

St James' CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116885
Local Authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	338916
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Ken Bush

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	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Paul Towner
Headteacher	Mrs Ann Mundy
Date of previous school inspection	11 July 2007
School address	Vicarage Road Hereford HR1 2QN
Telephone number	01432 273961
Fax number	01432 273961
Email address	amundy@st-james.hereford.sch.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

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

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspection team observation 13 lessons, taken by 9 teachers. In addition, meetings were held with pupils, staff and governors. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a variety of documents including the school improvement plan and records of pupils' progress. They also considered the views of 108 pupils, 10 staff and 69 parents as shown in questionnaires.

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

- attainment and progress in all year groups, but particularly Year 2 and Year 6
- the extent to which teaching and assessment supports at least satisfactory achievement
- the effectiveness of leadership and management
- the extent of improvement since the previous inspection
- the quality of education provided in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

St James' Church of England is a primary school of average size. Most pupils are from a White British background with small proportions of Eastern European and Asian/Asian British heritage. A small but growing proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language, a few of whom are at an early stage of acquisition. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average, although currently none has a statement of special educational needs. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is in one Reception class. The school offers both a breakfast club and after-school provision on 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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with Section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures, because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing and governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Since the school's previous inspection, St James' has maintained good levels of care and support for its pupils, resulting in predominantly good outcomes in terms of personal development. However, the quality and consistency of teaching and learning and the level of pupils' achievement have reduced markedly. Senior leaders and managers have not intervened quickly or effectively enough to arrest this decline. Self-evaluation procedures are weak and, as a result, the school's current plans for improvement are not sufficiently detailed, focused or rigorous. Consequently, both leadership and management, and the school's capacity for sustained improvement are inadequate.

Children enter Reception with skills that are generally in line with those expected for their age. Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory, although variable across the different areas of learning. Pupils' progress slows markedly across Key Stage 1. By the end of the key stage, attainment is low in mathematics, compared with national standards, and exceptionally low in writing. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' overall attainment remains low, especially in mathematics. Attainment is better in English, although fewer pupils reach higher levels than is the case nationally. Pupils' progress has slowed significantly in recent years because too many underperforming pupils are not identified early enough, and they are not always given the appropriate type and level of support. The school has recently begun to develop a more systematic approach to tracking pupils' progress, but as it is in the early stages of development, its impact has yet to be seen.

An additional factor contributing to pupils' slow progress is the quality of teaching, which is inadequate. Instances of better teaching where pupils are motivated, enthused, appropriately challenged, and so learn effectively, are infrequent. Assessment information is not used effectively to ensure that all pupils are set work which suits their interests, needs and capabilities. This was also highlighted in the previous inspection. The quality and impact of marking is inadequate as too many pupils do not get enough good quality written feedback to guide them on how to improve their work and reach higher levels of attainment.

Pupils' personal development is good overall because well-trained and committed staff value each individual pupil and liaise effectively with each other, with parents and with

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

outside agencies. This secures high quality pastoral support. The school provides a warm, caring environment in which most pupils, including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, feel safe and secure. The overall effectiveness of Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. However, provision for outdoor learning is rendered inadequate by the poor state of repair of some equipment and a general lack of cleanliness in the area.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase attainment and rates of progress, especially in writing and mathematics by
 - improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school
 - ensuring better use of assessment information to challenge and support all pupils to do their best
 - developing more effective systems for tracking pupils' progress in order that underperformance can be more quickly identified and remedied
 - improving the quality of written feedback to pupils so that they are clearer about what they need to do to improve their work.
- Improve the quality and rigour of monitoring and evaluation procedures in order to develop clear plans for realistic and measurable improvement.
- Address the issue of inadequate outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by the start of the next academic year.

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

Although in some lessons they behave well and enjoy their work, pupils' achievement and enjoyment overall are inadequate. Pupils are generally keen to take part in activities and respond with enthusiasm when asked questions. The majority of pupils work cooperatively, in pairs or groups, and take some responsibility for their learning when asked to do so. Some pupils, however, lose concentration rapidly when teachers talk for too long or activities are not well managed. During the inspection this was particularly, but not exclusively, evident in Key Stage 1. Moreover, pupils are generally not stretched enough in lessons and in too many instances fail to make the progress that they should. In recent years, this has been especially the case with boys. Erratic teaching, together with weak procedures for monitoring pupils' progress and ensuring that targeted support is provided early enough where required, contribute to inadequate achievement. This is so for all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Behaviour is generally good around the school although a few incidents of excessive boisterousness were seen during the inspection. Most pupils respond well to staff, visitors and to their peers. Attendance is above average with sound procedures in place for following up absence. The vast majority of pupils feel secure in school and have acquired good knowledge and understanding of how to stay safe. During conversations with inspectors, pupils said that bullying was rare and any incidents were dealt with

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

quickly.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and can put forward convincing reasons for eating healthily and taking regular exercise. Participation in the wide range of extra-curricular physical activities is good, and the school has been awarded Healthy Schools status and Activemark. Pupils' good contribution to the school and wider community is a strength. A good example of this is the skipping display team who have travelled widely to promote the benefits of the sport and to raise awareness of the British Heart Foundation. Pupils also benefit from the school's very close links with the church and other faith groups which contribute to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Despite teachers' generally good subject knowledge and positive relationships with pupils, teaching and learning, and the use of assessment are inadequate. This is because, in too many lessons, work is not matched well enough to individual pupils' needs and capabilities, resulting in their limited progress. Planning is usually thorough

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

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

but does not build sufficiently on pupils' prior learning. During the inspection, very few opportunities for pupils to work independently were seen. In a rare exception, Year 6 pupils worked collaboratively in a literacy lesson to plan a high quality piece of writing about foxhunting. Pupils' work is marked frequently but this is often ineffective as it generally does not provide enough guidance about how to improve. This is a factor in explaining why more-able pupils are failing to achieve at the higher levels, especially in Key Stage 2.

The curriculum is satisfactory and provides a sound basis for pupils' academic and personal development. Provision for information and communication technology is an emerging strength and there are growing links between different subject areas to give more coherence to pupils' learning. Provision for extra-curricular activities, including off-site learning, is good and developing well. The school is aware of the urgent need to improve its provision for numeracy and is making appropriate use of external support to this end.

Care, guidance and support are good overall. Pastoral care is a key strength of the school and there are well-established routines to ensure pupils' good personal development. Transition arrangements with pre-school and secondary providers are long-standing and effective. Learning and behaviour mentors are generally deployed well to assist pupils who face challenging personal circumstances and those who speak English as an additional language. Good support is also provided to improve pupils' behaviour where appropriate. However, academic support for pupils who have fallen behind in literacy and numeracy is less effective.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders have been unable to embed ambition adequately, or maintain a momentum of improvement, since the last inspection. Expectations of pupils are not high enough, resulting in too many failing to progress as quickly as they should. Although there have been a number of changes in senior and middle leadership roles recently, pupils' achievement has declined over a period of time. Intervention measures to speed up progress have proved to be slow and ineffective. Current plans for improvement are not sufficiently robust or focused on the school's weaknesses. The relatively inexperienced new leaders do not have sufficient support from within the school to make a positive impact on tackling key priorities for improvement.

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

The leadership of teaching and learning is a chief weakness with monitoring and evaluation systems that are not adequate for the job. Significant inconsistency of practice across the school is indicative that continuing professional development is not effective, or well enough led and managed, and is not providing good value for money.

The governing body meets all its statutory responsibilities and has been influential in helping to create an inclusive and welcoming school community, in which equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled effectively. It is committed to, and supportive of, the school but has yet to develop its role sufficiently in holding school leaders to account for pupils' academic performance. The procedures adopted by the school to safeguard pupils are good overall. Processes and actions on matters concerning child protection are well established and known by staff. The school ensures that all the required checks on staff prior to appointment are undertaken and recorded. Risk assessments and health, safety and first-aid arrangements safeguard pupils appropriately. Pupils are well supervised in all areas of the school, including at lunch and playtime.

The school has a good understanding of the community it serves. Its contribution to promoting community cohesion is satisfactory and improving. Partnerships with parents and other community groups are good and the school has forged a range of successful links to support its flourishing extended services provision.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
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	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	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall, children make satisfactory progress in learning, with girls making particularly

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

good progress in language skills and number work. There is some variability in progress across the different areas of learning, an issue that is already being addressed by the school. The Early Years Foundation Stage classroom is well resourced and makes a strong contribution to children's learning. However, the outside area is not well maintained, which renders it inadequate. A committed team of adults works effectively to support the children and all are valued and nurtured as individuals. Accurate assessments of children's work and play are used effectively to plan the next stages of learning. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Safeguarding arrangements are securely in place, although some minor health and safety issues were identified during the inspection.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents are supportive of, and appreciate, the efforts made by the staff and governors to create a positive learning environment. Many commented favourably on the quality of pastoral care and the support given to pupils with various additional needs. One parent commented: 'My child's self-esteem has hugely improved. His special educational needs have been identified and are being addressed very effectively. The staff are very helpful and appear to have a genuine interest in the children'. A few parents raised concerns about what they perceived to be unresolved issues in how the school had dealt with bullying and conflicts between pupils. Inspectors did not find evidence of this during the inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St James' 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 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 202 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	67	22	32	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	42	61	22	32	5	7	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	31	45	32	46	6	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	48	32	46	4	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	37	54	30	43	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	51	30	43	4	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	52	29	42	3	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)	23	33	36	52	3	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	48	33	48	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	36	36	52	6	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	39	38	55	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	30	43	35	51	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	58	27	39	2	3	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.



19 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St James' CofE Primary School, Hereford, HR1 2QN

Thank you very much for your welcome when we visited your school. We noticed that your behaviour was good and that you were friendly and cooperative. You say you feel valued and part of the school, which is also good. Staff are happy to help you and take care to make sure you are all right. You enjoy the visits and visitors to your school and appreciate the after-school clubs that are on offer.

You get off to a satisfactory start in the Reception class but then your progress slows down in Years 1 to 6. We think you can do a lot better, especially in mathematics and writing. We have asked the school to make sure that you do, and have told the school that 'special measures' are needed to make this happen. This means the school will get help to improve quickly. We have asked the headteacher and senior staff to make sure that all of you make as much progress as possible in your time at school. This will make sure that by the time you leave at the end of Year 6, you have all done as well as you can do. In particular, we have asked the school to

- plan lessons which help you to make progress more quickly
- make sure teachers take extra care to know how well you have done in each lesson, and then to plan work that follows on from where you have got to
- make sure that teachers write more comments when marking your work so that you know how to improve it
- find better ways to check on how well you are doing and draw up clearer plans to help you to do even better. These plans should show how teachers can check throughout the year that you are making the right amount of progress.

Inspectors will visit again soon to check the progress being made by the school.

Yours sincerely

Ken Bush

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.