

St John The Baptist CofE (Controlled) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123498
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	327925
Inspection dates	3–4 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Anthony O'Malley 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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	144
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	Fiona Loveday
Headteacher	S Weetman
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Street Ruyton Xi Towns Shrewsbury SY4 1LA
Telephone number	01939 260445

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	3–4 June 2009
Inspection number	327925

Fax number

01939 261764

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

This very popular small primary school draws its pupils from the local and neighbouring villages. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has a number of accreditations including Basic Skills Quality Mark, Safe School Initiative, Healthy Schools Gold Award, Sports England Activemark and Eco Schools Green Flag Award.

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 the Baptist is a good school with outstanding features where pupils achieve well. The school excels in ensuring pupils' outstanding personal development through its high-quality care and an outstanding curriculum. Parents rightly hold the school in high regard: 'Staff have a brilliant rapport with the children'; 'Children are confident and exceptionally well behaved'; and 'We are very lucky to have such a school on our doorstep' are typical of their views.

Children make a good start in school because of the excellent care and the good teaching in the mixed Reception and Year 1 class. Rates of progress are good overall but are stronger in English than in mathematics. By the end of Year 6, standards are consistently well above average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same progress as others. The additional provision for the most vulnerable pupils helps them achieve particularly well. The systems for tracking academic progress lack rigour in some year groups and this delays the identification of any underachievement and the implementation of support to accelerate learning.

The quality of teaching and learning is good but there are inconsistencies in the effectiveness of practice. Most teaching is good or outstanding because teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils well, understand how they learn, and set work that meets their needs. However, occasionally, particularly in mathematics lessons, the tasks set for pupils do not match their learning needs precisely enough. When this happens, most pupils remain on task but because the work is either too easy or too hard they do not make good progress.

The school rightly prides itself on providing an exciting range of experiences that inspire and motivate the children. Outstanding use is made of educational visits and visitors to provide a starting point for learning and to provide first-hand experiences from which pupils see the relevance of their learning to life. For example, pupils spoke enthusiastically and thoughtfully about a visit to Chester as part of their history project. Classroom, corridor and playground displays, particularly of children's art, are of a very high standard and provide a colourful, stimulating and interesting environment.

Pupils make excellent progress in their personal development. This is because of the very strong care and support that they receive from the staff. Pupils feel safe and secure in school. An effective programme for health education ensures that pupils have an outstanding understanding of how to eat healthily and why it is necessary to take exercise. Through their involvement in the parish and wider community, pupils gain an excellent understanding of the value of contributing as part of a much bigger 'family'. The school's emphasis on the pupils' personal development and high academic standards prepares them exceptionally well for the next stage of education. Pupils' excellent attendance over many years reflects how much they enjoy school.

Good leadership and management have helped sustain the school's many strengths since both the previous inspection and, more recently, the tragic death of the school's greatly respected deputy headteacher. The successful way in which the headteacher has delegated leadership responsibilities amongst the staff meets the needs of this small school effectively. Governance is good. The staff and governors work well together. They have an accurate understanding of the school's weaker aspects and the school has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's skills and knowledge on entry vary from year to year, but the children presently in the Early Years Foundation Stage started school with skills above those usually found. The thorough induction arrangements help them to settle quickly. Parents are encouraged to take an active role in their children's introduction to education, and this quickly establishes strong links between school and home. Children make good friends, treat each other and adults with respect and are happy learners.

Through good teaching, they move on with their learning at a good pace, so that by the start of Year 1 the great majority have skills above expected levels. They make greatest progress in their emotional development, reading, writing and calculation. Planning and assessment take account of individual needs and ensure that there is effective coverage of all the areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Children want to come to school and learn because of the excellent care and support and the wide range of interesting activities they experience every day. They are encouraged to work together and this contributes significantly to their outstanding personal development. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. The teacher and teaching assistant work very effectively together and outstanding procedures are in place to ensure the children's welfare. They are aware that the organisation of furniture in the indoor area occasionally restricts practical and creative activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Identify underachievement more quickly by implementing rigorous systems for tracking pupils' progress throughout the school.
- Secure consistently good or outstanding progress in mathematics by ensuring that tasks set for pupils match their learning needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children's skills and knowledge on entry vary from year to year. The children presently in the Early Years Foundation Stage started school with skills above those found in most schools. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and when they start Year 1 their standards are above average in all areas of learning. Their good progress continues in Years 1 and 2, and overall standards are significantly above the national average at the end of Year 2. Standards in reading are exceptionally high. Rates of progress slow in Years 3 and 4 and then accelerate so that by the end of Year 6 pupils consistently reach very high standards. Standards in English and science are particularly high with over half of the pupils attaining the highest level. The small number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve equally as well as their peers throughout school because of the good teaching support provided for them. Occasionally in lessons where tasks do not match their needs, some pupils struggle whilst others find the work too easy.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils show a great deal of enthusiasm for school and for learning. They are involved in making important school decisions and respond very positively to the trust that the staff place in them. This encourages their own considerate and respectful behaviour and makes the school a

delightful place to teach and learn. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their enterprise skills and these contribute to their confidence, self-esteem, decision-making and social skills. School assemblies and the rich curriculum encourage pupils to reflect and express their feelings through art, music and poetry. This excellent provision leads to outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils from a young age show respect for others, including those from different cultures, because lessons give good coverage of the diversity of the world in which we live.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In the main, pupils progress well across the school because teachers combine good subject knowledge with high expectations of what the pupils are capable of achieving. Such strong practice was evident in an outstanding English lesson where the teacher's own love of poetry encouraged pupils of all abilities to share personal and insightful responses to the verse. In science too, there is clear evidence that training to improve the skills and confidence of teachers has increased the opportunities for pupils to plan and carry out regular scientific investigations. However, occasionally in mathematics, not all teaching displays such good subject knowledge. In a minority of lessons, explanations of concepts lack clarity and the tasks set do not always match precisely with pupils' different needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum successfully builds on earlier learning and experiences in every subject. Rolling programmes ensure appropriate coverage, and take account of the mixed-year group classes. There is a very effective focus on the creative aspects of the curriculum. Music, art and design, and design and technology all have a high profile. Regular concerts enable a large number of pupils to share their achievements musically and dramatically. The school provides very well for physical education through sporting activities and opportunities to participate in outdoor pursuits. Curriculum enrichment is excellent.

An exciting and extensive range of visits and visitors adds greatly to pupils' personal development, particularly in terms of boosting their levels of interest and enjoyment. The range and quality of extra-curricular activities is remarkable for a school this size.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents are very appreciative of the excellent care and support all staff provide for the pupils. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet national requirements and risk assessments are fully in place. The school's very positive relationships with outside agencies and families ensure that vulnerable pupils and others who need additional help benefit from very effective support and make good progress. However, systems for monitoring pupils' academic progress are more rigorous in some year groups than in others. As a result, weaknesses in pupils' work are not always as rapidly identified as they could be. Marking is carried out regularly, but too often does not inform pupils clearly enough how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has successfully developed an effective team of staff who work well together to sustain the school's record of high academic standards and exceptional personal development. She has established a clear direction for improvement and a leadership team with high aspirations. The school self-evaluation processes are good because they accurately identify and prioritise the most important areas for development. However, reviews by coordinators in some subject areas focus on the quality of provision more than the achievement of pupils and only adequately direct improvement. The school makes good use of outside support for pupils and staff, and works closely with other professionals and parents. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. The school is at the heart of the community it serves and has strong links with schools in other continents. Governors fulfil their role well. The actions they have initiated to evaluate and develop the pupils' awareness of our multicultural society are particularly impressive.

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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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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?	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**

5 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John the Baptist C of E (Controlled) Primary School, Ruyton X1 Towns, SY4 1LA

Thank you for making me welcome when I visited your school recently. Many of your parents wrote to say how pleased they are that you attend this school and I can see why. Your school is a good school and some things about it are outstanding. It is a lovely place to be because your teachers and teaching assistants ensure each day is interesting, varied and enjoyable and you all get on so very well together.

Here are some of the best things about your school.

- Your standards are very high and you make good progress through the school.
- The curriculum is outstanding and prepares you very well for your next schools.
- The adults look after you exceptionally well and quickly deal with your worries.
- You really enjoy the excellent range of clubs and activities on offer.
- The youngest children in the Reception and Year 1 classes make a good start to their education.
- Your attendance and behaviour are outstanding.

To make your progress even better, I have asked your school to do two things.

- Track your progress closely in all classes so that anyone who needs extra help can get it quickly.
- Ensure that the work set for you in mathematics is not too easy or too hard.

You can do your bit by continuing to be very positive and by making the most of your time at St John the Baptist. Very well done to you all and best wishes for your future lives.

Yours faithfully

Anthony O'Malley

Her Majesty's Inspector