

# St John's CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112875
<b>Local Authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	325708
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 September 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Brennan

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	464
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Lisa Salton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dr Peter Blunsdon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 September 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>	Laund Nook Belper Derbyshire DE56 1GY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01773 822995
<b>Fax number</b>	01773 822466

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Pupils attend this popular and larger than average sized school from a range of economic and social backgrounds. Almost all pupils are of a White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion entitled to free school meals. Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with skills and abilities that are broadly typical for their age. The school has achieved a range of external awards, including the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Investors in People status, a Healthy School award, the Activemark, an Excellence award for Anti-bullying and more recently, an Information and Communications Technology (ICT) award.

## 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 school that has improved well since the last inspection. Improvement has not been narrowly based and encompasses both pupils' academic and personal needs.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are mature and demonstrate a willingness to learn. It is their outstanding personal development as much as the good quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum that helps them do well. The range of awards the school has achieved is richly deserved. Personal development is excellent. Pupils are very active and enthusiastic and committed to living a healthy lifestyle. They show respect for themselves and for others. They clearly enjoy school not least because there is much for them to do outside of lessons. The curriculum meets pupils' needs well. Specialist teaching in ICT has successfully raised the profile of this subject. Provision for children in the Reception classes is good and has been enhanced by successful improvements to the outdoor learning area. However, there are times when schemes of work are followed unquestioningly rather than in a more selective and flexible manner that takes account of whether more or less time needs to be spent on certain topics.

Adults manage pupils sensitively, establishing warm and encouraging relationships with them. Pupils feel able to give of their best and feel safe in the nurturing ethos of the school. This underpins the evident good quality of care, support and guidance. The teaching of key skills is precise and clear. This has helped raise standards in mathematics, a relative weakness of the last inspection. These are now on par with other key subjects. Overall pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and in science is good and standards are significantly above average. Pupils needing extra help and pupils who are more able do particularly well. However, a small number of pupils in between these poles do not do as well as they might because teaching does not always involve them enough in class discussions or prepare them for the work that is to follow.

Leadership and management are good. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and is well led. A calm and sensitive tone is maintained and leaders pursue a range of improvements energetically. However, the planning underpinning the strategic plan is not detailed enough, making it difficult for leaders to check whether actions have been successful or not. Nevertheless, many of the substantial strengths identified in the last inspection have been maintained and the school has improved in some key areas. It clearly has good capacity to continue to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children settle quickly into safe and secure routines because close attention is paid to their welfare and to assessing and providing for their individual needs. Good progress is made in their personal development and most demonstrate a high degree of independence in a relatively short time. Children of all abilities also make good progress in each of the other areas of learning. By the time children start Year 1 many have attained the goals expected of them and a significant number go beyond them. Teaching is good and activities varied. Effective leadership and management can be seen in the successful actions taken to help boys, who have in the past not attained as well as girls, to do better. Teaching in the group activities ensures that all children are involved. Learning resources are imaginative and successful use is made of improved outdoor facilities, which add an extra dimension to learning. Language and counting skills are a major part of everyday learning and often involve children working together to solve problems

and share ideas. The rapt concentration a group of boys displayed when using construction equipment to turn a plan of a house into the real thing provided testimony to this. Not all independent activities are as successful, however. Planning for some activities is too general and differing staff may visit the same activity and the same children whilst other activities are left unvisited and some children are left to their own devices too much.

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

- Ensure that all pupils, but especially the more reluctant, are more involved in class discussion in order to be well prepared for subsequent follow up work.
- Make more flexible use of schemes of work.
- Ensure the strategic plan is sharply focused on measurable outcomes that provide benchmarks against which the school's progress can be measured.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children make a good start in Reception and maintain their momentum through Years 1 to 6. Throughout the school pupils reach standards that are significantly above average, particularly in reading, writing and science, as indeed they have done for several years. Improvements in mathematics are marked and the school has met its increasingly challenging targets, with more able pupils doing particularly well. Pupils who find learning more difficult do equally as well because of the skilled support they are given, though this is not as true of middle ability pupils whose needs are not consistently met in all lessons.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Typically, pupils are mature in both thought and deed. They clearly enjoy school. Many older pupils take it on themselves to continue with their work at lunchtime. Attendance rates are above average and rising. Pupils display considerable knowledge of moral and social issues, indicative of their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Opportunities to visit local churches and raise money for a number of charities, and links with a range of other countries extend pupils' understanding of responsibility towards local and wider community. Pupils feel safe; they know that the very rare incidences of bullying, or indeed any inappropriate behaviour, will be dealt with properly by the staff. Pupils have a first rate understanding of what is needed to keep fit and healthy and take considerable responsibility for their school and increasingly for their learning. The school council is influential and the suggestion box used well, for example, to introduce healthy snack days. Pupils' positive attitudes, excellent social skills and high standards in basic skills provide a very good basis for the next stage of their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is good and ensures good learning habits are quickly established. The gently affirming manner of teaching and well thought out management strategies lead to calm, purposeful classrooms. Adults work with one group in secure confidence that pupils working independently will give of their best. Regular use is made of paired and group work to help pupils learn

together. Teachers' secure subject knowledge can be seen in the perceptive questions asked of pupils and the accurate demonstrations of new skills. Questioning generally works well, particularly when allied to strategies such as the use of small boards for all pupils to note and reveal their findings, and thus join in class teaching. However, there are occasions when questioning does not engage a minority of pupils sufficiently or ensure they make the progress of which they are capable.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is well planned. Clear schemes of work for individual subjects give structure and progression to teaching though, on occasion, these are adhered to too rigidly. In Year 6 for example, pupils often move from studying one genre of writing to another without fully exploring either. The curriculum is extremely well enhanced through an extensive range of visits, including wide ranging residential visits and visitors to school. Themed weeks such as the Creative Arts Week and a plethora of out of school activities, which attract many pupils, contribute strongly to pupils' learning and enjoyment.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils learn in a safe and happy environment where relationships are supportive and encouraging. Those in need of extra help are given assistance tailored to their needs. The school has successfully turned its attention to pupils who have particular gifts and talents. They have access to a wide range of extra activities including links with the local specialist secondary school. Procedures for securing pupils' safety and well-being are rigorous. Pupils' academic progress is well monitored and milestones for the future plotted. This in turn is helping pupils take ownership of personal improvement targets, which many seize upon eagerly. A growing number of pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve their work but a small number are less clear, as some teachers do not give this facet of their work the same emphasis as others.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

This is a calmly led school and one which operates smoothly and harmoniously. Pupils, staff and a very large majority of parents are happy with the school and morale is high. Leaders pay close attention to both pupils' personal and academic needs. Close attention is given to staff training and to ensuring that the school quickly identifies and addresses any weaknesses in provision, such as, for example, in improving boys' achievement in the Early Years. All staff with management responsibilities play an active part in assessing the effectiveness of provision. However, the lack of detail in the school's development plan sometimes means that monitoring procedures are not sufficiently linked to the school's key priorities. This leads to inconsistency in the way initiatives, such as involving pupils in target setting, are implemented. Governors perform their duties well balancing the need to offer school support and to act as a critical friend by asking challenging questions of staff. The school gives good value for money.

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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?	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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<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	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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

<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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

17 September 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of St John's C of E Primary School, Belper, DE56 1GY.

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We would like to share with you what we thought about your school.

You go to a good school. Although it is large it felt like we were visiting one big happy family. You play your part well in making the school what it is. You play and work extremely well alongside each other. We were impressed with what you know about how to live a healthy and active lifestyle. You are certainly very active. Some of this is because there is so much for you to do in clubs and in other activities.

You make good progress in learning to read, write and count. Many of you join in lessons very well. We did feel that some of you needed more help when it came to joining in class discussions. We have asked your school to think of ways of achieving this. The school has worked hard to write year plans for what to teach you in differing subjects. This helps everyone know what needs to be covered. However, we think teachers need to use these more flexibly and we have asked the school to think carefully about which bits of these plans to use with you.

The adults in your school work hard on your behalf. They have some good ideas for making the school better still. We have asked them to write detailed plans for these ideas and to check how well these new ideas work. You can play your part by continuing to work hard and, if asked, by letting the school know what you think of some of the new ideas they introduce.

Thank you once again and good luck in the future.

John Brennan

Lead inspector