

St John the Evangelist RC Primary School, Bromley Cross, Bolton

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105249
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	336457
Inspection dates	23–24 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Colin Smith

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	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr G Dobson
Headteacher	Mr R McGloin
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school improvement planning, pupils' work and minutes of the governing body. In addition, parents' and pupils' questionnaires were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- achievement and standards in mathematics compared to other subjects
- the learning and progress of lower and higher attaining pupils
- the effectiveness of teachers' use of assessment in providing challenging activities, well matched to pupils' different learning needs
- the extent to which leaders, governors and staff work together to plan and evaluate school provision and outcomes, including community cohesion.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average in size. Almost half of the pupils attending live outside the immediate locality. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is below average, although the school serves a typically mixed community. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Only a very small number speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also below average, although there has been a higher than average number of pupils with a statement of special educational need over recent years. The school is undergoing staff changes. Two newly qualified teachers started this term and the appointment of a replacement deputy headteacher is expected shortly. The school has gained the Healthy Schools and Active Mark awards, the Basic Skills Quality Mark and Investors in People status.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

Main findings

St John the Evangelist continues to be a satisfactory school although there have been improvements since the previous inspection. Teaching, although remaining satisfactory overall, is strengthening because teachers' marking of pupils' work is more constructive and pupils now have clear targets to help them to improve.

Good features from the previous inspection have been maintained and added to. Behaviour is good, attendance is excellent and pupils fully understand how to lead safe and healthy lifestyles. Care, guidance and support have improved to good and pupils make a good contribution to the school community by helping each other. They enjoy their time at school.

In recent years, children have entered school with knowledge and skills typical for their age and reached average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Good teaching in mathematics has raised standards, by the end of Year 6, to well above average. Tracking pupils' progress towards challenging school targets is improving their learning. Pupils who receive additional support for special educational needs and/or disabilities do well. However, teaching is not sufficiently challenging in English and science to ensure that all of the more-able pupils reach the levels of which they are capable. This is why standards in these subjects remain broadly average. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that largely enables pupils to build on their previous learning. Better induction, including links with pre-school provision, are improving children's readiness for school, which is reflected in their increasingly higher attainment on entry. However, the good start made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not extended as well as it could be in Key Stage 1.

Senior staff and governors have a realistic understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's capacity for improvement is satisfactory, largely because individuals take responsibility to provide the best for their pupils. However, there is scope to improve the direction of the school by securing greater unity of purpose towards agreed outcomes. Where this happens, for example, in mathematics, significant improvements result. While the school maintains productive relationships with parents and outside agencies and ensures that pupils are safeguarded and have equality of opportunity, it is not promoting community cohesion sufficiently beyond the school.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the strategic direction of the school by:
 - involving all members of staff in identifying priorities
 - agreeing actions required to achieve them
 - clarifying the purpose of any monitoring and evaluation.
- Raise the quality of teaching in English and science to ensure that all the more-able pupils fulfil their potential by:
 - using the outcomes of assessment to provide more challenging activities
 - encouraging wider use of classroom computers to extend their learning.
- Improve transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage into Year 1 by:
 - planning the curriculum to ensure continuity
 - sharing the use of indoor and outdoor areas and equipment
 - providing additional Early Years Foundation Stage training for Year 1 staff.
- Ensure that community cohesion is promoted more effectively by reaching out to involve other religious and ethnic groups in the life of the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Learning in mathematics lessons is almost always good because the tasks are interesting and challenging, such as predicting number patterns. Learning in English lessons is often good. In both subjects, pupils concentrate well and present their work carefully.

Learning is very evident when pupils are actively involved in sharing ideas and solving problems, but decreases when they spend too long listening to the teacher. For example, Year 3 pupils were tuned into the next lesson because they had dramatised a story the day before. Work in pupils' books and school assessments show that pupils make satisfactory progress in reading and writing over time and good progress in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities learn very productively under the guidance of well-trained teaching assistants. The learning of more-able pupils is very successful in mathematics because they rise to the challenges provided. However, insufficient challenge in science and more variable challenge in English lessons result in the more-able pupils not learning as quickly as they could.

In 2009, results in mathematics dramatically improved when over half of the pupils achieved levels higher than expected for their age. In Year 2, pupils' attainment has been improving steadily and standards are well above average owing to, in part, higher attainment on entry. Given pupils' starting points, progress is satisfactory in English and science and good in mathematics.

The very large majority of pupils enjoy school. This is evident in their good behaviour and exceptionally good attendance. Pupils' spiritual, social and moral development is good. They work together harmoniously, appreciate fairness and justice and show respect for others. Pupils have a good appreciation of their own heritage, but a more limited understanding of cultural diversity. Pupils feel safe and know how to avoid dangers, such as traffic and fire. Their good knowledge of the importance of diet and

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

exercise enables them to stay healthy. Pupils are increasingly involved in decision making and older pupils show maturity in caring for younger ones, describing themselves as 'gardeners looking after seeds.' Pupils have satisfactory literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills and good numeracy skills. They understand what they need to do to achieve their targets. These factors ensure that pupils are being suitably prepared for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good in mathematics because assessment is used well to provide activities that are very closely matched to pupils' different learning needs. For example, more-able Year 4 pupils worked independently checking their answers using inverse calculations. In the best English lessons this is also the case, but in English and science more-able pupils are sometimes given extra work at the same level rather than more demanding tasks. There are signs that teaching is improving, not only in mathematics. In all subjects, teachers ensure that pupils understand what they are expected to learn and ensure a good atmosphere for learning in their lessons. Interactive whiteboards are used to good

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

effect to explain difficult ideas, such as the use of paragraphs. However, pupils have insufficient opportunities to use classroom computers to extend their learning further. Curriculum priority is given to literacy, numeracy and increasing enjoyment in learning, for example, through drama. Pupils' knowledge and understanding in science are covered adequately, but their skills of investigation are not developed systematically. The curriculum is sensitively adjusted to meet the needs of pupils who find learning difficult. The needs of gifted and talented pupils are better provided for in mathematics than in other subjects. The school makes good use of visits and visitors to bring the curriculum to life, such as the eco project, which raises pupils' understanding of important issues such as global warming and fair trade. Effective personal, social and health education, along with a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, ensure that pupils' personal and social skills and their interests are fostered. The good start made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not extended as well as it could be in Year 1, where there is limited space and no direct access to outdoor areas. A narrower, more formal curriculum is provided, for which some children are not yet ready.

Pastoral care is good. Pupils are welcomed into the school's supportive family atmosphere. Older pupils help younger ones and pupils who require additional support benefit from sensitive relationships with staff. Parents of vulnerable pupils are some of the school's most staunch supporters. Comments such as, 'The school has opened doors for my children', typify their views. Health and education specialists work successfully with teaching staff to help remove barriers to learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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?

Leadership and management are successful in establishing a positive climate for learning in which pupils' welfare is strongly promoted. The school fully meets governments' safeguarding requirements in ensuring that staff are safely recruited, trained in child protection and supported by outside agencies in their duties to keep pupils safe. Regular health and safety checks minimise any potential hazards.

The management of teaching and learning does not share such clear direction. There is no lack of ambition. The work of the school is regularly checked. Lessons are observed, pupils' work is examined and assessments are analysed. An accurate picture of areas requiring improvement emerges and coherent plans are drawn up to move the school

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forward. However, staff are not sufficiently involved in the process. They do not have ownership or fully understand the purpose, which makes it harder for the school to achieve its goals. There is one example of inspirational subject leadership that proves beyond doubt that the school has the capacity to improve. The teaching and learning in mathematics has been revolutionised through staff training, local authority support, rigorous evaluation and sharply focused action planning in which all staff have been involved and standards have subsequently shot up.

Governors are beginning to exert their influence by asking important questions to increase their understanding of school performance. This is helping to inform their decision-making and assisting them in holding the school to account. The school promotes equality and includes all pupils. Their progress is now carefully checked and those not on course to achieve challenging targets are identified and given additional support to help to close the gap. Satisfactory relationships are maintained with parents who receive copies of their children's targets to enable them to support their learning. The school maintains typical links with outside agencies, which enhance pupils' welfare and learning. Although community cohesion is well-established within the school, it is not promoted effectively outside the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The school has maintained and built upon its good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage since the previous inspection. Children settle happily and form trusting relationships with adults. Their health, safety and well-being are paramount, which is reflected in their happy smiles, rapid adjustment to school and growing awareness of

hygiene and keeping safe and healthy. Good teaching enables children of all abilities to make good progress and reach standards that are above those expected for their age. A wide range of stimulating experiences is provided, indoors and outside. Children are encouraged to explore, make choices and gain independence. They become absorbed in activities, such as the pretend car wash, which nurture their curiosity. Short intensive activities led by adults and brought to life by 'Freddy Bear' ensure that children acquire good reading, writing and mathematical skills. Teachers and support staff observe children carefully, assess their learning and use the information to plan the next steps. That said, there is scope to analyse assessments more thoroughly, tailor activities more precisely to children's individual needs and provide greater physical and problem solving challenges in the outside area. Good leadership ensures that provision continues to improve. For example, there are plans to provide a canopy to enable children to learn outdoors in inclement weather and to extend the Early Year's Foundation Stage curriculum into Year 1 to enable the children to make a smoother transition.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents are satisfied with what the school provides and very appreciative of what the school does to keep children safe and healthy, prepare them for the future and help them to enjoy school. Inspectors agree. A very small minority of parents have concerns about their children's progress, behaviour and teaching. The inspection team found behaviour to be good and often excellent in lessons. Teaching and pupils' progress was found to be satisfactory, but not as effective for the more-able pupils as others. A few parents mentioned their children were not 'pushed' enough. However, parents of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are extremely positive about what the school provides, and their opinion is justified. A few parents have concerns regarding leadership and management. The inspection team found leadership and management to be satisfactory, but some lack of clarity and unity amongst leaders and staff is making it harder for the school to move forward quickly.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St John the Evangelist RC Primary School, Bromley Cross, Bolton 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 57 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 181 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	58	66	29	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	47	49	39	41	4	4	5	5
The school informs me about my child's progress	31	34	50	54	6	7	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	37	49	52	4	4	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	34	38	42	47	9	10	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	40	43	41	44	6	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	52	22	41	2	4	0	0
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)	45	52	36	41	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	42	40	47	7	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	37	42	48	8	9	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	38	43	48	6	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	40	45	38	43	6	7	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	68	72	25	26	1	1	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.



I would like to thank you for being so helpful and polite to myself and the other inspectors when we visited your school recently. We very much enjoyed talking with you to find out what was happening in your school. Our inspection found that St John the Evangelist is a satisfactory school that has some good features.

Your headteacher, teachers and support staff take good care of you, keep you safe and help you to understand how well you are learning. We were impressed by your good behaviour, positive attitudes and excellent attendance. You work hard in lessons, respond well to your teachers and try your best.

Younger children entering the Reception class make good progress and are happy from the first day, partly because you help to look after them. Infant and junior pupils make satisfactory progress in English and science and reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Teaching is satisfactory and we can see improvements in the way that your work is marked and targets are set to help you to improve further. Teaching in mathematics is good. This is why you are making such good progress and reaching high standards in this subject.

We have asked your headteacher, governors and staff to help the school to improve further by:

- working as a team and agreeing exactly how future improvements will be made and checked upon
- making sure that the more-able pupils amongst you are given really challenging activities in English and science lessons to help you to reach higher levels
- providing activities for pupils in Year 1 that build smoothly upon what they have learned in the Reception class
- including people from the wider community, with very different cultural and religious backgrounds, into the life of your school to help you to understand more about other cultures and enable your school to play a greater part in helping communities to work and live together in harmony.

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