

St John the Baptist Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120230
Local Authority	Leicester
Inspection number	339639
Inspection dates	14–15 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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	454
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Asher
Headteacher	Andrew Marshall
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation, which included the school's analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, the school's improvement plan and also pupils' work. In addition, the responses of 145 parents' questionnaires were analysed and their comments taken into account.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at the following:

- the progress of pupils in Years 3 to 6 and whether Year 6 pupils are on course to meet their targets
- the quality and use of assessment to support learning
- how well teachers with responsibilities contribute to the school's monitoring and evaluation processes
- the quality of leadership and management of the governors.

Information about the school

This is a large urban primary school. Due to its aided status, it receives pupils from the whole of Leicester and also some pupils from Leicestershire. About half the pupils are of White British heritage and there is an increasing proportion of pupils from other ethnic groups. The largest of these, representing about a quarter of all pupils, is Asian or Asian British - Indian. Although it is a Church of England school, an increasing number of pupils are from other religious groups. There are a few pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is about half the national average. There is a privately run pre-school and after school provision within the school's accommodation which is inspected separately. The school has gained a number of awards: included in these are Investors in People and the Healthy Schools award. The school has a new headteacher who has been in post since April 2008.

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

St John's is a good school. Under its inspirational and highly effective headteacher, it has improved rapidly since its previous inspection. At that time, there were some significant weaknesses. This is no longer the case because the headteacher, working in close partnership with governors and the staff, has steered the school through considerable improvements in its provision, pupils' progress and leadership and management. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and they rightly recognise how much the school has improved. Their many positive comments are summarised by the parent who wrote, 'St John's has become a forward thinking school and we are reassured and confident in the headteacher's leadership.' Children enter the school with skills and abilities that are similar to those that are typically found and they make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This continues throughout each year group and, as a result, attainment at the end of Year 6 is significantly above average. Although there remains a legacy of some past under-achievement in mathematics, particularly in Years 3 and 4, this has been overcome due to the clear and successful focus that has been placed on accelerating pupils' learning. All groups now make good progress because the school's work to ensure equality of opportunity and the elimination of any form of discrimination is effective.

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils is good. When combined with the highly positive atmosphere that stems from the school's Christian foundation, this enables pupils to make good progress in their personal development. Behaviour is good, pupils have very positive attitudes to school and learning and relationships are good throughout the school. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle and they say that they feel safe in school. Vulnerable pupils are supported well and any barriers to learning are dealt with effectively.

There has been a marked improvement in the quality of teaching. Most lessons are of good quality. Because there has been a marked improvement in the tracking of pupils' progress, teachers generally use assessment information well to ensure that work is challenging for all groups of pupils. Classrooms are calm and purposeful places for pupils to learn where staff manage the pupils well, provide interesting and lively activities that capture their interest and where they enjoy lessons. As one pupil said, 'Lessons are fun and the teachers fill my brain.' However, there are some inconsistencies. Whilst teachers invariably spell out lesson objectives, in some lessons they do not always make clear what the pupils have to do to meet these objectives. In some, the pace of learning is too slow because teachers spend too long on their introduction and pupils become passive learners. In addition, on occasion, work is not sufficiently well adapted to meet the varying needs of pupils in each class.

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The school is led and managed well. All staff with subject leadership roles take on responsibility enthusiastically, though their involvement in monitoring teaching is not as fully developed as it is for checking teachers' planning and pupils' work. The governors know the school's performance well and probe rigorously to check that it continues to improve. School improvement planning is based on accurately identified priorities which stems from good quality self-evaluation procedures and involves staff and governors alike. There has been outstanding improvement in the provision and outcomes for the Early Years Foundation Stage, which was inadequate at the previous inspection. With valuable and timely support from the local authority, there has been a turnaround. Provision is now good and the staff work closely together as a team to ensure that children make good progress in the Reception year. The school's strong improvement since the last inspection demonstrates a good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the role of subject leaders in the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning.
 - Make all teaching as good as the best by:
 - ensuring that success criteria are shared with pupils and referred to in lessons
 - making sure that pupils are not asked to sit for too long to listen to teachers' explanations
 - always providing consistently challenging work for all groups of pupils.

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

Pupils learn successfully and well in all year groups. Lessons are generally well planned, leading to brisk learning in most lessons. Pupils enjoy lessons and learning. They are keen to talk about their work and show how well they are progressing. Their progress is good and attainment is rising. There is a firm upward trend in attainment at the end of Year 2. National progress measures between Years 3 and 6 show very strong progress, particularly in English. Standards at the end of Year 6 have also improved each year since the previous inspection and are now significantly above average.

Achievement and progress have improved because there has been a successful school-wide focus on making the progress of different groups of pupils consistently good. However, this work is not yet complete because sometimes work is too easy for some pupils. One of the keys to this has been the improvement in tracking of pupils' progress. This means that teachers are now very aware of any pupils who are in danger of slipping behind. In consequence, provision for both higher ability pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well targeted to ensure good progress. There is an increasing number of pupils at an early stage of learning English: these pupils also do well. They quickly master spoken English and their reading and writing skills develop swiftly. The school has tackled the previous lack of progress in Years 3 and 4 very well. These pupils now progress as quickly as other year groups,

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even though overall progress for pupils now in Years 5 and 6 has not been as rapid in mathematics as in English and science due to this legacy.

Pupils relish taking responsibility such as through the influential school council or by the wide range of charitable work on a local, national and international level. Their spiritual development is particularly well catered for due both to the school's Christian foundation, which is evident in assemblies, and also through the strength of the arts-based curriculum, particularly music. Pupils take a strong role in the local community, particularly through the many musical activities. By the time that they leave the school, pupils are mature and responsible young people who are prepared well for their move to secondary education.

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	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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	2

How effective is the provision?

There has been a stepped improvement in provision. Teachers work effectively to make sure pupils do well in school. In the best lessons, there is a high level of challenge and teachers make a good and consistent use of assessment to ensure that work is pitched to meet the varying needs of pupils in each class. Interactive whiteboards are used well

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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to enliven learning and many pupils commented on how the teachers provide them with interesting activities. They work enthusiastically because their tasks are relevant and meaningful. Teaching assistants provide a strong contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for those that have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their support is of good quality and they are skilled at ensuring these pupils make good progress towards their individual targets.

The school now offers a good curriculum that encourages and motivates pupils of all backgrounds and abilities to work hard and make good progress. There is an appropriately strong emphasis on the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). There have been improvements in the organisation of the curriculum, with the school having worked hard and successfully to ensure greater consistency and successively harder work as the pupils move up the school. This is particularly the case with work in Years 3 and 4 which, in the past, was lacking challenge. Teachers' planning has improved and the focus on linking subjects together is paying dividends, particularly in the teaching of literacy and ICT skills, which are developed across many subjects. There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities focusing mainly on the sports and arts and these are enjoyed by many pupils. The curriculum for Years 1 and 2 has been developed well to ensure that activities are personalised for St John's pupils and that topic themes are based on first-hand experiences. There is a well-founded priority to extend this approach to all year groups.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The sensitive and highly effective approach of the headteacher, supported well by the two assistant headteachers, has ensured that teamwork has improved enormously since the previous inspection. There is a strong sense of shared commitment to improve from all staff and governors, and staff morale is high. Relationships with parents have improved considerably and continue to be strengthened further. Parents and carers hold very favourable opinions of the school and they have confidence in the staff and governors. School leaders take parents' views fully into account when making changes and also ask pupils for their thoughts. There has been a re-organisation of leadership roles with an appropriate emphasis on strengthening the responsibilities of both senior and middle leaders. Training for these new roles is of good quality and has provided staff with the skills needed to contribute to the school's effective monitoring and

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self-evaluation processes. Senior leaders recognise that the role of subject leaders in the checking of teaching and learning is a next step and there are suitable plans in place to support this priority. There is a good emphasis paid to ensuring pupils' health and safety and there continue to be robust and effective safeguarding procedures in place. There is a clear commitment to include all pupils in the wide range of activities available and this is a demonstration of the importance given by the school to providing equal opportunities to all. Great care is taken to ensure that pupils of all backgrounds and abilities achieve equally well.

There is a good sense of community cohesion in the school. The governors and staff promote good levels of cohesion particularly with the local parish but also with links to other contrasting schools, including those of other faiths. In addition, there are clear plans in place to build on the links with a school in Uganda.

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	2
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

School staff and governors are rightly proud of the significant improvements that have been made to the provision for children in the Reception classes. Previously, this was inadequate. Provision is now good and children make good progress. In their social skills, progress is excellent. The improvements have succeeded because of the strong staff team who have worked tirelessly to make sure the children get the best possible start in school. Planning, assessment and evaluation go hand-in-hand to create learning that is fun and enjoyable. Children are encouraged to develop self-confidence, high self-esteem and to become independent. This is because there is a good balance

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between those activities that are directed by adults and those which the children choose for themselves. They make careful choices from the good range of resources, and they are encouraged to persevere and concentrate. Children enjoy working in both small and larger groups and they benefit from an attractive and stimulating learning environment. The outdoor learning area has improved considerably and provides a good resource, though staff rightly recognise that activities outdoors need to be linked more strongly with the themes and topics being undertaken.

Leadership and management are good. The staff work closely as a team and they place the children's well-being and safety at the heart of all they do. In consequence, children achieve well, enjoy their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage and are prepared well for entry into Year 1.

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

Parents and carers hold particularly positive views of the school. Many parents who returned the questionnaires stated that they noted the improvements brought about since the appointment of the new headteacher. Others commented on how happy their children are in school and the very positive climate for learning. Parents are almost unanimous in saying that overall, they are happy with their children's experience at school. Inspection findings confirm the parents' and carers' positive views. A few parents said that their children were not making enough progress. Whilst it could be that this may possibly be the case in isolated incidents, inspection findings demonstrate that progress is good and accelerating overall.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St John the Baptist 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 145 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 454 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	111	77	31	21	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	109	75	36	25	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	71	49	65	45	8	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	79	54	52	36	11	8	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	90	62	51	25	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	91	63	48	33	6	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	82	57	60	41	2	1	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)	75	52	52	36	4	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	66	46	63	44	11	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	67	46	62	43	8	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	64	44	67	46	8	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	92	63	48	33	2	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	102	70	36	25	6	4	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.



18 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John the Baptist C of E Primary School, Leicester, LE2 1TE

Thank you for welcoming us so warmly when we visited your school recently. We found you very helpful and you shared your ideas about your school with great enthusiasm. We particularly enjoyed seeing part of the infant rehearsal and performance of your Christmas production, though we were sorry that we did not have enough time to watch the juniors' rehearsal in the church. We think you go to a good school and we have written about it in our main report. If you read it, you will see that we identify a number of good things.

You make good progress in your learning and reach standards that are above the national average.

You are taught well, enjoy learning, behave well and work hard.

Your headteacher is doing a good job and he is determined to make your school even better: he works closely with your governors and staff to make sure that this happens.

You have an excellent understanding of being healthy, you feel safe in school and you enjoy taking responsibility.

We have identified a few things for your school to improve:

- for your teachers who are responsible for different subjects to observe lessons so they can see for themselves how well you are doing
- for all the teaching to be as good as the best by making sure that work is always challenging for you however easily you learn; by making success criteria clear to you; and, finally by making sure that you don't have to sit and listen too long to your teachers talking.

You can help by continuing to work hard to meet your targets.

We wish you luck in the rest of your education.

Yours faithfully

Keith Sadler

Lead Inspector

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