

St John's Green Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114711
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	338432
Inspection dates	29–30 September 2009
Reporting inspector	John Mitcheson HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Alan Short
Headteacher	Mr Simon Billings
Date of previous school inspection	0 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited 8 lessons, and held meetings with senior leaders, staff, special needs coordinator and a group of pupils. The lead inspector and chair of governors discussed school governance in a telephone conversation. Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at a range of school documents and scrutinised the work of Year 6 pupils in English, mathematics and science. 45 Parents returned questionnaires to the school for inspectors to read.

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

- To what extent the school's good capacity for improvement, identified in the previous inspection has been used to tackle areas identified for improvement, maintain and strengthen outcomes for pupils and build upon its success.
- The impact of significant staffing changes, including new senior leaders and managers
- Pupils' attendance rates and the quality of actions taken by the school to encourage regular attendance.

Information about the school

St John's Green Primary School is a smaller than average primary school. It serves the town of Colchester and its surrounding areas. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and the percentage that have learning difficulties and/ or disabilities, including a statement of special educational needs is above average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. The school holds the Healthy Schools, Activemark, Inclusion Quality Mark and silver Eco-Schools awards. Since the last inspection a number of staffing changes have taken place including; a new deputy headteacher, a new senior teacher and three newly-qualified teachers. A nursery, not managed by the governing body, operates on the school site.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school with a number of strengths, most notably its good curriculum and the good quality care, guidance and support it provides for its pupils. This contributes to a very welcoming learning environment and helps pupils to settle quickly, grow in confidence and enjoy school. It is an inclusive school where all pupils are cared for, and care for each other well. Pupils feel valued and are well protected from harm. All safeguarding arrangements are secure. The school's engagement with parents and carers is good, those parents that responded during the inspection were overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They value the help offered to families and to children, the friendliness of staff and the fact that they are always available to talk to before and after school.

Most pupils make satisfactory progress from their individual starting points and achieve standards that are broadly similar to the national average. This year, results in mathematics slipped to below average. Overall attendance is broadly average, but it is inadequate because a significant minority of pupils are persistently absent from school. Governors authorise time out of school for extended holidays in school time which helps to promote community cohesion and family life but has a detrimental effect on pupils' learning.

In lessons, inspectors found that the quality of teaching is inconsistent. It ranges from satisfactory to outstanding, because some teachers are new and others have changed classes. Assessment procedures are used well to track pupils' progress but do not always inform lesson planning or provide pupils with clear targets for improving their work. The school provides a rich and varied curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils, including an increasing number with highly specific needs. It is enhanced further through strong partnerships with other local schools that extend opportunities, particularly in sport and the arts, and provides additional challenging activities for the school's most able pupils.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher leads the school well as it undergoes a period of significant change, including newly appointed senior managers. Thorough self-evaluation and regular monitoring gives him a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Good progress has been made in developing subject leadership but not in all subjects, particularly numeracy. Leaders and managers have ensured that most of the issues raised in the previous inspection have been resolved. Capacity to improve is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- – Improve attendance and significantly reduce the number of pupils absent from school to at least national averages by:
 - -Reviewing school attendance policy and procedures
- Raise standards in mathematics so that results are similar to those achieved in English and science by:
 - Improving subject leadership for numeracy
 - Applying the same successful strategies used to improve the teaching of literacy
- Improve the amount of challenge in lessons by:
 - - Monitoring teachers' use of assessment information to plan and deliver lessons
 - - Ensuring teachers provide pupils with day to day advice on how to meet the targets set for them.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Since the last inspection, results in all key stages have fluctuated from year to year. In Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress. Overall standards have been just below average for the last three years. Currently, results are similar to national averages in reading and mathematics but below average in writing. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are consistently high in science. As a result of a whole-school focus on improving the teaching of literacy, standards are currently above average in English. The same focus has not been applied to mathematics and standards have fallen to below average.

In lessons, the majority of pupils enjoy learning, by themselves, with partners and working cooperatively in small groups. When the teaching is good or better, pupils make rapid progress. In some satisfactory lessons, progress slows because some pupils who are coping well and could learn at a faster rate are not stretched. Girls tend to achieve better than boys in Key Stage 1 but by the end of Year 6 boys have caught up and many perform better than girls. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively in lessons to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and this ensures that they achieve equally as well as other pupils.

Behaviour is very good. Pupils share good relations with teachers and are eager to please. At breaks and lunch- times they cooperate and care for each other and thoroughly enjoy playing games with each other in an excellent, well-equipped playground. Pupils engage fully in school life; they readily volunteer as school councillors, prefects and help around school. Pupils say that they feel safe in school at all times, saying 'school is a great place to make friends', and 'I feel really close to everyone and everyone cares'. A number of parents also praised the school as 'a caring, happy school'. Two hours of physical education (PE), healthy snacks sold by the pupils at break-times and good opportunities to participate in after-school sport help them to

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lead healthy lifestyles. A good contribution is made to the wider community through pupils' fund-raising, local surveys and promoting sustainable development through its Eco-school status. Pupils acquire the necessary academic and social skills needed to secure their future economic well being but for the minority of pupils, this is compromised by the high number of lessons missed through absence.

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	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
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	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers foster good relations with pupils, giving them the confidence to respond to questions, share ideas with the class and ask for help when needed. In mixed age classes in Key Stage 1, teachers effectively combine whole-class teaching with group work. A wide range of resources, including computer technology is used to stimulate pupils' interest and engagement. Assessment procedures help teachers and learning support assistants to target support towards pupils that need help. Less use is made of assessment information to inform lesson planning that builds upon and extends pupils' learning, particularly those that are more able and would benefit from additional challenge. Regular marking helps teachers to check that lesson content has been

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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covered. It is less helpful to pupils because whilst it praises their hard work and corrects errors, it does not refer to their specific targets for improvement or make any demands on them to follow up on their errors or unfinished work. Standards of presentation are generally high but opportunities to write in pen are limited.

The good curriculum focuses on developing the skills needed for learning across a range of imaginative themes. Regular opportunities to practice and develop literacy in all subjects aids pupils' learning, but similar opportunities are not yet in place to promote numeracy. Pupils learn modern foreign languages; this is relatively new and the school does not have sufficient evidence to show the impact of this on pupil's achievement and enjoyment. As well as personal, social and health education and circle time, activities are planned across subjects and during events organised with partner schools to promote pupils social, moral spiritual and cultural development, work with pupils from different backgrounds and celebrate success. A varied range of enrichment opportunities help to extend pupil learning, promotes their personal development and enjoyment of school.

The good care, guidance and support for all pupils also contribute directly to their personal development and well-being, learning and love of school. Pupils are treated as individuals and all are known well to the staff. Equal opportunities are promoted well and as a result nobody is excluded from school life. Pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable, those that find learning difficult and a small number with disabilities receive very effective additional support, counselling and therapy from staff in the nurture room.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

An experienced headteacher enjoys the support of staff, pupils, parents and governors. His ambitions for the school remain strong but he acknowledges that the school is currently in a state of transition and it is rebuilding its capacity for improvement, which is currently satisfactory. New teachers and a new team of senior leaders are committed to bringing about improvements and tackling areas for development, but until their efforts impact on outcomes for pupils, they remain unproven. Subject leadership has been strengthened since the last inspection and now includes detailed monitoring through lesson observations, work scrutiny and analysis of performance. Governors meet their statutory duties, including safeguarding and provide satisfactory support for the headteacher. Their understanding of the school's performance and the plans to

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eliminate weaknesses and aid improvement are less well developed; they are not fully cognisant of the detrimental impact of the school's attendance policy on pupil outcomes. School managers help to promote community cohesion satisfactorily but have not yet fully evaluated the impact of its strategy to ensure that it raises pupil awareness of local socio-economic issues and celebrates different faiths and cultures.

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	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	2
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

Views of parents and carers

Parents are fully supportive of the work of the school. In questionnaires they praised the leadership of the headteacher, the approachability of staff and the 'tremendous feeling of community and inclusion in the school'.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St John's Green 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 45 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 185 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	79	9	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	67	14	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	55	16	38	3	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	50	17	40	2	5	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	27	64	13	31	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	52	18	43	2	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	60	17	40	0	0	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)	20	48	19	45	3	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	55	15	36	2	5	2	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	62	11	26	1	2	4	10
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	55	15	36	2	5	2	5
The school is led and managed effectively	28	67	14	33	2	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	69	11	26	0	0	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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's Green Primary School, Colchester, CO2 7HE

Earlier this week we inspected your school and found that it provides you with a satisfactory education. Thank you for allowing us to join you in lessons and to talk with some of you. We also spent time meeting with your senior teachers, governors and read letters from some of your parents. Throughout the inspection, your behaviour was very good and you made all members of the inspection team feel most welcome.

We were particularly impressed by the wide range of activities you do, both in lessons, during lunchtimes and after school. We were pleased to see so many of you behave well and volunteer to help as school councillors, prefects and Eco-warriors. We also noted how much you enjoy school and really appreciate the really good care and support you get from your teachers. You are kept safe and make the most of your great playground by playing games together and enjoying each other's company.

We found some good things about your school but also a few things that need improving. You do very well in science and in English but less well in mathematics.

We noticed that in some lessons, those of you who are capable of learning at a faster rate are not always challenged to do so. In your books, teachers' marking does not always tell you what to do to meet the targets set for them. Also, some children miss out on all of the things happening in school because they go on long holidays during term time, or are absent from school without permission.

We have asked staff to improve these things. You can help them by making sure that all of you attend regularly. You can also help to make further improvements by letting your school council know your ideas and asking them to share them with your teachers.

Best wishes for the future.

John Mitcheson

Her Majesty's Inspector.

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