

St John's Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124990
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	328257
Inspection dates	24–25 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Cathie Munt 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	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	208
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	Mrs Glenys Mason
Headteacher	Miss Marian Cassidy
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Pendleton Road Redhill RH1 6QG
Telephone number	01737 763 804
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St John's is a small, popular, oversubscribed school located in an historic setting, surrounded by Redhill Common. Standards on entry are broadly average. The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including the proportion with a statement of special educational needs, is lower than average. About 1 in 12 pupils are from backgrounds other than White British. This is lower than in schools nationally. Fewer than 10 are at an early stage of English language acquisition. A new deputy headteacher has joined the school in the last 18 months. Currently, the post of Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 manager is vacant. The school passed the rigorous financial audit in February 2008 and was awarded Financial Management Standard in Schools status. Other awards include that for Healthy School Status. On-site nursery provision that is not managed by the governing body was inspected separately at the same time as this inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school has developed many areas of excellence since the last inspection. The headteacher's passion for developing well-rounded, confident and articulate pupils is shared by staff and governors and supported wholeheartedly by parents. They frequently compared the school to a well-loved family and a community where all felt safe and valued. A palpable sense of community communicates itself to the pupils, encouraging them to give of their best. Good leadership and management exist at all levels, ensuring that every penny is used wisely. Governors hold the school to account effectively. Children settle happily in the Reception class and make good progress in all areas of learning. The decline in standards at the end of Key Stage 1 is being halted and older pupils continue to reach high standards in the Year 6 national tests. Standards in speaking and listening and information technology are exceptionally high across the school. Pupils develop excellent teamworking skills. The school, rightly, has begun to put a range of additional assessment and teaching strategies in place to ensure the early identification and support of pupils who have specific special educational needs.

Outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident in pupils' responses to poetry and art, and in their excellent understanding of, and appreciation for, their own and other cultures and traditions. Residential visits develop an appreciation of life in other parts of the country. Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is excellent. They feel secure because effective steps are taken to provide a safe environment. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community.

Teaching is mainly good with examples of outstanding practice across the school. Teaching assistants play a significant role in raising standards. Pupils prefer lessons where they do not spend too long repeating work that has already been covered adequately. An excellent curriculum exceeds national requirements, providing instrumental tuition and two modern foreign languages for all. History, in particular, is brought alive by visiting actors and by the use of the well-preserved air raid shelters in the school grounds. The skills and talents of the staff are used most effectively to offer a wide range of exciting and unusual clubs. Parents' responses were particularly appreciative of the 'friendly, approachability of staff', praising the excellent care that teachers, teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors provide. Parents particularly praised the excellent provision that is enabling children with special educational needs to make good progress this year. Revised systems for monitoring and assessing progress are proving exceptionally effective at identifying underperformance, allowing the school to act swiftly to support pupils and eradicate weaknesses in learning. St John's reaches out most effectively to local, national and global communities, contributing to the safety of locals by influencing the siting of the patrolled crossing, developing regular visits to a school in a rural English setting, supporting the maintenance of a Kenyan school and developing social and academic links a school in Lille.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Reception class provides children with a good start to their education. Under the guidance of the headteacher, it is led and managed well and staff work together cooperatively for the benefit of the children. Many parents commented positively on how well the school has managed this time of transition, as they await the appointment of a head of Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. A parent remarked on the seamless handover to the current teacher and several

welcomed the opportunities to work alongside their children - a new initiative that is further strengthening home/school links. Caring adults effectively support the development of children's physical, social and academic skills. They know the children well and have their welfare at heart. Occasionally, activities are overdirected by the adults. Good use is made of existing resources and children enjoy all areas of learning. They particularly enjoy the outside area where they choose activities themselves, either working individually or with others. Children play together in a friendly manner, behave very well and enjoy their conversations with one another. They are happy and settled, make good progress in all areas of learning and are well prepared for moving into Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further implement the planned range of extended interventions and support for pupils with special educational needs in order that these are met fully.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Learners across the school meet challenging targets and make good progress, enabling them to reach high standards in the Year 6 national tests. Pupils who find learning difficult and those for whom English is not their home language are given good support and mainly make progress in line with their peers. Results in the 2007 and 2008 Year 2 assessments were in line with national figures, dropping from a position well above in the previous three years. However, the school's excellent range of data, supported by the good standard of work in the Key Stage 1 classes, indicate that this decline is being halted. The work of pupils in Year 3, whose Year 2 results were lower than those generally obtained by the school, has improved. Mathematics work was judged to be good. In Key Stage 2 standards in lessons, in books and in work on display, were above those found nationally, particularly in Year 6. Standards in speaking and listening are exceptionally high throughout the school. This enables pupils to make good and sometimes excellent progress in their writing and supports their development well in other subjects. A programme for small, carefully chosen, mixed-age groups is increasingly extending pupils who are gifted and talented. Pupils with special educational needs did not achieve as well as similar groups nationally in the end of key stage tests and assessments in 2007 and 2008. Although these pupils are currently doing well, the school, rightly, has initiated more systematic monitoring and assessment of their provision.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are mature, articulate and considerate towards one another. Older children happily look after younger ones in the playground. Behaviour around the school and in lessons is excellent. Pupils' respectful attitude to religious practices is notable. Admirable cultural development is promoted through trips, visits and special events and by the strong links with schools abroad. Pupils show an excellent understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, easily identifying the contribution food groups make to a balanced diet. They participate enthusiastically in a wide range of sporting activities, and many of them travel to school by bicycle. Pupils understand the importance of sensible internet use and feel extremely safe in and around the school. They are not unduly concerned about bullying, because they feel the school deals swiftly and well with any instances that do occur.

They like school and enjoy good relationships with their teachers. A few feel that some lessons are not stimulating enough: one boy said that lessons sometimes were too 'repetitive'. The effective school council has helped to initiate improvements such as the provision of a wider range of out-of-school clubs. Pupils raise impressive amounts of money for a range of good causes and regularly provide funds for the 'sister school' in Kenya. Preparation for their future economic well-being is outstanding. Their self-confidence and ability to justify their opinions will stand them in very good stead for their future education and roles in the workplace.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The headteacher rightly judges the quality of teaching and learning to be good overall. Her accurate and supportive monitoring has also identified areas of excellence. Well-considered professional development helps teachers and teaching assistants to improve their practice. Some of the school's best work is created when lessons are practical and when pupils have the opportunity to engage in cross-curricular activities, such as during science week. Under the guidance of the deputy headteacher and the assessment coordinator, better assessment and monitoring of work has had a positive effect on tailoring teaching to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers are becoming adept at selecting resources and adjusting their teaching practices to raise pupils' achievements. Well-planned lessons build systematically on prior learning and effective marking, particularly in English and mathematics, means that pupils know what they have to do to improve further. Pupils are taking increasing responsibility for their own work and the majority know their targets. Pupils respond well to the increasingly high expectations being set. Consequently, by the time pupils leave the school, standards are above average. Teaching assistants are exceptionally valued members of staff and play a significant role in raising standards.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school exceeds national requirements and has already introduced French in Year 3 and Spanish in Year 5. Pupils talk with excitement and enthusiasm about what they have learned from the murals created by wartime pupils in air raid shelters on the school premises and from their current meetings with these ex-pupils. Excellent use is made of the school's unique historical artefacts to promote community cohesion, by holding open days for the general public. Pupils benefit greatly from the links that teachers create between different subjects and from special events such as residential trips, science weeks, visits from 'Viking warriors' and drama productions. The school adapts the curriculum to suit the particular needs of groups and individuals. For example, single-sex teaching sessions for Year 6 pupils have enabled the girls to increase their self-confidence. 'Master Classes' in art, mathematics, sport and writing extend gifted and talented pupils. Pupils enjoy regular opportunities to take part in drama and musical events. The school offers a very wide range of well-attended clubs and other activities including cheerleading, hiking and opportunities to enter local and national competitions. Up-to-date, attractive and informative displays help to stimulate children's interest, and encourage them to take pride in their own and others' work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Inspectors agree with staff and parents that this is a school that knows and values its pupils as individual members of the school community and takes excellent care of them. Children settle quickly into St. John's and are well prepared for secondary school because of excellent transition arrangements. Safeguarding procedures and risk assessments are robust. The school has been highly successful in creating an ethos where relationships are extremely positive, with the result that exclusions are very rare. Systems for monitoring and assessing the progress of individuals and groups, and for acting swiftly to eradicate underperformance, have been revised since the last inspection and are outstanding. Pupils understand their individual targets because their teachers regularly discuss them in class. Parents feel well informed about their children's progress and development. They appreciate the 'friendly approachability of staff', citing their willingness to listen to and act upon any concerns they have. Teaching assistants' extremely effective contributions ensure that all pupils are fully included in the life of the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's and deputy headteacher's complementary skills maximise their impact on raising achievement and moving the school forward rapidly. This outstanding partnership provides an excellent model for the rest of the staff. Middle managers have a clear idea of the school's strengths and of the areas requiring development. For example, an apposite range of provision has been devised following the thorough audit carried out by the recently appointed special needs co-ordinator. This has resulted in ensuring good progress and excellent outcomes for pupils. That the good leadership of subject managers is bearing fruit is evident in the high standard of work across the curriculum. Beautifully executed art and craft work and extremely well-researched and presented independent projects were a delight to view. Attainment in Key Stage 1 has risen because of consistently good teaching and effective monitoring of pupils' work. The school, rightly, wishes to move this good teaching forward. The school promotes excellent teamwork among staff, governors, pupils and parents. Governors work hard to promote and support the school. Together they have ensured that standards are high and that all aspects of provision, including assessment, monitoring and provision for gifted and talented pupils, have improved since the last inspection. This underlines their good capacity to make further improvements.

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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 ¹ 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

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	2
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?	1

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	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	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**

20 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's Primary School, Redhill, RH1 6QG

I am sure that you all remember our recent visit to St John's and I am writing to let you know what we found out about your school. Thank you for sharing your thoughts so clearly and politely with us. Here are some of the most important points.

- We agree with your parents that your headteacher and the entire staff work very hard and make St John's a good place to learn.
- Some things are really outstanding. These include the way that the staff care for you and treat everyone equally, the exciting subjects and clubs, and the trips and visits that you make.
- We found you to be very pleasant, helpful and sensible young people who are a great credit to your parents, your school, but most of all to yourselves.
- We were glad to hear that you feel safe in school. You know how to keep safe outside.
- You all get along very well with each other and you do a lot for people who are not as fortunate as yourselves. We saw how much you raised for Red Nose Day. Well Done!
- You work hard in the library and do many jobs in the school to help your teachers.
- The school councillors listen to your suggestions and share your views with the staff. Your traffic crossing warden said your ideas helped to make crossing the road safer for everyone.
- We saw a lot of your beautiful art and craft work and I was very impressed with how well you used the computer programs to present your project work and to create wonderful spinning wheels of dazzling colours.
- You make good progress in your learning because of good teaching and because you come to school regularly and work hard in class.
- Your parents would like a bit more help for some of you who find learning very difficult and the school is just getting this sorted out for next term. We agree that this is the right thing to do and we have asked the headteacher and the governors to make sure this happens.

We did not manage to visit the air raid shelters, but you told us all about them and we saw the newspaper cuttings and read some of your well-written interviews with people who were schoolchildren at St John's during the war. I will remember that for a long time.

Best wishes for your centenary celebrations.

Yours faithfully

Cathie Munt

Her Majesty's Inspector