

St John CofE Primary School, Kearsley

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105241
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	331552
Inspection dates	29–30 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Allan Torr HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	173
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Dorothy McGlyn
Headteacher	Mrs Sally Magill
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and a representative from the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at 82 pupil, 11 staff and 24 parent questionnaires. They also looked at pupils' work; observed break and lunchtimes; scrutinised policies, school documents and the school's latest information about pupils' attainment and progress.

- attainment and progress, particularly of boys and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to determine the quality of pupils' achievement and the effectiveness of provision
- pupils' attendance, to determine how well prepared pupils are for their future
- teaching and learning to determine whether all groups of pupils are involved, challenged and extended through questioning and well designed activities.

Information about the school

St John's is a smaller than average sized primary school. In June 2008 the school was given a notice to improve because it required significant improvement. The subsequent monitoring inspection in March 2009 judged the school's progress to be satisfactory against the issues identified in the previous inspection. Between September 2008 and July 2009, there was significant staff illness and disruption to the school. In addition there was a period of about nine months during which time the school was led by an acting headteacher.

The proportion of pupils eligible to take a free school meal is well above the national average; this is a significant increase from the previous two years. Almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs are above average. The school provides for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage within the Reception class. The school gained the ActiveMark and Healthy Schools Award in 2008.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

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.

Pupils and parents are supportive of the school and its work and feel it has improved in the last year. Improvements to the tracking of pupils' progress, attendance and to subject leadership have begun to show an effect on achievement, particularly in Key Stage 1. However, the improvements have not raised standards quickly enough. The local authority has provided some good support, including a consultant headteacher and leading teachers, to help manage and improve teaching and extra time from very capable school improvement officers. This has been partly successful; however, it has not yet improved pupils' achievement. The school has positive features, particularly in outcomes for pupils such as their understanding of how to live a healthy and safe lifestyle and how to make a positive contribution to the community. The school's care, guidance and support are good. As a result of effective measures to reduce absence, pupils attend more frequently. This aspect of the school's work has benefited from effective partnership working with others. The school's partners are working well together to remove barriers to raising pupils' attainment.

The school has, nevertheless, made too little progress in tackling some of the issues identified at the previous inspection. Some important areas, such as pupils' progress in writing and in mathematics, have deteriorated. This is mainly because of frequent and long-term staff absences and inadequate or barely satisfactory teaching. The absences have hampered the ability of staff to embed new initiatives and developments and to ensure pupils' attainment and achievement improve. Standards in Key Stage 2 are currently well below national expectations, particularly in writing. The results of the national assessments in 2009 show that less than half the pupils attained the expected Level 4 in mathematics and only half attained Level 4 in English. In the lessons observed during the inspection, attainment was low. Although pupils' progress in those lessons was mainly satisfactory, overall the progress is not fast enough to tackle the years of underachievement. This was also reflected in the work pupils were given to do, which was too easy. For example, some pupils in Key Stage 2 were completing work normally seen in Reception or Year 1 classes, particularly in mathematics. Some groups of pupils, particularly boys and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make the progress they should. This is often because the curriculum and the activities set in lessons do not challenge them and do not meet their interests. However, systems

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for working with pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have been revamped and improved by senior leaders. Evidence from case studies and from pupils' files indicates there are now good systems to identify learning difficulties. Pupils' development of skills for their future lives is inadequate. Information and communication technology (ICT) is underdeveloped and pupils rarely use it to improve their learning or their skills.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have introduced many new structures, procedures and developments to improve subject leadership, governance, and achievement. Pupil tracking, pupil progress conferences and the performance management of the school's staff have also been introduced. However, because of the use of many temporary teachers in the last year, the impact on pupils' achievement can only be seen in a few classes. Nevertheless, as a result of the changes, staff are motivated and committed. Senior leaders have worked hard to develop the skills of teaching assistants and improve the quality of their work. One assistant said 'we now feel more professional'. Governance is inadequate but is improving. The governors have worked hard and some attend training events. However, they do not all yet have secure enough understanding of their roles and responsibilities, particularly in terms of their statutory duties and monitoring the impact of initiatives. They do not yet have the knowledge to be able to challenge and support the school to improve pupils' achievement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in all subjects, particularly in writing, to be in line with the national average, through raising the quality of teaching and learning, ensuring:
 - - lessons take full account of pupils' interests, skills and National Curriculum levels
 - - pupils extend their writing skills in all curriculum areas
 - - pupils extend and develop their information and communication technology skills across the curriculum, and use it to extend their learning
 - - governors fulfil their roles in monitoring and assessing the impact of initiatives
 - - the gap between boys' and girls' attainment is further reduced.
- Raise attainment for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities by:
 - - providing daily targeted support
 - - monitoring the impact of support programmes
 - - providing challenging activities which meet their needs and interests

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Pupils' achievement is inadequate. Standards attained by Year 6 pupils have been well below average for the last three years and deteriorated in 2009. Evidence from lessons, pupils' work and from the school's teacher assessments for each year group indicates attainment is low, and particularly low in writing. Boys attain standards well below the national average and well below the girls. They are often not challenged enough in lessons and complete uninspiring, low level tasks, for example, their books show page

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after page of correct calculations in mathematics because the work set is too easy. They therefore do not make the progress they should. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make inadequate progress. For years they have underachieved and have not been correctly identified as needing extra help, support or targeted teaching to meet their needs. The school has now turned the corner with this group of pupils and their attainment and achievement is increasing, but not yet at a fast enough rate to be satisfactory. Pupils' learning has been fragmented due to the high level of staff absence, frequent changes of teachers and the relatively high proportion of inadequate lessons. The staffing is now more stable; there is some good and outstanding teaching.

The school has been successful in improving some outcomes for pupils which are now good. Pupils are friendly, polite and welcoming; they make a good contribution to the school, church and local communities, taking an interest and an active part in improving their local environment. Their spiritual and moral development is good because they have the opportunity to reflect, express their feelings and ideas, and to think about different religions and faiths. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles and put this into practice. A large proportion of pupils are involved in out of school activities and clubs. Many are involved in sporting events with other schools. The large majority of pupils say they feel safe and free from harassment and poor behaviour. Peer mentoring and playground pals are successful in helping pupils feel safe at break times. They have a good understanding about safety such as road and internet safety. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall. Learning in a small number of lessons was disrupted by low level behaviour. This was also linked to easy and uninspiring activities. Generally, pupils enjoy coming to school as indicated by their improved attendance. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning in a quarter of the lessons observed were good or outstanding. There is, however, not enough good teaching to tackle the low standards and to increase achievement. In too many lessons pupils are occupied, rather than challenged. This is particularly evident when looking at pupils' work. Pupils sometimes complete activities they have already proved they can do, particularly in mathematics. Some of the activities are too easy and more like the work provided for younger pupils in Reception and Year 1. There is very little written work completed in subjects such as geography, history and science and the work does not extend pupils' writing skills. In one example, the work was to cut and stick parts of a worksheet onto a page; in another it was to complete a few sentences about a geographical feature. There are a few good examples, however, such as in a history lesson: pupils were asked to write from the perspective of a Victorian child, describing their experiences building on the research completed in the previous lesson. Some teachers involve all pupils through talking partners, short active tasks and fast paced teaching. In these lessons, pupils do most of the work and teachers ask questions which enable pupils to think, reason and to explain. In the majority of lessons, however, adults ask questions which are too narrow and need very little effort from pupils to answer. By doing this, they are spoonfeeding the answer rather than helping pupils to make progress in their thinking. In these lessons pupils sit passively for too long listening to the teacher, or listening to the teacher ask a question to one or two pupils. Although resources such as the interactive whiteboards are used to support teaching, ICT is rarely used well to support and extend pupils' skills or to prepare them for their future lives.

The use of assessment across the school is inadequate. Too few lessons are based on an assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding. As a consequence, lessons are often too easy. In some lessons, teachers do not monitor or assess the learning of the whole class enough or adapt their teaching during the lesson to ensure pupils' learning is being taken further. In some classes teachers' marking provides good tips for pupils to improve their work and pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to reach the next level.

The school's curriculum is based on national schemes of work which have not been adapted sufficiently to meet the range of needs or interests of pupils. There are missed opportunities to make cross-curricular links or to extend pupils' skills across all subjects. As a result, the effectiveness of the curriculum on raising standards and improving pupils' learning is not as good as it could be. Some subjects have been improved

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because teachers have adapted the requirements to better meet the needs of pupils at St John's. The physical education curriculum has been improved, for example, by a greater entitlement for pupils to go swimming and by partnerships with other school and organisations to broaden pupils' experience of different sports and activities.

The school works well with other agencies such as attendance and behaviour support officers and social workers. As a result, pupils have a more stable base from which to start achieving. Measures to reduce absence are taking effect and measures to improve the support and challenge for vulnerable pupils are beginning to be effective.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Although governance is inadequate, senior leaders and the local authority have provided training to enable governors to undertake their roles and responsibilities. They are now more able to support and challenge the school and to know the schools strengths and weaknesses. However, not all systems and procedures are embedded and governors have been pre-occupied with building issues. They still, in general, lack knowledge and understanding about how to measure the impact of initiatives on pupils' achievement.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear vision of improved achievement and, as stated in the school's mission statement within a context of 'love, compassion and respect'. This is shared with a hard working and committed staff.

Parents are mostly well informed about what is happening in school and about the progress of their children by, for example, a termly report and parents' evening. Close working with parents has enabled the school to tackle discrimination and inequality and to improve pupils' readiness to learn. Partnerships with other organisations have been effective in promoting pupils' well-being but as yet the impact on pupils' achievement is no better than satisfactory. Safeguarding has an appropriate priority and procedures are in place to ensure the accurate and appropriate vetting of newly appointed staff. Risk assessments, health and safety procedures are rigorous. The headteacher is effective in the promotion of community cohesion. She has analysed the characteristics of the local population and has a strategy for ensuring the school helps pupils to engage and interact with people from different backgrounds and traditions. The governors are not aware of their duties in this respect and have not evaluated the impact of the community cohesion strategy.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Reception class with skills and knowledge below typical expectations for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. They make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning, particularly in their confidence, independence and social skills. In the observed sessions, children were actively engaged, knew class routines and systems, selected equipment and activities independently and enjoyed their learning. Adults made satisfactory use of resources. In one observed lesson, pupils were engaged in sorting sweets into groups, pasta shapes, geometric shapes and buttons. Pupils not involved in these activities sometimes had a missed opportunity to extend their learning, for example, through ICT, and creative activities that linked to the main topic for the lesson. Although all of the areas of learning are catered for within the safe, bright indoor learning environment, not all activities are linked as well as they could be to the central learning objective or the theme. Access and the quality of the outdoor area has improved since the last inspection. Children's skills and their progress in writing are not as good as in other areas of learning. For instance, there were only a very small number of children, in the observed sessions, engaged in writing tasks and the writing area is neither exciting nor prominent. Leadership and management of the area is satisfactory. Staff have an effective and appropriate overview of the welfare standards, the management and organisation of the class and of how to monitor learning.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents are very supportive of the school's work. All who returned the questionnaire agreed that pupils enjoy school and the school keeps their child safe. Almost all agreed they are informed about their child's progress, the school helps children to have a healthy lifestyle, and the school takes account of parents' suggestions and concerns. Parents felt that pupils make progress, teaching is good and pupils are well prepared for their future lives. While inspectors agreed with the majority of parents' views, they disagreed with these. Inspectors saw too many barely satisfactory and inadequate lessons which slowed pupils' progress. Pupils' skills in writing, mathematics and in ICT are underdeveloped.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St John CofE Primary School, Kearsley to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 26 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 173 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	63	9	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	50	12	50	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	10	42	11	46	2	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	7	29	14	58	2	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	9	38	14	58	1	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	6	25	15	63	2	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	5	21	18	75	0	0	1	4
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	6	25	14	58	1	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	5	21	15	63	1	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	4	17	13	54	4	17	2	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	3	13	16	67	2	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	7	29	13	54	1	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	50	9	38	3	13	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



1 October 2009

Inspection of St John C of E Primary School, Kearsley, Bolton

Dear Pupils,

On behalf of myself and the other inspectors, I would like to thank you for your very warm welcome to your school during the recent inspection. You were friendly, polite and kind. We enjoyed meeting and talking to you, looking at your work and reading your comments in the pupil questionnaires.

Almost all of you agreed that you enjoy coming to school, you feel safe and adults care for you and are interested in your views. We also agree with you that the school helps you to be healthy and helps you to get ready to move up to your next class.

Although most of you thought you learnt a lot in lessons, inspectors disagreed because your assessment results are too low and many of you could make more progress, particularly boys and pupils with a special educational need and/or disability. We have asked the school to improve your attainment by teaching lessons based on your interests and skills; by helping you to use your writing and ICT skills in all subjects; and by ensuring governors support the school in improving your test results.

Most of you agreed that behaviour is good and some of you said it had improved since the last inspection. Attendance has also improved since the last inspection and so has the outside area for the youngest pupils. There were problems last year in some classes because so many teachers were away. This has meant that some things introduced to improve the school didn't have chance to work to improve the standards you reach. This is why the inspectors have judged the school to need special measures. This means an inspector will visit your school each term to check how much progress you are making.

Yours sincerely

Mr Allan Torr

Her Majesty's Inspector

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