

John Wesley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	133627
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	381522
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2012
Lead inspector	Jon Carter

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Morgan
Headteacher	Gail Spragg
Date of previous school inspection	2 December 2008
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Age group	5–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Jon Carter

Additional inspector

Sarah Beales

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors spent seven hours observing teaching and learning. Seventeen lessons and eight teachers were observed during that time. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, a group of parents and carers, a group of pupils and members of staff holding leadership responsibilities at the school. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at assessment information, the school's analysis of pupils' progress, curriculum plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records of the school leaders' lesson monitoring. Inspectors also analysed responses from the 75 questionnaires received from parents and carers.

Information about the school

John Wesley is a combined Church of England and Methodist faith school which has steadily grown since it opened in 2007. It is now of average size compared to other primary schools. Each year group has its own class and, since September 2011, there are two Reception classes in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school continues to attract an above-average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. These are mainly social, emotional and behavioural difficulties or specific learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils joining the school other than at the usual time is greater than normally seen, and is particularly high in Years 5 and 6. Most pupils are White British with a much smaller-than-average percentage from minority ethnic backgrounds. A very small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language, and few are at a very early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The school did not meet the government floor standard for performance in 2011.

The school shares its site with a nursery school which is not managed by the governing body and was not part of this inspection.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Pupils make good progress in their learning within an environment that places strong emphasis on pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result, the school operates harmoniously on a day-to-day basis. Behaviour is typically good and, on the rare occasions when problems such as bullying occur, the school’s robust systems ensure that issues are dealt with fairly and consistently. This ensures that pupils feel safe.
- Many pupils join John Wesley Primary from other schools as it has quickly gained a reputation in the local area for providing well for pupils who have previously experienced difficulties. This is particularly the case in Key Stage 2 and contributes to the school having a greater-than-average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Nevertheless, good teaching ensures that older pupils who transfer from other schools improve their rate of progress and achieve well. Progress is more variable in Key Stage 1 as some teaching in these classes is more effective, such as in mathematics, so that pupils’ learning advances more quickly than it does in reading and writing. Although pupils’ attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 is broadly average, it is lower in English than in mathematics.
- School leaders and the governing body effectively use accurate information about how well pupils make progress over time to identify the school’s strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, they fully understand which areas require development. Appropriate actions are planned and implemented to address these issues and they are successful over time. However, the governing body’s strategies for holding middle leaders to account are not always rigorous enough in checking the short-term impact of changes to provision on pupils’ attainment and progress.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English by accelerating pupils' progress in reading and writing in Key Stage 1 through ensuring that the teaching of literacy skills is of consistently good quality, particularly for the less able pupils.
- Accelerate the pace with which school development results in improved outcomes for pupils by ensuring that:
 - staff and governors are more precisely focused on the impact of provision on pupils' learning and progress
 - the governing body holds middle leaders to account for the short-term impact of changes to provision.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of development which are usually below age-related expectations. Over the period of growth since it opened, pupils have entered the school in different year groups, often with below-average levels of prior attainment and sometimes with a range of special educational needs.

In lessons, pupils usually make good progress from these starting points. They respond particularly positively to opportunities that allow them to learn through personal experience. For example, in a mathematics lesson for Year 3, pupils enjoyed being able to develop their skills and understanding of measurement, estimation and comparison while transferring liquid between a variety of containers. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. Their language and communication skills develop well through independent role play and constructive interaction with the teacher during guided reading. Children are challenged well while developing their problem-solving and number skills through activities such as dice games that introduce addition and subtraction.

Since the previous inspection, pupils' writing skills have developed more slowly than those in reading and mathematics. However, recent improvements in teaching the school's chosen structured writing scheme have led to accelerated progress. As a result, the gap between pupils' attainment in reading and writing is now closing more quickly, particularly in Key Stage 2. Progress in literacy in Key Stage 1, however, is less consistent, particularly for those pupils who are less able than their peers. Recent initiatives are beginning to address this issue, although it is too early to see the full impact. Inspection evidence and pupils' current work indicate that attainment in reading at the end of both key stages is broadly average.

Parents and carers are particularly pleased with the progress their children make as a result of teachers' good knowledge of their individual strengths and needs. This ensures that pupils with special educational needs, particularly those who join John

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Wesley from other schools, often make accelerated progress. Consequently, pupils' attainment is broadly average overall. The number of pupils in groups, such as those known to be eligible for free school meals, fluctuates as the roll of the school continues to change. This makes meaningful comparison with national averages difficult. However, pupils in these groups tend to make similar progress to their peers.

A few parents and carers indicated concern about the progress made by pupils in a particular class in the last academic year. School leaders confirmed that this issue had been identified and appropriate action taken. The pupils involved are currently making good progress. The various views expressed by parents and carers, both positive and negative, about the progress their children make are substantiated by the evidence collected by inspectors.

Quality of teaching

Lesson planning makes good and effective use of a range of assessment information. Targets for pupils are clear and form the basis for feedback and discussion during lessons. This is particularly well managed in writing, where targets are highly personalised. Pupils are developing skills in self-assessment well. In the most effective lessons, teachers respond immediately to pupils whose feedback identifies that they are unsure. Consequently, their learning is revisited quickly and misconceptions are addressed while pupils are still focused on the task. Improvements in assessment and marking practice have ensured that pupils now receive better information about how they can improve their work.

Teachers deliver lessons enthusiastically, usually taking good account of pupils' interests through appropriate and planned adaptations to the curriculum. Learning activities are typically well paced and presented as a wide variety of tasks to suit a range of different learning styles. This engages pupils well with their learning. Group activities, observed regularly during the inspection, contribute strongly to pupils' good social and moral development. Most lessons incorporate opportunities for teachers to question pupils in a focused and developmental way. Where this is most effective, teachers build on pupils' answers to extend their learning.

Teaching assistants are usually well deployed to support the learning and progress of pupils with special educational needs and those who are less able. This ensures that their independence can be promoted during challenging learning activities. For example, in an extended writing session about Greek myths in Year 4, weaker writers were helped to build on previous work with guidance about what to improve.

The very large majority of parents feel that their child is taught well at this school. Inspection evidence supports this view overall, although not all classes receive consistently good teaching.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and engage enthusiastically with new experiences. Their behaviour in lessons and conduct around the school is typically good. On the few occasions that pupils' behaviour does not meet the high standards set by the school, teachers respond effectively and consistently. Pupils, including those who experience social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, receive good support and positive guidance. Consequently, disruption to lessons is rare and there have been no exclusions from the school since it opened.

Pupils cooperate well and work collaboratively with their peers during lessons. Their relationships with staff are strong, friendly and mutually respectful. This helps to ensure that a positive learning environment exists in all classrooms. Pupils therefore feel safe and secure and contribute fully to lessons. Their attendance is above average and punctuality to school and lessons is good.

While the very large majority of parents and carers have positive views of behaviour at school, a few expressed concerns about bullying in their responses to the questionnaire. Pupils are clear, however, that bullying of any sort is rare and dealt with swiftly by school staff. School leaders take appropriate action to respond to concerns, for example, by changing playground arrangements so that younger children do not have to play in the same area as their bigger and older peers.

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers at all levels, including members of the governing body, have a comprehensive understanding of what the school does well and the areas it needs to focus on to improve further. Clear communication between staff and senior leaders has ensured that they share a common vision for the school. Consequently, there is a strong team ethos. All staff are clear about what they contribute to continued school improvement. Leaders and managers at all levels promote equality and tackle discrimination well. The caring school ethos and full awareness of pupils' individual needs ensure that equality is at the heart of its work.

Improvements in pupils' literacy skills have been achieved following an extended period of professional development for teachers. This has been particularly successful for reading but has only recently had more significant impact on pupils' writing skills. This is because leaders and governors are not sufficiently rigorous in ensuring that changes to teaching practices were having an immediate effect on accelerating pupils' progress. Monitoring of improvement focuses on observable changes to the provision rather than holding the relevant middle leaders to account for the impact that changes have on pupils' rates of progress. Similarly, senior leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning gives too much priority to evaluating the quality of teaching rather than the impact it is having on learning.

Joint planning with three local primary schools ensures that statutory requirements for the curriculum are fully covered. School leaders and staff from the partner

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schools meet regularly to share specialist knowledge and support each other. Consequently, there is greater depth to the curriculum than at the time of the previous inspection and the learning opportunities provided are more imaginative. Local changes to suit the circumstances of each school are made by teachers. This ensures that teachers can respond to pupils' needs and provide extended chances to practise key skills, for example, in writing, as well as developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Pupils are involved with identifying learning opportunities within the framework of each topic. This contributes strongly to the school's aim for an 'irresistible' curriculum which pupils cannot help but engage with. A particular strength of the curriculum is the concept of open-ended challenge. This has contributed to increased involvement of parents and carers and better engagement with their children's education.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Through connections with the church, pupils respond well to regular opportunities to develop their sense of spirituality. This is enhanced by aspects of the curriculum which provoke thought and reflection.

The development of strong links with partnership schools and the improvements in literacy skills over time show that the school has been able to maintain good achievement for pupils and has good capacity to improve further. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are managed appropriately. Links with parents and carers are strongly enhanced by the work of the school's family liaison officer.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



16 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of John Wesley Primary School, Singleton, Ashford TN23 5LW

Thank you for giving us a warm welcome when we visited your school recently. We were pleased to talk to so many of you about how well you are getting on at school. We would particularly like to thank those of you who showed us around the school and those who spent time reading with us. You told us that the teachers look after you well, which helps you to feel safe at school. Your behaviour is good – well done!

John Wesley Primary is a good school. You usually make good progress in your learning because your lessons are exciting and interesting. Your skills in reading and writing have improved well recently, particularly for those of you in Key Stage 2 classes. Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is because you respond well to the opportunities the school provides to reflect and learn about yourself and other people, through worship and lessons about different topics. The teachers who lead and manage your school do a good job because they make sure the curriculum that you are taught meets your needs well.

A few pupils do not make progress as quickly as the rest of you, so we have asked the headteacher to ensure that:

- there is consistently good teaching in Key Stage 1 classes so that pupils can make better progress in their literacy skills
- teachers and governors check more thoroughly how well your progress is improving by being very focused on how well you are learning.

You can help by letting your teacher know if you need extra help to understand something that you have been taught.

Yours sincerely

Jon Carter
Lead inspector

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