

St John's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107315
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	354356
Inspection dates	11–12 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Roger Gill

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	475
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon Gordon Dey
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Lawley
Date of previous school inspection	16 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 15 lessons taught by 14 different teachers and held meetings with staff, governors and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence including the school's documents for self-evaluation, the tracking system used to monitor pupils' progress and the work pupils were doing in their books. Inspectors studied the 270 questionnaires completed by parents and carers as well as those completed by pupils and staff.

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

- current attainment compared with standards in 2009 and the satisfactory profile in mathematics
- how attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage has changed since 2007 and the degree of progress children have made by the end of Reception
- the effect on pupils' learning and well-being from recent changes in staffing
- precise evidence for the aspects that the school asserts are outstanding.

Information about the school

St John's is a large school in which the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. There are average numbers of pupils from minority ethnic heritages, a few of whom are learning English as an additional language. An average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. A small group of pupils are looked after in public care. Since the last inspection the school has experienced a sizeable change in staffing including changes to the headteacher and several senior staff. The school has recently achieved the Basic Skills Award, a Leading Parents Partnerships Award and is an Investor in Pupils.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

St John's is an outstanding school that has been highly successful for a number of years. It has even improved after being judged as outstanding in 2007. A calm, purposeful and positive atmosphere guarantees that pupils develop self-confidence and pride in all that they do. The school is dynamic in that pupils can use a superbly resourced library and high-quality resources for new technology but can also sit quietly in the small chapel to reflect on the day to gain spiritual poise.

The school has recovered quickly from a period of rapid change, which resulted in slightly lower than usual levels of attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2009. Subsequent improvements in attainment are due to some very well-considered innovations in the already excellent curriculum and superb teamwork among staff. These have been steered skilfully by extremely capable leadership, particularly from the headteacher.

Pupils' joyful enthusiasm for school, their highly thoughtful behaviour and remarkable feelings of safety result from the school's deep-rooted culture of mutual care and support. This emanates strongly from governors, senior staff, all adults and the pupils themselves. Some pupils said with assurance when talking about the absence of bullying: 'It's not a natural habit here; St John's is not that kind of school.'

First-rate outcomes, in terms of how well pupils are doing academically combined with their personal development, stem from high-quality provision. Good teaching underpinned by very accurate assessment of pupils' learning, an influential curriculum and highly effective systems of support all combine to make children eager and enthusiastic learners. It is the superb planning and whole-hearted commitment of all staff that makes pupils so knowledgeable about healthy lifestyles and possess such a remarkably well-developed understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural matters. By comparison, pupils' knowledge of how well they are doing and what they need to do to make improvements to their work is not consistently good throughout the school. Leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, have a precise knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development. There are plans in place to raise to outstanding any good aspects in school. The meticulous analysis of teaching and pupils' learning, the school's swift recovery after recent changes and rising standards all demonstrate a very powerful capacity to sustain the school's excellent status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that pupils know exactly what they have to do to improve their work by:
 - ensuring that pupils discuss, more often, their progress towards targets

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- making crystal-clear comments when marking work
- enabling all pupils to understand what steps they need to take to reach a higher level.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****1**

The good quality of learning ensures that pupils make quick progress in acquiring basic skills and outstanding progress overall in developing many personal qualities. Pupils find the daily learning in literacy and numeracy interesting: many say that they are their favourite subjects. Beyond that, fascinating cross-curricular themes provide pupils with a wealth of absorbing opportunities. Pupils in Year 6 were typically enthused when making bridges out of foodstuffs such as spaghetti to discover how to make a strong structure. Their success helped them understand the technology behind the Humber Bridge. At the same time, other pupils were filming the experience or using the internet to find out more about the geography of rivers.

The average standards at the end of Year 6, which are not far short of being above average, represent good progress after attainment fell behind momentarily in 2008–09. Learning is speeding up again. For example, pupils' vastly improved performance in mathematics is part of the upward trajectory of standards. Current attainment in mathematics in Year 6 represents much quicker progress than was achieved in the past three years. Similarly, pupils' progress is accelerating in Key Stage 1. Current attainment at the end of Year 2 is above average, which represents good progress. Most groups, including boys, girls, looked after pupils and the most able, progress well. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve outstandingly owing to the extremely well-tailored special support they receive.

Some first-rate personal qualities help pupils to enjoy and achieve well. Their excellent participation in school life is typified by the very effective workings of the school council, but the scope for even greater involvement in the life of the local community makes their contribution good overall. Pupils' outstanding cultural development is enhanced not least by the chance to have a pen pal in a Ugandan school. Average attendance is a success that helps pupils to acquire good skills for the future.

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	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching provides well-planned learning that is founded on very accurate assessment. The best teaching enables pupils to make great strides because accomplished subject knowledge is also used very well to plan the work. Teachers are greatly assisted by well-qualified teaching assistants who make sure that individuals and groups of pupils receive the specific help they need. Assessment ensures that pupils know, in principle, what they need to do to improve their work but detailed advice is variable across the school. This is why progress is good rather than outstanding. Moreover, a relative lack of specific advice in marking and a lack of opportunity to talk about pointers for improvement in lessons places a cap on progress in some cases. The curriculum and the care pupils receive make major contributions to learning and development. Beyond the engaging cross-curricular activities and profitable links with local schools, pupils find specialist teaching in information and communication technology, music and physical education a real boost to their skills and enthusiasm. The school employs a counsellor who helps to ensure that the right level of support is provided for pupils who need it. This is an example of the thoughtful and very effective provision for care, guidance and support.

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

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 extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders have coped very successfully with some significant changes in personnel of late. As a result, the school has maintained previous successes but also built on them in several ways. Governors are as involved in the school as ever, keeping a watchful eye over all the developments. They understand the benefit that accrues from the introduction of a new slant on the curriculum and a more finely honed system of assessment. The headteacher has had an immediate effect, for example, in improving teaching in mathematics and enlarging the provision for reading across the school. Moreover, she has made sure that the new team of senior leaders has gelled very quickly to further the school's ambition and drive for excellence. Equality of opportunity is promoted outstandingly and discrimination is not tolerated. The school's procedures for safeguarding pupils are often superb. Only a few easily rectifiable issues in the school's documentation prevent it from being outstanding overall. The school's wonderful sense of community, evident for example in the magnificent assemblies, is enhanced by beneficial links with a school for children from a Muslim background locally and one in Africa. The school evaluates correctly that pupils lack, by comparison, enough involvement in the local community. This makes the school's provision for community cohesion good rather than outstanding at the moment.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
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	1

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress from below nationally expected levels overall. Some children join Nursery with attainment that is well below expected levels. Owing to movement in and out of the Early Years Foundation Stage at the end of Nursery, there is often a new starting point at the beginning of Reception. The aspects of speech and communication, which are sometimes well below typical levels, benefit greatly from the increased emphasis on high-quality play. The balance between being taught knowledge and skills directly and developing these skills through freely chosen play is provided for well. This is why levels of attainment overall reach national goals by the end of Reception. Relationships in the Early Years Foundation Stage are excellent. Provision for the different needs of individuals is considered carefully, particularly now that staff are beginning to record in detail how children achieve when they are playing without adult supervision. The facilities inside and outside the setting enhance children's learning well. The Pod, which is a covered area for outside-style play, is particularly valuable for children to explore ideas and exercise their imaginations.

Good leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage make sure that all children progress well overall, and rapidly in aspects of personal development. Self-evaluation is thorough and effective. In this way the school knows that it wants greater links with parents and carers, and for children's interests to be even more influential in shaping the activities on offer. A good start has been made already in pursuing these ambitions.

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 vast majority of those who responded were very satisfied and happy with the school, seeing it as successful academically and in caring for their children's personal well-being. A very small minority of parents and carers had concerns about behaviour. However, these concerns were not shared by inspectors, who found behaviour to be excellent.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at 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 270 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 475 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	181	67	81	30	4	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	199	74	69	26	1	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	155	57	108	40	7	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	164	61	94	35	9	3	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	185	69	81	30	4	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	161	60	101	37	6	2	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	156	58	109	40	3	1	1	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)	135	50	114	42	9	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	151	56	105	39	9	3	3	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	148	55	103	38	7	3	5	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	124	46	123	46	11	4	6	2
The school is led and managed effectively	168	62	94	35	3	1	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	189	70	72	27	3	1	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

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

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

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

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



14 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's C of E Primary School, Bradford, BD4 6JF

Thank you for your help when the other inspectors and I visited your school. Everything we saw made us realise how much you enjoy your time at St John's: the obvious thrill at seeing your headteacher stand on her head in assembly to demonstrate how Doubting Thomas might have felt; your enthusiasm for learning; the very civilised way that you behave in the dining hall; and the marvellous opportunities you have for quiet reflection in the chapel, for example, are all firmly lodged in our memories.

You go to an outstanding school. Your good progress in learning coupled with many excellent features of your personal development ensures that you gain an excellent education at St John's. The headteacher, staff and governors have managed to cope with all the recent changes at school to help it keep its reputation as a top-quality school and even improve on that in several important ways. For example, pupils in Year 6 waxed lyrical about the trips, linked to your topics, such as to the theatre to work with other local pupils on an arts project.

I know everyone wants to do even better and your school has plenty of plans to help to do that. However, I have asked your school to do one thing to improve. Your teachers need to make sure that you have as much information as possible to understand how you can improve your work and raise your levels of performance.

You can do your bit by being confident to talk about your learning: what you find easy and what you have difficulty with. I know you can do it since you speak so well about other aspects of your learning, as I discovered when several of you came to show me your work.

Well done and best wishes

Mr Roger Gill

Lead inspector

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