

St John's CE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135056
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	329019
Inspection dates	19–20 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Barbara Atcheson

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)	409
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	Derek Arnold
Headteacher	Gordon Wainwright
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Blakebrook Kidderminster DY11 6AP
Telephone number	01562 745558
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized school which was opened in September 2007. The school is an amalgamation of a first and middle school, undertaken as part of the Wyre Forest review and school reorganisation. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than average. A few pupils who have recently joined the school are in the early stages of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also lower than average.

The deputy headteacher has been acting as headteacher since February 2009 as a result of the long-term illness of the headteacher. Since April 2009, another acting headteacher has been in place for two days a week. She will become full-time in June 2009. A teaching assistant runs a breakfast club and a private provider runs an after-school club.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

The school's overall effectiveness is inadequate. It is failing to provide an acceptable standard of education because leadership and management are inadequate, as is the school's capacity to improve. Monitoring and evaluation of provision have not been sufficiently systematic or rigorous, and self-evaluation has not led to improvement. Leadership and management roles remain underdeveloped. The slow pace of improvement since the amalgamation of the two schools has necessitated the involvement of the local authority. A review of the school in January 2009 highlighted that the majority of teaching was inadequate, standards were too low and pupils were not making the progress they should. Since then, the school has been through a period of uncertainty as a result of the long-term illness of the headteacher. The deputy headteacher has worked hard to run the school on a day-to-day basis from February 2009. Both she and the acting headteacher have focussed on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Together with governors, they are committed to raising standards and understand the next steps needed to improve the school.

Children start school in the reception class with skills and knowledge typical for their age and make satisfactory progress so that they all enter Year 1 in line with national expectations. Major inadequacies and inconsistencies in progress and standards in Years 1 to 5 reflect a legacy of underachievement because of inadequate teaching and shortcomings in academic guidance. Consequently, there are many gaps in pupils' skills and knowledge and currently, standards are below average at the end of Key Stage 2.

Teaching is inadequate. Expectations are not sufficiently high and too many lessons lack challenge so that the pace of learning is too slow. As a consequence, pupils are not reaching the standards they should. Work in books also shows that pupils are not making the progress they are capable of and that standards are too low. In some lessons teachers do have high expectations and pupils make good progress. However, generally the pace of learning is not fast enough.

Pupils enjoy school and behave well because pastoral care is good, and all procedures for ensuring the well-being of pupils are securely in place. Pupils' understanding of how to lead a healthy life and keep safe is good. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution in the pastoral support of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, in line with their peers, these pupils do not make the academic progress of which they are capable. Good links with outside agencies ensure those who are vulnerable receive good support. The academic guidance pupils receive is inadequate because assessment information is not yet consistently accurate and pupils do not know how to improve their work. Although the curriculum motivates and interests pupils, it does not meet the needs of all pupils, especially the more able, and this factor contributes to pupils' inadequate progress.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge typical for their age. They make satisfactory progress to reach the expected levels in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. Children settle quickly into the welcoming atmosphere of the Early Years Foundation Stage because personal development is good, relationships are strong and children are well cared for. Staff foster positive attitudes to learning and as a result, children behave well, are confident and sustain their concentration well. They work cooperatively and respond well to questions. Children enjoy preparing for their 'Pig Pen' party and show a secure knowledge of letters and sounds. They take pleasure in using different size containers in the sand to reinforce their vocabulary to describe size. Teaching assistants support children's learning appropriately and model the use of language well. Although teaching is satisfactory, learning is often directed rather than nurtured and supported, and children do not always have sufficient opportunities to make their own choices. The outdoor area is colourful and well resourced but is not always used as much as it could be to extend learning. Although leadership and management are satisfactory, teamwork and communication are not always sufficiently strong to ensure a consistent approach to planning challenging experiences across the curriculum.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate progress in all subjects to improve standards across the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching by raising teachers' expectations, increasing the pace of learning and the level of challenge for all pupils.
- Improve the quality of leadership, including monitoring and evaluation, at all levels so that there is a clear basis for planning improvements and effective strategies to ensure they are implemented.
- Ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and builds effectively on what pupils have done so that progress is accelerated.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

In 2008, standards at the end of Year 2 were significantly below average and too few pupils reached the higher levels in writing, mathematics and, particularly, reading. At the end of Year 6, pupils reached average standards in national tests. However, as these pupils had reached above average standards at the end of Year 2, this represents inadequate progress between Year 3 and Year 6. Current standards at the end of Year 6 are below average, particularly at the higher Level 5 in English and science, and most groups of pupils are not making the expected progress. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is inadequate because tasks are not always sufficiently well matched to their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils get on well together and forge positive relationships with adults. Nearly all pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. Their behaviour is good and, in most lessons, pupils concentrate on their work. However, when teachers talk for too long or the work is too easy and pupils are not actively engaged, then pupils' attention wanes. Despite pupils' positive attitudes, the

attendance rate is average, because too many parents choose to take their children on holiday during term time.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils work together amicably, respect the feelings of others and have a well-developed sense of fair play. Pupils generally respond well when given responsibility. However, the work of the school council is rather limited, and pupils' skills in showing initiative and making decisions are insufficiently developed. Pupils are safety-conscious and are concerned for the welfare of others. They understand the importance of healthy eating and benefit from many opportunities for physical exercise. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the community, and are keen fundraisers for charities. While pupils have learned to work constructively with others, their unsatisfactory academic progress means they are not adequately prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The majority of lessons lack an adequate level of challenge, especially for those pupils of higher ability. Teachers dominate the lessons because they talk for too long and opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and refine and evaluate their work are missed. At times, tasks take too long or are not designed to move learning on. Pupils say they could 'work a bit harder'. They say they usually understand what they are expected to learn in English and mathematics but not in science. Where teaching is good, the brisk pace of learning engages the pupils well. Teachers show good subject knowledge and have clear expectations of what pupils will achieve. In addition, the effective use of assessment ensures that the work is matched to the pupils' needs. As a result, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. However, these positive features are not applied consistently enough across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

The curriculum is inadequate because it does not promote satisfactory progress in learning. Insufficient attention is paid to ensuring that pupils make continuous progress from year to year and as a result, work is sometimes repeated. Opportunities for extended writing and pupils' use of information and communication technology are often limited. There has been too little consideration about how the curriculum and lesson planning can meet the needs of all groups of pupils. More able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently by the work they are given.

Extra-curricular enrichment activities are good and have included a residential trip to France. Pupils enjoy the range of interesting clubs after school, including sports and the arts. The lively breakfast club offers a variety of indoor and outdoor activities and promotes the personal development of pupils of all ages, as the older ones support and coach the younger pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

The support and guidance provided for pupils' academic development are inadequate. Pupils often require more focused support to achieve well in lessons. In addition, the quality of teachers' marking is too variable. While some pupils benefit from well-judged feedback, others receive insufficient guidance about how to improve. Mediocre work is inappropriately praised

too often. The quality of pastoral care is good. The school promotes a nurturing family atmosphere, which contributes to pupils' sense of security. Pupils know that adults will listen if they have any worries at school. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are robust, and regular health and safety checks are carried out. The school has strong links with outside agencies which serve to support pupils when this is required. The effective support and guidance provided for pupils' personal development are clearly reflected in their positive relationships, attitudes and behaviour.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The acting headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors are committed to raising standards. However, they have not yet had time to improve the quality of teaching and learning in order to do this. Systems and procedures for monitoring and evaluating pupils' performance and the quality of teaching are not sufficiently robust. Consequently there is too little good teaching and too much that is inadequate. There has been a lack of clear direction because the school development plan is out of date. Senior leaders recognise the need to formulate quickly a well-considered plan for improvement based on the main priorities. While governors work hard and are supportive of the school, they have not always held the school sufficiently to account, particularly with regard to raising standards and improving achievement. Over a quarter of parents do not feel that the school is led and managed well and a third feel that they are not consulted. Community cohesion is satisfactory. Pupils take part in local events and there are strong links with the church. In addition, pupils in Years 5 and 6 visit France and the school is developing links with schools in France and India which are contributing well to an understanding of international cultures.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	4

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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	4

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

21 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's Church of England Primary School, Kidderminster DY11 6AP

Thank you for being so friendly when we visited your school. We enjoyed visiting your lessons and talking to you. You really helped us in our work. While we think that there are some good things about your school, we feel that it needs extra support to help you to make the best possible progress. We thought you might like to know about the main things that we found when we came to your school.

- Your headteacher is away from school, but those who are in charge at present
- have a clear idea of what needs to be done to make improvements.
- Adults really care for you and help you if you are worried or upset.
- You enjoy school and you behave well.
- You are kind and helpful to each other, you know right from wrong and have respect for one another
- You know how to stay safe and keep healthy.
- The teaching and work you have been asked to do have not always helped you to make the progress of which you are capable.

The school is working hard to improve. We have asked the school to do four things.

- Ensure staff help you to learn quickly so that you can reach high standards in your work.
- Make sure that teachers always expect your best work and plan lessons that help you to learn at a fast rate.
- Check to see if the changes that have been made in your school are working well.
- Make sure that lessons always build on what you have done before so that you do not repeat work.

Other inspectors will regularly visit your school to check how well it is doing. We hope that you will all continue to enjoy coming to school and to try your hardest so that you are successful in the future.

Thank you again. We wish you continuing success.

Yours faithfully

Barbara Atcheson Lead inspector