

St John's Green Primary School

St John's Green, Colchester, CO2 7HE

Inspection dates 25–26 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils enjoy school, as seen by their excellent attendance. Pupils achieve well and the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures that they mature into responsible, caring members of the school and the wider community.
- Parents and pupils who gave their views were extremely positive about the school.
- Teaching is good because lessons are well planned and assessment is used to provide interesting activities that make learning demanding but fun.
- Pupils behave well in and out of lessons and their very positive attitudes to learning and consideration for each other contributes to their good achievement.
- Pupils say they feel very safe and secure. Teachers' high expectations for good behaviour and the care and guidance provided for pupils are particularly strong.
- School leaders have ensured there are robust systems that are successfully checking and improving the speed at which pupils learn.
- Teamwork is excellent and all staff contributes towards improvement. The setting of targets for teachers and the programme of staff training are used effectively to help improve teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The attainment of boys is not as high as girls, especially in writing.
- Teachers do not always show pupils how to improve their work and the challenge for more-able pupils is not always sufficient.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons, taught by eight teachers.
- Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils and evaluated samples of pupils' work.
- They spoke to parents and analysed questionnaires from different groups of staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documents including those relating to safeguarding, a summary of the self-evaluation records, examples of its monitoring records, and a wide range of the school's own assessment data.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and senior staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.

Inspection team

Richard Blackmore, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Gay Tattersall

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St John's Primary school is average in size compared with other primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus is slightly higher than average and the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is a little lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The governing body manages a breakfast club that operates for an hour before school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring pupils always know how to improve their work
 - providing higher levels of challenge for more-able pupils
- Raise the attainment of boys and accelerate progress in writing by:
 - providing more opportunities for extended writing
 - ensuring that writing tasks are relevant to boys and serve a real purpose

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children's individual skills and aptitudes vary when they start school, being below what might be expected. The well-established routines help them settle quickly and make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In lessons, children work well together because their personal and social skills are effectively developed.
- There is a good focus on developing speaking and listening and inspectors observed some effective teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make), which is helping children to make good progress in early reading. The assessment data collected by the school indicate that all pupils, by the time they reach Year 6, also make good progress.
- The work in Year 6 pupils' books and teachers' assessments show almost all have reached the expected Level 4 in English and mathematics and a growing number have attained a higher than average Level 5. Attainment in reading has improved over the last three years and is now average by the end of Key Stage 1 and due to effective teaching is above average by the time pupils leave the school.
- Boys do not attain as highly as girls at the school because their progress is a little slower, particularly in writing. This is because there are too few opportunities for extended writing and writing for real purposes.
- The effective learning seen in lessons illustrates the successful emphasis placed on pupils acquiring key mathematical and literacy skills. For example, in an excellent Year 3 mathematics lesson pupils pretended to be long jumper Bob Beacon, very quickly developing their skill of mentally adding ten to different numbers.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well as a result of good provision and early identification of their learning needs. No groups of pupils do less well than their peers nationally over time, including those known to be eligible for the pupil premium. Skilled support staff is well briefed and as a result are able to support pupils' learning effectively.
- In lessons, pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and want to do well. This is because lessons are well planned and interesting. They work with enthusiasm and especially enjoy lively class discussions. Most parents believe that their children make good progress because of the effective teaching at the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good. Teachers plan imaginatively and, when possible, link tasks to pupils' own experiences to make lessons meaningful. Care is taken to match activities to pupils' different abilities, although occasionally some pupils are not fully challenged. This is evident, for example, in mathematics where some of the more-able pupils fall short of expected targets because they are not stretched enough, particularly at the beginning of lessons.
- Teachers work closely in highly focused and cohesive teams throughout the school. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers use the outdoor area effectively to promote children's communication skills. They ask difficult questions of the children that encourage thoughtful answers. Teachers make good use of role play to promote social development and are good role models for children's social development.

- Teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is characterised by the excellent relationships pupils have with adults. As one parent said, 'the kids love them'. There is highly-effective use of teaching assistants both in class and in leading small groups and in the good quality and thoughtful questioning used to challenge and extend the learning of pupils.
- Teachers assess pupils' understanding in lessons by monitoring their progress, by highlighting errors and misconceptions, and through pertinent questioning.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. Teaching assistants are effective because they are often trained to meet these pupils' specific needs. They play a leading role also in interventions, including speech and language support and emotional counselling sessions. These are very well organised and focused on pupils' needs by the special educational needs coordinator.
- There is a well-established system of self-assessment which encourages pupils to compare their own appraisal of their performance with that of their teacher during lessons. However, teachers' comments do not always show pupils the next steps in learning and how to improve their work, and there is not always sufficient time for pupils to reflect on them or respond to them.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are well behaved, respectful and polite. They are calm and aware of the well-being of everyone around them, both in the playground and at other times and places.
- From the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards regular routines and expectations, together with clearly understood rewards and sanctions, result in a positive, supportive and happy atmosphere for learning. This is because the playground codes are a regular focus in whole school and class assemblies, and as a result pupils understand clearly what is right and wrong and how their behaviour affects others.
- There is a lively learning ethos in lessons and pupils work and play happily and are sociable at break and lesson times. During the inspection, a number of pupils were consulted about behaviour and bullying and stated that their school was a 'fun place', and that incidents of name-calling and unacceptable behaviour were rare.
- School records indicate that behaviour is typically good. A few pupils can present difficult behaviour but this is well-managed by staff and any minor incidents are dealt with quickly and consistently.
- Pupils know about bullying and the different forms it may take. When, on the odd occasion bullying occurs, they consider it is dealt with promptly. They have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying. Pupils are aware of other possible risks and know how to deal with these, including when using the internet.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong leadership for the school through their shared ambition and determination to improve further. They provide very clear direction for the school through well-focused improvement plans and have a highly accurate view of the school and the priorities for the future. These priorities for improvement have been identified

by all staff and they are involved in school development planning.

- Rigorous assessment of teaching and learning has ensured the continued good progress made by pupils during their time in the school. As a result, gaps in achievement between different groups of pupils are closing quickly, reflecting the school's good promotion of equalities. Discrimination is addressed effectively.
 - School leaders carefully use the Teacher Standards to ensure good quality teaching through a secure system of performance management. The school receives effective local authority support for the teaching of mathematics and English, which has improved the provision in these subjects.
 - The curriculum is very broad and provides many varied learning experiences for pupils in lessons and beyond the classroom and in the good extra-curricular activities provided for them. Topics join different subjects of the curriculum imaginatively and help pupils to achieve well. This has helped to improve the attainment of pupils, for example in reading at Key Stage 1.
 - The breakfast club provides pupils with an interesting range of activities and a good start to the day and meets their individual needs.
 - The headteacher continually focuses on improvement. As one parent commented, 'He wants to make it better and better.' Consequently pupils make faster progress than at the time of the last inspection, demonstrating the school's capacity for further improvement.
 - Parents are involved in school life through attending literacy and numeracy workshops. They receive information about how to help their child with their learning, for example with reading skills. Informative reports at the end of every half term provide parents with an update on their child's achievement.
 - The governance of the school:
 - offers good support to the school
 - conducts a regular programme of monitoring visits, linked to priorities in the school development plan
 - makes sure governors are developing their skills and offering improved challenge to leaders and managers
 - ensures that all safeguarding requirements are met and supported by clear policies and that checks on new staff are rigorous and processes for keeping pupils safe are robust.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	114711
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	401460

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Short
Headteacher	Simon Billings
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2009
Telephone number	01206 573457
Fax number	01206 570760
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