

Over St John's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111263
Local Authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	337652
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Judith Tolley

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	138
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs S McClellan
Headteacher	Mrs ML Sheridan
Date of previous school inspection	0 October 2006
School address	Delamere Street Winsford Cheshire CW7 2LU
Telephone number	01606 592608
Fax number	01606 861841
Email address	head@overstjohns.cheshire.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors spent the majority of time observing learning, visited 10 lessons, observed seven teachers and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's analysis and tracking of pupils' progress, 53 pupils' questionnaires and 75 parental questionnaires.

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

- the achievement of pupils at Key Stage 1 and 2 to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging, particularly in English
- the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels to raise standards further.

Information about the school

Over St John's CofE Primary School is much smaller than average. Pupils are of predominantly White British heritage. There are very few pupils of minority ethnic heritage. Very few pupils have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school has the Inclusion Quality Mark, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Activemark, Healthy School status, Fair Trade status and the Eco School 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

Over St John's is a good school. It has some outstanding features. Excellent care, guidance and support are at the heart of the school. All staff know individual pupils very well and so are able to meet their individual needs very effectively. Pupils are confident and articulate. They respect and care for each other and reflect on their own actions as well as moral and ethical issues. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Their above average attendance is a ringing endorsement of this. They typically say 'My school is caring and special,' and that school 'is a safe and happy place to be'.

Safeguarding procedures are good.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and by the end of Reception the vast majority attain average standards and so enter Year 1 confident learners, well-equipped to access the Key Stage 1 curriculum. During Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils continue to make good progress, so that by the end of Year 6 their attainment is above average in English, mathematics and science.

Good teaching enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language, to make good progress from their starting points. They are given challenging targets and their progress is closely tracked so that any difficulties can rapidly be identified and appropriate support given where necessary. Pupils are aware of their targets and, as a result of good feedback, have a good understanding about how they can improve their work. Pupils say that learning is fun and that they are given interesting things to do. They make the best progress when they explore ideas for themselves and work collaboratively with others to solve problems, but opportunities are sometimes missed to enable them to work in this way in lessons.

The curriculum is used imaginatively to capture pupils' interest and to enable them to practise their basic skills in different contexts. They have very positive attitudes towards their learning and talk with enthusiasm about their topic work, for instance, on Australia, a village in India, the Tudors and their study of plants. They show great pride in their work and are keen to share their achievements with others.

Leadership and management are good. The school's excellent commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity is at the heart of all that it does, so that pupils and staff alike feel valued and pupils are extremely proud of their achievements. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school. She is strongly supported by the deputy headteacher and staff, who all share this vision. They all work very effectively as a team to evaluate their work, spread good practice and strive for improvement.

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Self-evaluation is accurate and based on robust procedures which track pupils' progress and monitor provision. All staff are fully involved in these processes and so have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. Standards have improved year on year and issues from the last inspection have been tackled successfully. As a result, the school has a good capacity to improve further. Governors are well informed and are very supportive. The school provides good value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards further by increasing opportunities for pupils to explore ideas for themselves and work collaboratively to solve problems in lessons.

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

Pupils enter Year 1 with standards that are broadly average. They make good progress and by the end of Year 6 standards are above average. In lessons, pupils are confident and articulate in explaining their views and in showing their working to others. Their writing is of a high standard and most express themselves accurately and fluently, displaying a good understanding of different styles, although opportunities for pupils to write creatively and at length are more limited. They tackle problems in mathematics with confidence, pooling their ideas and are keen to show their working to others. In lessons, pupils display very positive attitudes towards their learning and listen carefully to their teachers and to their classmates. They work effectively in pairs and small groups and are mutually supportive.

Pupils willingly take responsibility, for instance, as school councillors, members of the Eco team and as buddies for younger children or children new to the school. They take these responsibilities very seriously. Around the school and in the playground they are kind to each other and look after one another. They have a good understanding about how to stay safe and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They regularly celebrate their own and each other's achievements, take time to reflect on their actions, empathise with others and have a good sense of right and wrong. They have an excellent understanding of their own and other cultures through their participation in local events such as the Arts and Dance Festivals and their study of other cultures. They are well prepared for the next stage in education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have high expectations and pupils respond very positively. They present new ideas clearly through demonstrations so that pupils rapidly understand. Both teachers and teaching assistants use questioning effectively to support and extend pupils' thinking. Pupils make particularly rapid progress and are markedly more confident in sharing their ideas in class discussion when they are given time to reflect and share their thoughts with a partner beforehand. Teachers usually use assessment information well to meet the needs of different groups in lessons. Activities usually engage pupils' interest, but occasionally pupils become restless when they are required to listen to the teacher for lengthy periods or when they are not directly involved in activities. When pupils explore ideas for themselves or work together to solve problems they make rapid progress but they are not always given the opportunity to do this. Marking is regular and gives pupils good guidance about how to improve. Pupils know their targets and how to improve their work.

The curriculum meets the needs and engages the interest of pupils well. Since the last inspection opportunities to enable pupils to practise basic skills in other contexts have been successfully developed. All staff share ideas and plan together in order to meet pupils' needs, to engage their interest and to raise standards further. Pupils have frequent opportunities to express themselves through art and music, to learn French and to take part in sports and dance. All pupils, including children in the Reception class, regularly use information and communication technology both to demonstrate their ideas to others and to present their work. There is a good range of clubs and extra-curricular activities which are well attended. The curriculum is further enriched by

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visits, outside visitors and residential trips as well as activities at the high schools and in the local community.

Excellent attention is given to all aspects of care, guidance and support. Teachers and adults in the school know pupils very well indeed and pupils have every confidence in the support and guidance their teachers give them. The school works very effectively both with parents and with outside agencies to remove barriers to pupils' learning and development and ensure their welfare. Excellent relationships are a characteristic of the school. Safeguarding procedures are robust and all staff have a very good understanding of safeguarding issues and procedures. Pupils say they feel safe and know teachers will help them with any difficulty. Parents and pupils alike talk about the caring 'family' atmosphere in the school and parents quote instances of how the support the school provides for their children has resulted in them making significant progress. Very well-focused support, not only for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities but also for higher attaining pupils, enables all pupils to reach, and often exceed, their targets. Very effective induction procedures and strong links with high schools ensure a smooth transition from one stage in education to the next.

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?

The headteacher and senior leadership team are very successful in inspiring all members of the school to share a strong sense of purpose and to work very effectively as a team. Regular and rigorous monitoring, involving all staff, is the basis for sharing ideas and best practice to improve teaching and learning across the school. Target setting is based on reliable assessment information and is realistic and challenging. The school has a good relationship with the vast majority of parents and carers. It actively seeks their views through questionnaires and keeps them well informed about school events and about their children's progress. The school works effectively with a cluster of primary and high schools to enhance the experience of its pupils, for instance, through participation in local events and competitions. Recent work with local universities has led to pupils conducting research into teaching and learning strategies and the importance of relationships. The school's commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity is at the heart of all that it does, so that pupils and staff alike feel valued and pupils are extremely proud of their achievements.

Links with the local community and communities abroad, for instance in India and

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Africa, enrich and broaden pupils' experience and this, together with the very good relationships pupils have with each other, demonstrate the success of the school's promotion of community cohesion. Governors play a full role in the life of the school and are developing their role as critical friends well.

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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle very quickly in a safe, secure and very welcoming environment. They enter the Reception class with skills that are sometimes below those expected for their age. By the end of Reception the majority reach, and some exceed, the level expected and the progress they make, particularly in personal, social, emotional development, is good. Children explore and learn very effectively through planned activities indoors and outside. They work and play together well, take turns and are keen to help one another. They willingly take responsibility, for example, in clearing away. Speaking, listening and thinking skills are developed effectively as a result of skilful questioning by the teacher and teaching assistants and every opportunity is taken to engage children in conversation and to reinforce basic reading and number. Well-planned activities, which children clearly enjoy, enable them to make good progress in developing their skills. They are used to sharing their ideas and achievements with their classmates. As a result, when they join the main school at playtimes, for lunch and in assembly, they are confident and self-assured.

High importance is placed on caring for children and they enjoy learning in a safe environment. Teachers use rigorous assessment procedures to measure and track children's progress and plan activities that move their learning on. Recent improvements

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to the outdoor area have added to a stimulating and well-equipped learning environment. Although there is good liaison between teachers, transition between the Reception and Year 1 classes is made more difficult because they are not adjacent to one other so that it is difficult to share facilities. Good leadership and management have created a very effective team and a stimulating and exciting place to learn.

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

The great majority of the parents who responded to the questionnaire are very happy with the school. They commented positively on their children's enjoyment of school, the 'family atmosphere' in the school and the support their children receive. A small minority of parents who responded to the questionnaire expressed concerns about the way the school dealt with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found no evidence to support these concerns. Pupils are confident that very rare instances of poor behaviour are handled effectively. Overall, parents' and carers' views reflect the inspection findings.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Over St John's CofE Primary 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 75 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 138 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	56	29	39	1	1	2	3
The school keeps my child safe	47	63	27	36	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	45	36	48	3	4	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	48	32	43	2	3	5	7
The teaching is good at this school	36	48	34	45	3	4	2	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	43	36	48	5	7	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	40	53	30	40	1	1	2	3
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)	28	37	36	48	4	5	2	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	47	34	45	4	5	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	39	32	43	11	15	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	33	41	55	7	9	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	41	55	26	35	6	8	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	57	26	35	3	4	2	3

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.



12 February 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Over St John's CofE Primary School, Winsford, CW7 2LU

It was a delight and a privilege to visit your school. I really enjoyed talking to you all and listened very carefully to what you had to say. You told me how much you enjoy your learning and how proud you are of your school. I agree with you. You go to a good school and you are looked after exceptionally well.

I was very impressed by your behaviour, which was excellent, and by the way you look after one another. You have good manners and make visitors very welcome indeed. I think that you all make a really important contribution to your school, for example, through your work on the school council, the Eco team and as buddies for younger pupils.

I enjoyed listening to you talk about the projects you have done about the Tudors, the village in India and about Australia. Your art work and writing are really good and you have a really good understanding of life in other cultures and other times.

Younger children get off to a good start in the Reception class and you are all making good progress. Your teachers work very hard and their teaching is good. I noticed how well you got on when you are given the opportunity to explore ideas for yourselves or work in groups to solve problems and so I have asked your teachers to make sure they give you more opportunities to do this in lessons. You told me that the staff look after you very well indeed and we agree. The headteacher and staff are working very hard to make your school even better.

I wish you every success for the future and hope that you continue to enjoy your learning.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Judith Tolley

Lead Inspector

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