

St John's CofE Primary School

Daisy Bank Avenue, Swinton, Manchester, M27 5FU

Inspection dates 26–27 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 of all ages achieve well and make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics as well as in a wide range of other subjects.
- Planned activities are interesting, enjoyable and capture the imagination of pupils so that they are ready, willing and happy to learn.
- The development of pupils' writing is particularly successful so that pupils' attainment is consistently above average and pupils enjoy writing.
- Teachers' marking is highly effective in encouraging good learning.
- Behaviour is good across the school. Pupils are keen to learn and concentrate in lessons. Around the school they are polite, friendly and helpful. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils and parents agree that this is a safe and secure place to learn.
- A strong determination to make the school better has led to good improvements over time. The headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and governors have all played key roles in developing and improving teaching and achievement. Pupils are prepared effectively for the next stage of their education.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, most able pupils do not have difficult enough work to do and teaching assistants do not always have the necessary skills to support their learning.

Information about this inspection

- Two inspectors observed 17 part-lessons taught by 10 teachers and several teaching assistants. They also visited assemblies, breakfast clubs and guided reading sessions.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, members of staff, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at development plans, records of pupils' progress, arrangements for safeguarding, the work in pupils' books and arrangements relating to pay and performance.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents from the 19 responses to Parent View, the on-line questionnaire, a survey of 85 parents taken in the autumn term of 2013 and from conversations with parents bringing their children to school during the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised the 17 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Judith Straw, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Elizabeth Loftus

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average primary school.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds with only a few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion who speaks English as an additional language is very small.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is well above average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is just below average.
- An average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. This is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and children who are looked after.
- In 2013 the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - making sure that the most able pupils in all classes work on tasks that are sufficiently difficult and so challenge them
 - developing the skills of teaching assistants to support the learning of the most able pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The work in pupils' books and records of pupils' progress from Years 1 to 6 show good progress from pupils' starting points. Great attention is given to detail and presentation so that there is high-quality work in both writing and mathematics. Similarly, pupils' work in subjects such as history, geography, French, science and religious education is researched well and written clearly. Pupils in all classes enjoy problem solving in mathematics and demonstrate good mental mathematics skills in lessons.
- In 2013, results of national tests at the end of Year 6 dropped to just below the national floor standards. Inspection evidence shows that this was an exception to a steady rise in standards from 2009, when they were significantly below average, to 2012 when they were significantly above average. The 2013 cohort of pupils was quite small and included a high proportion of pupils with differing specific needs. Nevertheless, several pupils did not make the progress expected, including some most able pupils. School leaders, governors and the local authority all acted promptly to investigate and analyse why results fell so dramatically in 2013 and to take secure steps to make sure this does not happen again.
- Pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 are working at above average standards and have already made good progress since the end of Key Stage 1 in all subjects. Their writing is especially confident and skilled because they enjoy writing. A typical comment was 'literacy lets me embrace my creativity'. Their books include celebrations of the power of poetry, interesting biographical writing and the difference between factual reporting compared to persuasive writing. Pupils' attainment in grammar, spelling and punctuation is above average. Pupils are on target to achieve well in mathematics where a focus on mental mathematics is helping to raise standards. Pupils particularly enjoy working on two and three-step word problems and make good progress.
- Children start the Nursery with skills below those expected for their age. Their record books show that they soon settle into school life and make good progress in all the areas of learning. By the end of Reception, they are just below the expected level but rapidly catching up.
- Children in Year 1 make good progress in learning their letters and sounds (phonics) and, for the last two years, have reached national expectations in the screening check for phonics.
- Standards by the end of Year 2 were above average in 2013 in reading and writing and just below average in mathematics. Currently, pupils in Key Stage 1 are working hard in all subjects and making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, did better than other pupils in school in English and mathematics in Year 6 in 2013. In the past, there has been a gap in the attainment of these pupils and others but it has narrowed rapidly and disappeared in 2013.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Their work is planned carefully so that they receive the right levels of both challenge and support to achieve well. Parents are particularly pleased with the way their children are supported.
- Pupils read widely and many speak of their enjoyment of reading in school, at home and on holiday. Pupils say that they read in school every day.
- The most able pupils are identified early and given extra challenges across all subjects to help them to reach their potential and gain the higher level of which they are capable. However, sometimes work is not hard enough and opportunities are missed to extend the learning of the most able even further.

The quality of teaching

is good

- In all classes, an ethos is created where pupils are alert, willing to concentrate, and enjoy their learning.

- The enthusiasm of pupils is captured immediately through various interesting introductions to activities. For example, mathematics lessons sometimes start with 'maths gym' where pupils jump once, twice or three times to indicate tens, hundreds and thousands; timed challenges and mental tests remind pupils of earlier learning. There is sometimes talk about imaginary 'big Dave' who did not pay attention in Year 1 and is now lost at secondary school. Children love solving problems that 'big Dave' gets wrong.
- There is a strong focus on pupils explaining their answers. Questions challenge pupils to expand, develop and reinforce their learning which builds confidence.
- There are high expectations for the presentation of work. Pupils' books are neat and easy to read. Pupils realise that setting out mathematics problems clearly on squared paper means there are fewer chances of making mistakes. Writing work is drafted and then redrafted so that pupils learn how to plan, and later improve, their writing. Marking is particularly well done. Pupils' work is marked thoroughly, advice is given on how to improve, pupils respond to the advice and a dialogue builds up between the teachers and individual pupils which strongly supports good learning.
- Reading is taught very effectively. Pupils read fluently and are encouraged to look beyond the text for deeper meaning, inference and appreciation of the feelings of characters in fiction books. All pupils have reading diaries which are up to date.
- Work is usually set at different levels for the pupils in a class. Sometimes, the most able pupils start working at once with a teaching assistant while others listen to a longer explanation. Occasionally, the most able pupils are not given work which is hard enough or teaching assistants do not have the expertise to take pupils' learning further.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, one Nursery class and two Reception classes share a large space with several separate rooms so that there is a wealth of activities for children to learn from and enjoy. There is plenty of adult supervision and staff interact with children to move their learning on. Children were counting skittles, painting portraits, constructing railways, modelling baked beans and counting who had more or less, threading large nuts onto bolts and managing a doctor's surgery in the role-play area. Numerous other activities take place with an effective blend of teacher-led sessions interspersed with children choosing their own activities indoors and outside.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because teaching assistants are well briefed by teachers and make sure that children who need extra time or another explanation of a new concept are well supported.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The site is managed well and maintained with secure procedures for entry and exit into and out of the building. Child protection procedures are rigorous.
- Pupils report that there are very few incidents of bullying. They describe the different kinds of bullying and name-calling that might take place but insist that pupils do not use offensive language in the playground or elsewhere in school and say that teachers very quickly sort out any poor behaviour.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their enjoyment of reading, are excited when they get their mathematics answers correct and relish the chance to write at length. Behaviour is not outstanding because, just occasionally, the rate of pupils' learning slows when pupils lose concentration.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of sporting activities and most attend lunchtime or after-school clubs. Dance club is especially popular with boys as well as girls. PiXL club runs for pupils in Year 6 and this gives pupils an opportunity to practise literacy and numeracy skills while enjoying breakfast.
- Older pupils enjoy managing the organisation of assemblies. The singing in assembly, as well as dancing, sometimes, is joyous. Older pupils also act as reading buddies and playground leaders. The pupils are proud of the fundraising that they and their teachers do and feel that their school

is an important part of the local community.

- Attendance is consistently average and sometimes a little above.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides skilled and inspiring leadership so that, with her leadership team in support, the school is improving steadily and is well placed to continue improving. Since the dip in attainment in 2013, leaders have increased the rigour and accuracy of their assessments.
- The senior leadership team has the full confidence of the staff. The quality of teaching is checked rigorously. Senior leaders have the necessary skills to develop, support and improve teaching and so teaching is good across the school. Teaching assistants are not always trained to a level that enables them to support the most able pupils effectively. All staff know they are accountable for the progress their pupils make and that pay progression is linked to classroom success.
- Subject leadership has improved since the previous inspection. These middle leaders now play a key role in managing their subject areas, checking on the quality of teaching, learning and resources and contributing to whole-school improvement.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage has been expanded and improved so that children get a good start to their education and make good progress.
- Pupils' progress is monitored effectively and additional support provided when pupils are in danger of underachieving. Pupil premium funding is used to provide extra small-group sessions in English and mathematics and also the PiXL club which especially helps pupils in Year 6.
- The curriculum provides an interesting and exciting range of experiences for pupils and contributes to their enjoyment of learning. There are examples of pupils' good writing on numerous wall displays from researching the battle of Marathon to a scientific study of the weather. The curriculum and the atmosphere of the school, as well as the example set by adults contribute significantly to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Sports funding has been used to widen the range of sporting activities available to all pupils and so develop their physical well-being. It also helps the staff to develop their skills to teach different sports.
- Parents who talked with inspectors were unanimously pleased with the school. The results of the school's recent questionnaire showed a high level of parental satisfaction.
- The local authority has carried out detailed checks on the work of the school after the drop in standards in 2013. It confirms the judgement of school leaders that this was an exception to the overall trend of rapid improvement. Such is the confidence of the local authority in the school that it is supporting its expansion to become a two-form entry school from next September with a new building.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school very well and have been associated with it for a number of years. They hold leaders to account and ask searching questions. After the drop in standards in 2013, they reorganised their committee structure to make sure that governors with a professional background in education take the lead in monitoring the school's assessment records. Governors fully understand progress data and know how well the school is doing in comparison to others. They monitor the quality of teaching and learning and oversee performance management systems ensuring that salary progression is linked to raising achievement for pupils. They keep a detailed check on how the school uses pupil premium funding and sports funding to give pupils the best education possible and to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils. Governors' sound financial management skills have successfully reduced a large budget deficit but not at the expense of staff morale and pupils' progress.

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	105929
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	440733

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	245
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Brighthouse
Headteacher	Sarah Rubin
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2012
Telephone number	0161 737 4622
Email address	stjohnsce.primaryschool@salford.gov.uk

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