

St John CofE Primary School, Kearsley

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105241
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	362712
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Eileen Mulgrew HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Bob Atkinson
Headteacher	Miss Sally Magill
Date of previous school inspection	17 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors. HMIs observed eight lessons taught by eight teachers. Meetings were held with staff, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board, IEB, two local authority officers, three groups of pupils, and spoke with 15 parents and carers before the start of the school day. HMIs looked at the school's assessment and tracking information, minutes of meetings held by the IEB, local authority reviews, documents relating to safeguarding and the school's action plans for improvement.

The inspection team reviewed most aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The quality of learning and progress for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, especially in writing.
- Whether levels of attainment in all subjects have risen.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment throughout the school to determine whether it is sufficiently consistent to raise attainment.
- The capacity of leadership and management, including governance, in ensuring sustained capacity to improve.

Information about the school

St John's is a smaller than average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average, although similar for those with a statement of special educational needs. The school has received Healthy School Status.

At the time of its previous full inspection in September 2009, St John's School was deemed to require special measures. This was the fourth monitoring visit to the school, the third being in November 2010.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. St John's Primary School provides a satisfactory and rapidly improving education for its pupils.

Sustained and effective action has been taken by leaders and managers to tackle the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. Consequently, aspects of the school's work relating to pupils' personal development, judged good at the last inspection, have been maintained; while other key aspects, particularly pupils' achievement, have improved. Pupils' learning and progress for all groups of pupils, including boys and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, across the age range is gathering momentum as previous underachievement is eradicated. As a result, attainment by the end of Key Stage 2, in reading, mathematics and particularly writing is average. Achievement remains satisfactory because of the need to ensure consistently good progress over time.

This accelerated progress is directly linked to the quality of teaching and learning which has significantly improved since HMI's previous visits. The focus for improvement shifted to pupils' learning and as a result, the majority of teaching and learning observed during the inspection was good. However, the school is well aware that this impetus must be continued and strengthened to ensure consistently raised levels of achievement. Lessons are consistently well planned and take account of pupils' interests and skills. Teachers' high expectations of pupils stimulate them to do their best. A whole-school approach of linking marking to pupils' appropriate curriculum targets, setting next steps for learning and giving pupils opportunity to respond to teachers' comments is a recent initiative. A few examples show how this is supporting pupils in making good progress in their learning. However, it is not consistent across all classes and in all subjects.

The school has introduced a newly revised curriculum which includes the skills and knowledge pupils will cover in each topic. Topics have been introduced which interest and excite the pupils. For example, pupils in Year 1 study famous people and have written 'blurbs' for the cover of a book on Guy Fawkes. Although pupils are enjoying this new method, there are limited opportunities for them to apply their basic skills and use information and technology communication across subjects. Pupils enjoy the activities planned at lunchtime and after school with many pupils attending at least one activity.

The much-improved quality of leadership and management at all levels, including governance, is good. Thorough self-evaluation identified areas where improvements were required and the school has taken action to bring about necessary changes. Leaders, managers and members of the IEB have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. A commitment to the professional development of staff, a variety of monitoring and evaluation techniques, a review of systems of responsibility and accountability, stronger team-working and the overhaul of the use of assessment

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information have embedded higher expectations. As a result, the performance of leaders and managers, staff and pupils has vastly improved. This demonstrates that the school has good capacity for sustained improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on recent improvements to raise achievement so that it is consistently good or better for all pupils.
- Embed the newly introduced system for target-setting, for all pupils, by:
 - ensuring marking links to the target set
 - making sure next steps are identified so that pupils' know how to improve their work
 - ensuring pupils are given a chance to respond, meaningfully, to teachers' comments.
- Further develop provision in the non-core subjects by:
 - providing opportunities for pupils to use the basic skills of reading, writing, mathematics, and information and communication technology in all subjects
 - stressing to pupils the importance of clear handwriting and good presentation of their work.

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

Pupils are proud of their school. Behaviour is now good, attendance levels are rising and pupils have good attitudes to learning. Pupils are eager to learn, persevere at tasks, have fun and take pride in their achievements. In a Year 4 guided reading lesson, a few pupils eagerly explained the task to HMI and at the end of the lesson showed their completed work, evidently delighted in their achievements. However, not all pupils take care with their handwriting or presentation of their work.

Pupils' academic achievement is satisfactory and there are clear indications that the pace of learning is accelerating. Pupils start the Reception Year with skills and knowledge lower than children of a similar age. Progress in Key Stage 2 recovered well in 2010 from a two-year dip. Overall attainment improved from well below the national average in 2009 to above average in 2010. Improvement was particularly noticeable in writing and the gap between boys and girls has narrowed.

The school's current information on pupils' progress, and pupils' work, suggest that attainment is well on the way towards being securely average while progress is on the up. This is because previous gaps in pupils' learning are being systematically eradicated. Pupils' targets for English and mathematics are displayed on each table enabling pupils to access them and use them in lessons. Pupils say they are clearer about what they are expected to learn. Achievement for all groups of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to their classmates. This is because the assessment tracking system is used to identify pupils who are underachieving for any reason and challenging activities are planned to meet their needs and interests. Similarly, there is a dedicated

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daily session for targeted support for individuals. This and other support programmes are monitored and evaluated for their effectiveness in raising achievement.

Pupils say they feel safe and understand the benefits of living a healthy lifestyle. They contribute to the school community through the school council, eco group and particular jobs in the classroom. An example of pupils' involvement in the wider community is when they successfully canvassed a local councillor to clean up the field to ensure pupils' safety when playing on it. Pupils know right from wrong; get on happily with each other and enjoy the activities planned after school, for example the dance and drama group, and the Year 6 residential visit.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Dedicated time for professional development for all staff has led to a renewed confidence and enthusiasm in teachers and teaching assistants. Positive relationships and high expectations of learning and behaviour are typical across the school. Lesson planning is thorough with clear objectives, and in most lessons, teachers use effective questioning techniques to check on pupils' prior learning and clarify the objectives. Activities are well chosen to engage and excite pupils, and the pace in lessons is improving. In a few instances, the end of lessons is used well to reinforce the objective of the lesson and check on pupils' learning. An outstanding Year 5 writing lesson exemplified the quality of teaching in the school at its best. This class of pupils maturely and industriously worked to

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generate strong vocabulary to be used for the 'build up' part of their mythical stories. The opportunity to work in pairs, role play and make decisions excited pupils and they made rapid progress. The teacher and teaching assistant constantly checked how well each pupil was doing and reshaped learning through discussion and questions. However, the process for checking pupils' learning in this way is not embedded throughout the school. Staff use a common method for setting targets for pupils in English and mathematics which are reviewed regularly. Marking is regular and affirms pupils' efforts. There are a few examples of marking specifically linked to the set target, identifying the way forward for pupils and of pupils responding to the teachers' comments. However, this process is not yet widespread across all classes.

A good range of enrichment activities enhance the curriculum. These include a variety of extra-curricular clubs for pupils, such as in sport and music, which are much enjoyed. Pupils take part in a number of visits, including residential trips, as well as having visitors to the school. A strong emphasis on personal, social and health education results in many good non-academic outcomes. The revised curriculum was introduced in September 2010 and is planned through topics which include satisfactory links between subjects. However, within these links, opportunities are sometimes missed to promote and extend the basic skills of reading, writing, mathematics, and information and communication technology.

The school places a high priority on providing good care, support and guidance for all pupils, especially for those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. This has a positive impact on their personal skills, helping them to gain more confidence, develop social skills and learn to behave appropriately. Arrangements for pupils joining the school have been strengthened this year and suitable arrangements are in place for pupils facing the challenge of secondary education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The energy and enthusiasm of the headteacher and deputy headteacher are reflected in middle leaders. The development of team working and greater emphasis on shared responsibility and accountability across the leadership team has supported the drive for consistency. Open and in-depth evaluation of strengths and weaknesses is leading to accurate self-evaluation. High, shared expectations are evident in the rigorous, detailed monitoring of assessment information, lessons, pupils' work and pupils' views. Training, coaching and team working have all contributed to a good understanding among the staff about how to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and how to use assessment information to better inform day-to-day teaching and learning.

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The school's promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory. It knows its pupils well and is starting to use the assessment tracking system to check the achievement for different groups of pupils. It has yet to evaluate the participation of different groups of pupils in all aspects of school life. The arrangements to secure pupils' safety and well-being are satisfactory. All required checks are completed on staff working with pupils. Community cohesion is satisfactory with the governing body developing a method for a more sustained approach to monitoring the effectiveness of this aspect of the school's work.

Members of the IEB have been instrumental in ensuring the improvements at St John's, providing support and challenge to senior leaders. A shadow governing body has been established with members bringing suitable skills and expertise to the school. Members have visited the school to meet pupils and staff. Training has been planned for the summer term so that members are ready to take over from the IEB.

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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are looked after well and their behaviour is good. This reflects the good level of care, support and guidance and how much they enjoy their learning. Arrangements for children starting school and moving to the next class have been strengthened; the teacher has made some home visits to get to know children prior to starting school and the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum has been extended into Year 1 to aid transition. Children get on well together happily sharing resources, for example in the role-play area. There is an effective balance of teacher-led and child-initiated learning and the spacious classroom gives children ample opportunity to wide and varied learning activities. Children make good progress, making particular gains in personal, social and emotional development, and linking letters and sounds. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation

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Stage is good, ensuring that pupils are safe, enjoy learning 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

Questionnaires for parents and carers are not normally distributed by Ofsted for special measures monitoring inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

However, the parents and carers who spoke to the inspector on the playground were very supportive of the school's work. A few parents and carers commented that notice of school events could be more timely.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John CofE Primary School, Kearsley, BL4 8AP

You may remember that I visited your school recently to check how well you are learning.

It was a pleasure to have the opportunity to talk to so many of you and hear your views about the school and the improvements that have taken place. I am pleased to tell you that your school has improved and is satisfactory. It is still improving because your headteacher, teachers and governors all want you to receive the very best education.

Since the school was inspected in September 2009, your achievement, behaviour and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage have got better, and your attendance is rising. This is because your teachers are starting to teach good lessons more frequently and you all respond well to the school's behaviour code. You enjoy school, have fun and have good attitudes for learning.

To make the school even more effective we have asked your headteacher and staff to do the following to raise your achievement so that it is consistently good or better for all groups of pupils: embed the newly introduced system for target-setting so that you are clear about the links between marking and your targets and you have a chance to respond to your teachers comments so that you know exactly what you need to do to get better. Also, to give you opportunity to use your skills of reading, writing, mathematics, and information and communication technology across all your subjects while taking care with your handwriting and presentation.

I know you will want to do your part to make your school even better so try your very best in all subjects.

With very best wishes for the future,

Yours sincerely

Eileen Mulgrew

Her Majesty's Inspector

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