

St John's Church School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110856
Local Authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	337591
Inspection dates	21–22 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Alan Lemon

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stuart Reed
Headteacher	Colette Firth
Date of previous school inspection	14 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Eighteen lessons were seen, taught by 11 teachers. Inspectors met with a group of pupils, staff and governors. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of school documentation including policies, external review, and information on pupils' progress. Fifty two parental questionnaires were analysed.

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

- the effectiveness of steps taken in Key Stage 2 to raise the standards achieved by girls in mathematics and science
- the circumstances giving rise to pupils in Key Stage 2 with special educational needs and/or disabilities seeming to do well in English
- the rigour applied to the analysis of pupils' outcomes by leaders and the governing body and the contribution of this to school improvement.

Information about the school

The large majority of pupils in the school are White British, and a significant proportion is from minority ethnic, and mostly Black, backgrounds. A small minority speak Portuguese, Polish or Lithuanian and they are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who enter or leave school other than at the usual time is high and a significant number have been identified as vulnerable. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. The school has developed a business and innovation unit based upon information and communication technology, through which it has made links with businesses and offers support to other schools. The school is a Football Association School. It has the ArtsMark, ActiveMark, Information and Communication Technology Mark and the Healthy Schools Award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Leaders have a good understanding of the challenges and barriers to learning presented by many pupils. This provides leaders with a clear sense of direction and underpins the school's well-established priorities with regard to each pupil's personal development, progress and preparation for the next stage of their education. Staff have an excellent understanding of pupils' needs which informs the care and support they provide. This is of an outstanding quality and its impact is substantial. It ensures every pupil stays safe, enjoys school and develops essential personal qualities, self-confidence and self-esteem in particular. Pupils speak confidently of feeling safe and they contribute actively to their own personal development by taking on a wide range of responsibilities for each other such as play-pals, peer-mentors and sports leaders. Contribution is at the heart of the school's strong Christian ethos and pupils respond exceptionally well by giving help to their community and to good causes world-wide. Pastoral provision impacts positively on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is outstanding as it is further enhanced by curriculum enrichment, which is especially strong in sports and the arts.

Teaching across the school succeeds in promoting effective learning, with no significant difference in quality at any key stage. In a minority of lessons it is so effective, that the quality of learning is high and pupils make outstanding progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills. In these instances, the excellent teaching is lively, enjoyable and very demanding, sometimes with work being planned at the highest level. Pupils are frequently engaged well in lessons and keen to contribute their thoughts and answers to questions. They often work effectively when learning independently and by helping each other on set tasks. In some lessons, pupils' capacity to use their initiative and the responsibility they take for their own learning are limited.

Leaders are resolute in raising standards and the staff share the school's ambition wholeheartedly. As a result, team effort is concerted towards improving pupils' attainment and progress. Year 6 pupils are currently attaining broadly average standards in English and mathematics. This reflects an improvement in the rate of pupils' progress over time. In 2009, and in previous years, English, mathematics and science standards were all below average, although pupils made satisfactory progress. As a result of the strong drive to raise standards in English over several years, and more recently in mathematics, the quality of learning has improved and pupils' progress is now good and they achieve well. The route to improvement has been the effective leadership of English over the past few years, which is now being replicated successfully in mathematics but has not yet been applied to raising standards further in science. Leadership gathers strength from rigorous monitoring of the school's work, through its

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own accurate self-evaluation, the governing body's oversight and robust external review. As a result, the school plans improvement effectively, setting itself challenging targets and managing developments with insight and skill. This gives it a good capacity to sustain further improvement. Much of the school's success is owed to the excellent ways in which the staff have engaged with parents, encouraging active interest in their children's learning and progress. The staff have also built exceptionally strong partnerships within the community and more widely. Together with the good emphasis placed in school on equality of opportunity for all pupils, their good preparation for future economic well-being, the contribution to promoting community cohesion is outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To maintain the momentum on raising standards increase the challenge for pupils by:
 - providing further opportunities for them to be more independent and to use their initiative in learning.
- Raise standards in science by:
 - strengthening the leadership and management of this subject across the school
 - monitoring rigorously pupils' progress in science.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The gap in achievement between boys and girls in mathematics has closed and is reflected in good progress and rising standards. Standards in English are rising consistently, year-on-year in Years 1 and 2 and increasingly in Years 3 to 6.

Improvement is not as marked in science. Higher standards are seen in lessons right across the school among different groups of pupils, especially those speaking English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who are all given close attention, which results in them progressing as well as other pupils.

In lessons, the effective assessment of every pupil's progress is ensuring previous variations in the performance of groups of pupils are being eliminated. Pupils are often eager to participate during lessons and happy to work together. The good provision in Reception means the majority of pupils started Year 1 in 2009 having reached average expectations, which is a marked improvement on previous years.

Pupils feel as safe as possible and this gives them the reassurance and confidence they need to be effective learners. They are well-rounded by their experiences in school, developing exceptionally well their understanding of and interest in a healthy lifestyle. More than half of pupils take school dinners and these are well balanced and nutritious. Many of the other pupils bring healthy packed lunches from home. Pupils are relaxed, friendly, and considerate of each other, respecting the differences in culture, race and language within the school. They are helpful and contribute very enthusiastically to school life and its Christian ethos. Pupils perform a wide range of responsibilities in

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school including support for each other as well as work on the school council and forums outside school. They raise money for many good causes and help locally through litter clearing and garden projects. Attendance has improved and is now above average.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Most teaching benefits from effective planning, resulting in much good teaching throughout the school. Pupils are kept closely informed about their progress by teachers' studious marking, and the challenging targets they set for each pupil. A key feature of each pupil's close involvement in tracking their progress is that they take a lead in parents' evenings when they show and explain to their parents the progress they have made. Pupils who find learning more difficult than others and those learning English as an additional language are well supported through the planning of lessons and by good deployment of effective teaching assistants.

The curriculum is planned with vision. It stimulates pupils' interest in learning and engages them with a wide variety of enjoyable and relevant challenges. It is enriched exceptionally well through many opportunities for sports, competition and enterprise.

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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These are complemented well by visits away from school and residential experiences, including confidence-building adventure activities. Information and communication technology, physical education and the arts are strengths and this is reflected well in the awards the school has achieved in these areas. English is increasing in strength, and the recent attention given to mathematics is improving its provision.

Excellent relationships with parents and very effective work in partnership with a wide range of social agencies help staff achieve their mission of pupils becoming ambitious and being high achievers. The school and local authority are rigorous in tackling absence and achieve a positive response from parents. The deputy headteacher gives robust leadership to child protection and oversight of each pupil's welfare.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

In achieving its aims, the school benefits from key leadership strengths which have impacted positively on literacy, physical education, information and communication technology and the overall enrichment of the curriculum. The headteacher sets high expectations, has established the school's most important priorities and has given it a clear sense of direction. Governors support the school's aims effectively. They are closely engaged and knowledgeable, and they use their expertise well to oversee the school's work and drive improvement. Their agreement to the appointment of the business and innovation manager has increased significantly the school's resources and expertise in information and communication technology. It has also contributed to the excellent engagement with parents in particular, by taking the lead in obtaining for many parents a computer and the internet at home using government grants.

While partnerships are extensive their outstanding quality is well exemplified in how information and communication technology expertise is marketed effectively to other schools and links with businesses have grown substantially. The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are good with particular strengths in partnerships with agencies, child protection procedures and in maintaining close oversight of pupils from vulnerable circumstances. The school makes an exceptionally good contribution to promoting community cohesion. Leaders have a very clear understanding of the needs and challenges its community presents. The school has responded very effectively through its engagement with parents and partners in helping bring the community closer together.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

All of the Reception children benefit from a wide choice of activities during each day. They enjoy their play and games indoors and outdoors and move freely between these areas. The emphasis on choice and freedom effectively promote children's positive attitudes and disposition. They make good progress in all areas of learning, in particular personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. While some find it difficult to concentrate in adult-led activities, such as phonics, reading and counting, lively teaching engages groups of children.

Teaching is well planned and children are taught in small groups, in which they are supported effectively by the good number of staff available. Close support and supervision mean children with special educational needs and those speaking English as an additional language learn and make progress as effectively as others. Children are closely supervised and monitored indoors and outside at all times. Their well being is promoted effectively and their activities are constantly assessed against all the areas of learning. An improving trend in children's progress reflects the strength in the leadership and management of the Reception year, which is ensuring all children get a good start to their education.

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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

In the low response to the parental questionnaire, views of the school were almost entirely positive. These accord with inspectors' evaluations of the school's work and in particular the fact that pupils enjoy school and parents are kept well informed about their children's progress. Most parents are happy with the experience the school provides for their children and agree with inspectors that it is well led and managed. A very small minority disagreed that teaching was good, that their children were making enough progress or that their children's needs were well met. However, the evidence inspectors gathered did not confirm these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St John's Church School 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 52 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 239 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	57	19	39	1	2	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	33	67	13	27	3	6	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	29	56	21	40	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	52	20	38	5	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	30	58	16	31	5	10	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	58	16	31	3	6	3	6
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	58	21	40	1	2	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)	26	50	14	27	2	4	2	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	52	17	33	5	10	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	52	20	38	3	6	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	52	18	35	1	2	4	8
The school is led and managed effectively	35	67	12	23	2	4	3	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	65	13	25	3	6	1	2

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



23 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's Church School, Cambridgeshire, PE2 5SP

Many thanks for the very warm welcome you gave to inspectors. A special thanks also to the pupils who met with an inspector to share their views of school and their progress. By the end of our visit we were completely convinced your school is a good school.

The strengths of your school are as follows.

You are making good progress and the standard of your work, especially in English and mathematics, is improving.

Your behaviour is good and the extent to which you are safe, lead a healthy lifestyle and contribute in school and beyond it is outstanding.

The good teaching is encouraging you to work hard and to learn well.

All of the work and activities the school has planned are enjoyable and challenging for you.

You are all exceptionally well looked after by staff and those of you who find learning more difficult than most are known and given all the help you need.

Your headteacher and all of the staff are working hard making sure everything about school is right for you to make progress and be ready for moving onto the next stage and eventually secondary school.

The areas for improvement are:

- for you to work more independently and use your initiative more in lessons which would improve how you learn
- for staff to check how well you are doing in science so that you make the same progress as mathematics and English.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alan Lemon

Lead inspector

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