	325353
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Angela Milner HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	316
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage	45
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Dai Roberts
Headteacher	Mrs Melanie McCombe
Date of previous school inspection	May 2006
School address	Ivy Road Macclesfield Cheshire SK11 8QN
Telephone number	01625 428222
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons, and held meetings with the headteacher, governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation including: the school development plan, pupils' progress information, individual education plans (IEPs) of a number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, policy documents, minutes of governors meetings and 102 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the quality of teaching and learning
- how effectively teaching is challenging all pupils and helping them to learn
- the tracking of pupils' progress to ensure all pupils meet their potential
- the impact of leaders and managers at all levels (including governors) in improving outcomes for pupils
- the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

St John the Evangelist is a larger than average primary school. Pupils come from a variety of social backgrounds but few are entitled to free school meals. Most pupils are of White British heritage. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds currently represent 4.5% of the school's population. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is lower than average. There are more pupils with statements of special educational need than the national average and a smaller than average proportion of pupils who need help with their learning. Awards achieved by the school include: FA Charter Mark, Sportsmark and Healthy Schools. There have been a significant number of changes in staffing since the previous inspection. The onsite childcare provision was inspected as part of a separate inspection.

Further information about the school

	School's figure	School's figures compared with other schools
School size	316	Above average
Free school meals	5.7%	Below average
Proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	9.2%	Below average
Proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups	4.5%	Well below average
Proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language	2.6%	Well below average
Proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need	2.2%	Above average

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St John the Evangelist is a good school. It provides outstanding pastoral support, guidance and care within a very safe and attractive learning environment. Effective support systems nurture pupils' personal development and well-being. The headteacher and senior leaders promote an extremely positive ethos, a real sense of community and positive relationships based on mutual respect. This has created a learning environment where every child matters, differences are valued and everyone takes pride in the school. Pupils are extremely well cared for. Their emotional and personal development is given a high priority. Pupils enjoy school and participate fully in the extensive range of opportunities it provides. They become mature, self-confident young people and leave the school well prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are particularly well supported.

The school's self-evaluation clearly identifies key areas for improvement. Effective strategies have been developed to improve the dip in attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2008. Inspection evidence shows that this is beginning to have an impact and that Key Stage 2 pupils are on course to reach their targets in 2009. After a period of significant staffing change, the school has been able to focus on raising attainment at Key Stage 2. Close tracking of pupils' progress, the use of challenging targets to guide learning by senior leaders and the provision of professional development for teachers have raised expectations and supported improvements in pupils' progress. Although middle leaders have a clearly defined role in monitoring the quality of provision there is scope for them to be more involved in the monitoring of pupils' progress and attainment. There is also scope for the school to share and learn from the best practice which exists in teaching, learning and assessment to aid improvement further.

The school has made good progress in tackling the key areas for development since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4 has been improved. Lessons are more interesting and challenging. Leaders have introduced rigorous checks on teaching quality and now make extensive use of performance data to monitor pupils' progress and attainment. The school is well positioned to move forward. The good quality of teaching and learning and good levels of pupils' progress and attainment seen during the inspection demonstrate a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment at Key Stage 2 by
 - improving the consistency of teaching, learning and assessment by increasing the opportunities to share best practice
 - enhancing the role middle leaders play in monitoring pupils' progress and attainment.

How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

2

Pupils are enthused by learning. They work hard and use their time profitably to achieve well in a range of lessons. Key Stage 1 assessment results in 2008 are above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Provisional results for Key Stage 2 in 2008 indicate that attainment as measured by the national tests in Year 6 was broadly average. Although significant numbers of pupils gained the higher Level 5 in mathematics, pupils did not perform as well as expected in English and science. The school has already taken effective action to address this dip in attainment by carefully analysing the science test papers to improve practice, adopting the 'Big Write' to improve writing skills and focusing on improving pace and challenge in Key Stage 2 lessons. Teaching and learning at Key Stage 2 has been effectively reorganised into three parallel mixed-age classes for Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6. The recent introduction of systematic pupil tracking and monitoring systems is allowing the school to identify underachievement sooner and ensure intervention strategies are put in place to raise attainment. All pupils are currently on track to reach or exceed their targets in 2009. A scrutiny of work, lesson observations and analysis of reliable school records show that all pupils are currently making good progress from their starting points. A small but significant number of high achieving pupils leave the school before taking the Key Stage 2 tests. This makes the school appear to perform less well against targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with complex learning needs, are identified and well supported to ensure they also make good progress.

Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is exemplary. Attitudes and relationships are excellent and pupils willingly help each other. Pupils show a good understanding of how to be healthy and take regular exercise. They feel very safe and know who to approach if they are worried. Pupils make a positive contribution to the life of the school through their contribution to the school council and their work as road safety and recycling officers. They are involved in a range of charitable activities in the wider community. Pupils say they are really happy and enjoy school, and their attendance is excellent. They are well prepared for their future economic well-being and introduced to a range of useful teamwork and enterprise skills. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with particular strengths in pupils' moral and social development as demonstrated by their polite, courteous and respectful behaviour and the way they work collaboratively in pairs and teams.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance	1
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

The quality of the school's work

The quality of teaching and learning is good with examples of outstanding practice in each key stage. The good relationships between pupils and the adults they work with are strengths. Teaching assistants play an effective role in supporting learning. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and most teachers conduct lessons at a brisk pace. Teachers challenge pupils and use assessments effectively to plan meaningful learning experiences which motivate pupils and keep them on task. Activities are well matched to the needs of different ability groups and build on previous learning experiences. As a result pupils enjoy lessons and all groups of pupils make good progress. In a minority of lessons there is an over-reliance on teacher-led activities with limited opportunities for independent learning or for pupils to be actively involved in the development of ideas. Teachers' expectations in these lessons can lack challenge, especially for the more able.

Pupils are actively engaged in monitoring their own performance and understand their learning targets. There is some variation in the quality of marking of pupils' work. Although work is generally marked regularly and there are examples of good practice, not all marking helps pupils to know how to improve their work. Procedures for tracking and monitoring pupils' attainment are comprehensive. Assessment information is used to set challenging targets for the school and is becoming increasingly focused on the progress pupils make in their learning. Senior leaders make termly checks to identify any pupils who are falling behind and appropriate intervention programmes are provided to support their learning.

The curriculum is good. It is broad, balanced and meets statutory requirements. It is kept under constant review to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the gifted and talented. The school takes full advantage of the opportunities available through links with local

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

high schools and the local authority to support gifted and talented pupils. The curriculum has been enriched with the introduction of structured phonics and the 'Big Write' to enhance pupils' literacy skills and through the emphasis on pupils' social and emotional development within the personal, social and health education programme. All pupils are provided with the valuable opportunity to learn French. The school provides pupils with an impressive range of sporting, musical, dramatic and educational activities beyond the normal school day. High participation rates indicate that these activities make a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development and well-being.

The level of support, guidance and care provided for pupils is outstanding. The way the school works with other agencies to support pupils with complex needs is exemplary.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	2
Effective assessment	2
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	2
Support, guidance and care	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Systematic self-evaluation and increasingly effective use of assessment information mean the school can identify its strengths and the areas it needs to improve. As a result the school's self-evaluation is honest and accurate. School development plans have appropriate priorities for improvement based on improving attainment and meeting the needs of all pupils. Recent work to improve the tracking of individual pupils' progress over time is providing senior leaders with a wealth of useful information and provides evidence of pupils making good progress in their learning. This is being analysed carefully by senior leaders to target set, identify underachievement and plan for appropriate interventions and support. Although middle leaders have very clear roles and responsibilities in relation to monitoring the quality of provision, there is scope for them to be more involved in the monitoring of pupils' progress and attainment. The headteacher is a strong, purposeful and caring leader who relates very well to staff, parents and the community. She has high expectations for pupils and has developed a number of strong partnerships with a range of external agencies which have an extremely positive impact on their personal development and well-being. She has created a highly motivated team of staff who are capable of sharing more in the challenge of raising attainment and taking on more delegated responsibilities.

The school meets all the requirements for safeguarding, child protection, health and safety and risk assessment and has clear policies and procedures in relation to equality and discrimination. It is an inclusive school where effective action is taken to meet the needs of all groups of pupils.

The governing body provides good support and challenge and ensures that the school is held to account for its performance. It discharges its statutory duties effectively and seeks the views of stakeholders as part of decision-making processes. Consequently, it has a clear understanding of the school’s strengths and how it can improve further. Financial management is good and resources are effectively deployed. The good arrangements to promote community cohesion are based on a sound audit of needs and the sharing of common values. The school demonstrates a clear understanding of requirements based on a good understanding of the school’s community in a local and national context, a clear plan of action and success criteria with which to evaluate impact.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	2
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	2
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	2
Promoting the school’s relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	2
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	1
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	2
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children enter Reception with skills that are in line with those expected for their age. Thorough induction arrangements, effective partnerships with parents and the welcoming atmosphere ensure that children settle quickly into school and learn routines. The bright and lively learning environment, interesting activities and warm, caring relationships develop children’s curiosity and help children to understand that learning is enjoyable. This good quality provision ensures that children make good progress in all areas of their learning. By the end of Reception most pupils are working at or exceeding the level typically expected for their age. Particular attention is paid to children’s personal, social and emotional development. Children develop a very good understanding of how to keep healthy and stay safe. Adults pay very close attention to tracking children’s small steps in learning and use this information well to ensure planned activities build on what children already know and can do. As a result children become confident, independent learners who behave very well and adopt excellent attitudes to learning. Current building work means that children have limited opportunities to learn outdoors but as a result of this work a covered outdoor area will be created. This will enable the school to offer continuous provision for learning inside and out. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed to ensure children receive a good start to their education and the needs of all individuals and groups are met.

How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
Overall effectiveness: how well does the setting/school meet the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire were positive in their views of all aspects of the school. One parent described the schools as 'a warm and friendly place that cares for all pupils'. Parents regard this school as happy and caring and the head and staff as approachable. There were no particular trends in the small number of criticisms received by HMI. A small minority of parents feel that they would like to be kept better informed about the progress their children are making and how well they are doing in comparison with national levels.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



12 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John the Evangelist Church of England Primary School,
Macclesfield, SK11 8QN

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and visiting you at work and at play. We saw happy pupils who enjoy school and get along extremely well with all of the adults in school and with each other. We were particularly impressed by your behaviour, your extremely positive attitudes to learning, your sense of responsibility and how proud you are to be part of your school community. We enjoyed hearing about the Key Stage 1 visit to Styal Mill and the success of Year 5 and 6 in raising money for others through the 'Time for a change' project. We saw you keeping fit and healthy through your physical activities and how well you were keeping yourselves safe during the current building work. Many of your parents completed questionnaires. This meant we were able to consider their views during the inspection. We agreed with them that in this school every child receives a good education and is extremely well cared for.

You reach similar levels of attainment to pupils in other schools at the end of Key Stage 2. This is because of the good teaching you receive, the wide range of activities the school provides and the excellent support, guidance and care that adults give you. The headteacher, the staff and governors know what needs to be done to continually improve your school and work very hard to ensure this is happening.

To help your school become even better we have asked governors and staff to improve the standard of attainment that pupils reach at the end of Key Stage 2. We agreed with the school that this should be done by ensuring that teachers share what they do well with each other and by leaders checking more carefully on how well things are going and how well you are doing.

You can all of course help to improve your school by continuing to attend regularly, working as hard as you can to achieve your best and by playing your part in continuing to improve the school further through the work of the school council.

Yours sincerely

Angela Milner
Her Majesty's Inspector

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