



St Johns Church of England Primary School, Clifton

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109146
LEA Bristol, City of
Inspection number 285341
Inspection dates 6 July 2006 to 6 July 2006
Reporting inspector Ian Hodgkinson AI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Worrall Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Clifton
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Bristol BS8 2UH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0117 9030251
Number on roll	284	Fax number	0117 9030251
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Anne Bradley
Date of previous inspection	11 July 2006	Headteacher	Mrs Jean Shepherd

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 11	6 July 2006 - 6 July 2006	285341

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector held several discussions with staff, pupils and the chair of governors covering aspects of the school's work. Opportunities were taken to talk informally with pupils and parents. One hundred and eighteen questionnaires returned by parents were analysed and comments read. School documentation was evaluated together with data on the standards achieved at the school. A number of classrooms were visited, and the lead inspector sampled parts of four lessons in joint observation with the headteacher.

Description of the school

Located in an affluent area of Bristol, the number on roll at this popular and larger than average school has been increasing steadily since the last inspection. Its site and buildings have been subject to extensive and ongoing recent improvements.

When children join the Reception classes, their skills are broadly at the level expected for their age. Around a fifth of the pupils are drawn from a range of minority ethnic heritages. The few who are beginners in English are often children of newly arrived university staff. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average, and an average proportion of children have statements of special educational needs.

The school offers a breakfast and an after school club, which have been inspected separately. These offer a range of activities outside normal school hours in addition to those offered by the school. The school's religious character permeates the school's ethos and learning, and is also the subject of a separate inspection report.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St. John's is a good school with a number of outstanding features. From an early age, pupils are encouraged to show initiative, work in teams and find out about the wider world. By Year 6, they are equipped exceptionally well with the skills they need for later life. They make an excellent contribution to the school by taking on a variety of responsibilities. Each Year 6 pupil, for instance, is a member of a lively school council. Pupils are given executive positions on the council, taking responsibilities for managing finance and publicity and maintaining minutes of meetings. The council recently organised a very well co-ordinated 'Five-A-Day' campaign to further raise pupils' awareness of the need for a healthy diet and to build on their strong understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Older pupils also provide very good support and guidance for younger pupils by acting as buddies and class representatives and by acting as 'head of the table' to ensure good manners at lunchtime.

Throughout the school, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and they demonstrate a mature understanding of the needs and feelings of others. This is underpinned by the school's Christian ethos and its focus on developing pupils' personal and social skills. A group of Year 6 pupils agreed that all felt very safe at the school because everyone was consistently encouraged to show each other care and respect.

Children get off to a flying start in the Reception classes where they make excellent progress. 'Fantastic reception and brilliant start to my child's career', wrote one very satisfied parent, whose views were echoed informally by others in discussion with the inspector. In Reception, a very well structured curriculum carefully develops children's basic skills through a well balanced range of activities. By Year 6, pupils' standards are significantly above average and they have made good progress. The school's excellent systems to monitor pupils' progress and intervene to support those with specific needs, or those who are underachieving, ensure that nearly all are kept on track to reach their challenging goals. The achievement of a very few pupils is, however, adversely affected by poor attendance and punctuality. The progress of higher attainers is sound but not as strong as for those in other groups. The school has recognised the need to strengthen teachers' planning to ensure that higher attainers always find work as challenging as other groups, partly by identifying and building on pupils' different levels of thinking skills.

Pupils really enjoy their learning because teachers make lessons interesting by linking them to trips, visits and other activities. Teachers plan particularly well to ensure that pupils' literacy skills are developed effectively through other subjects. Good marking and excellent assessment procedures ensure that pupils are made well aware of how they are making progress against their targets and what they need to do to improve. Assessment and marking in literacy is especially good, and similar principles are now being extended to improve performance in mathematics, where pupils' progress has not been as strong as in other subjects.

The school has made very good progress since its last inspection. It has rigorously addressed the substantial issues identified at that time. Such strong improvement is given excellent direction by the headteacher along with subject and key stage managers. There is a very strong sense of teamwork that runs through the whole school staff, which allows thorough self-evaluation to be highly effective. Good governance has helped to sustain improvement for this growing school. Parents and pupils are very pleased with the service provided. The school gives good value for money.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well to reach standards which are significantly above average by the end of Year 6. Very few pupils fail to achieve the challenging targets set for them because the school monitors their performance so closely and intervenes to support them so effectively. National test results in science have been exceptionally strong for all pupils. Pupils make good progress in English and satisfactory progress in mathematics. In English and mathematics, the progress of higher attainers is satisfactory but not as strong as that of other groups. Children make excellent progress in all areas of learning in their Reception year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is a real strength. This begins in the Reception year, of which one parent wrote: 'My child has had a wonderful introduction to school – she really loves going there and feels like a valuable member of the school community.' Pupils are frequently brought into contact with the 'real world' by investigating the locality and by listening to outside speakers. Together with the effective team-working and initiative shown in lessons, these experiences prepare the pupils exceptionally well for later life.

Pupils' attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now in line with the national average. Despite strong efforts by the school to promote good attendance a few pupils have poor attendance records and some of these underachieve as a consequence.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

'The teachers are good at making the work interesting.' This is a comment frequently heard from parents and pupils. Teachers make every effort to bring learning alive for their pupils, for example by good use of information and communication technology and excellent use of classroom displays to provide pupils with effective visual stimuli. One parent was anxious to get into a Reception class to see how his child had helped

to 'make a rainforest on the ceiling'. Within such interesting contexts and topics, teachers skilfully plan to help pupils develop their literacy and a range of other key skills, particularly their personal and social skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has achieved excellent success in its focus on helping pupils to enjoy their learning, and on supporting those personal and social skills which are relatively underdeveloped when children join the Reception classes. Very good breadth is added to the curriculum by the teaching of French at all ages, and by specialist teaching of games, physical education and music. Pupils develop a strong cultural awareness through the school's extensive links with the church, community, and partner schools at home and overseas. The school makes increasing provision for gifted and talented pupils, but recognises the need for greater consistency in extending challenge to higher attainers in lessons. A good range of activities is offered through after school clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

A parent describes the school as 'a well rounded school that places emphasis not only on academic achievement but on the well-being of each pupil'. It takes particularly good care of its pupils because its systems for monitoring pupils' welfare and progress are exceptionally effective. Staff communicate very well with each other to support pupils' progress, and work with determination to enlist the co-operation of external agencies when appropriate. Individual education plans are very clear and specific, and support the progress of pupils with learning difficulties very well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

This is a school which knows itself very well. Its excellent procedures for self-evaluation allow it to recognise key areas for improvement and to take resolute action to deal with these. Excellent leadership from the headteacher and her team of managers helps to sustain the drive for improvement. Thus, all key issues of the last inspection have been addressed very successfully. The school turned around weaker science results up to 2004 by sharp focus on improving teaching and the curriculum in science, and science results have been very strong since. A whole-school focus on improving boys' writing has produced better results this year.

Communication throughout the school is highly effective. Staff work very well as a team. Governors maintain close contact with the school and are well informed about developments. The school takes careful account of the views of governors, parents, pupils and staff in evaluating its work and planning improvements. A few parents said that they would like the school to develop more modern means of communicating with them, including through the development of a website.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I very much enjoyed my recent visit to St. John's for its inspection. Many thanks for the welcome you gave me and for helping me to understand more about your school.

You and your parents let me know that you think St. John's is a good school. I agree with those views. I also agree that it has some excellent features. It is particularly good at helping you to get ready for secondary school and for life as an adult. This is not only because it helps you to make good progress in your learning. By giving you lots of opportunities to visit the community for your work and to hear from visitors, your teachers make learning exciting and give you a good understanding of the world. By getting you to work together in solving problems, and by giving older pupils lots of responsibilities, the school helps you to develop many of the skills you will need in work when you get older. Your teachers keep a very close check on how well you are doing and give you a great deal of support if you need it. They also encourage you to care for others.

I know that you like the wide range of activities the school offers to you. It is really good to see that you can learn French from such an early age. Children in Reception get off to an excellent start at school in all areas of their learning.

The headteacher and other staff who run the school have made many successful improvements in recent years as the school has grown. They are now working to make things even better, especially by making sure that those of you who can do more difficult work are always given tasks which give you enough challenge. Some pupils still do not attend school enough, and do not do as well in their tests as a result. You can play a part in helping to improve your own results and those of the school by making sure that you attend regularly.

I wish you every success for the future.