

# St John's CofE (C) Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124278
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	292942
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Hazel Callaghan

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	86
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Karen Campion
<b>Headteacher</b>	Elizabeth Attwood
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 January 2003
<b>School address</b>	Wombourne Road Swindon Dudley DY3 4NB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01384 273865
<b>Fax number</b>	01384 293190

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Many of the pupils come from the village of Swindon but increasingly pupils live further afield. More pupils move to and leave the school in different classes than is found nationally. Children's attainment when they start school in the Reception class varies from year to year but is generally similar to that found nationally. The numbers of pupils in each age group are fairly small and although there is an average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, they are not evenly spread through the school. This creates fluctuations in the standards each year.

## 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 Primary is a good school that is steadily improving under the good leadership of the headteacher. A strong emphasis is placed on ensuring pupils are confident and happy and have the skills which will enable them to be successful. This underpins the good provision for pupils' care, guidance and support. Pupils rightly feel well supported, respected and secure. Their personal development and well-being are good. Social and moral development is particularly strong. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are well prepared for the next stage of learning and the world of work.

Achievement is good. Children make a positive start to their learning because the provision in the Reception class is good. Children make good progress in all aspects of their learning. This good progress continues through the school because of consistently good teaching and learning. Pupils reach above-average standards by the end of Year 6. Standards and progress in reading are a real strength. Standards in writing are also improving because positive strategies have been introduced and pupils now have a clear understanding of how to improve their written work. Standards in mathematics have not been as strong as in English. In 2006 this was because boys did not achieve as well as the girls and teachers do not always adapt work closely enough to differing needs. Mathematics has rightly been identified as the next focus for improvement but the school's tracking systems do not support the school's analysis of the relative progress of boys and girls. The school rightly recognises that greater rigour is now required in the way it evaluates trends in the achievement of different groups so that staff can identify and respond even more quickly to any minor dips in pupils' progress. The curriculum is good and enhanced by many additional activities which extend pupils' knowledge and skills. Pupils' work is checked regularly and weaknesses or concerns quickly identified so that support is provided. However, assessment of pupils' abilities when they start school is not always sufficiently accurate and this makes it difficult to evaluate progress in the Reception class. Good systems have been introduced for monitoring pupils' individual progress from the end of Year 1 to Year 6 and this supports teachers' planning well.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is well supported by the senior teacher and a strong team of staff. Good procedures for monitoring the work of the school support their accurate judgements about the school's effectiveness. Successful strategies are employed to address any concerns. Governors are well informed and very supportive of the headteacher and staff but they are not yet fully involved in monitoring school improvement. There is a clear commitment from all to improve the school further and to continue to raise standards. Based on the significant improvements since the last inspection, especially in pupils' achievement and in teaching, the capacity for further improvement is good.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Establish systems for accurately assessing children's knowledge and skills when they start in the Reception year that lead to a secure evaluation of their progress.
- Develop the school's system for monitoring pupils' attainment so that trends in progress can be identified, not only of individuals, but also of specific groups.
- Raise standards in mathematics by ensuring that teachers identify weaknesses in learning and adapt activities to meet all pupils' needs.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils achieve well throughout the school. They make a good start in the Reception class and most pupils reach the standards expected for their age, and many higher. Standards fluctuate from year to year because of the small numbers in each year group, but they are rising faster than is found nationally by the end of Year 2. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and standards are broadly average. This represents good progress from their starting points. Pupils do especially well in reading, where standards are well above average. Standards are also rising in Year 6 and are above average overall this year. Pupils have reached the challenging targets set for them. Standards in English are now the strongest aspect and pupils make very good progress in this aspect of their work. Standards in science and mathematics have also improved but are not as strong as in English and fluctuate from average to above average in different years. Pupils of all abilities achieve well overall because the school successfully matches activities to their different needs. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because of the positive support they receive.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils say they enjoy coming to school because there are so many interesting things to do. Attitudes to their tasks are good. They work hard and show good levels of interest and motivation to learn. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils show good levels of care, support and empathy for others. New pupils to the school settle quickly and make friends. Most pupils attend very regularly but a very small number have had many absences, which has brought attendance levels down to broadly average this year. Behaviour is good, especially in lessons and around the school. Pupils say that there is no bullying, but if there were incidents they are confident that they would be quickly addressed.

Pupils readily accept responsibilities. For example, older pupils take great pleasure in helping the youngest at playtimes. Pupils are proud of their school and they value the opportunity to improve it further, especially members of the school council. Pupils also respond readily to supporting numerous local and worldwide charities. Their contribution to the community is good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and satisfactorily adopt healthy lifestyles. They readily participate in exercise and sport, but they admit they are not as quick to make healthy eating choices.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the school, and is successful in promoting good achievement by most pupils. Good relationships between staff and pupils characterise much of the learning. Activities are based upon clear learning objectives, which are tailored to the needs of the range of abilities and ages in the class. Assessment and teachers' knowledge of their pupils is good, and teachers convey clearly to pupils how successful they are in their learning and what they must do to get better. In the Reception class, however, there is not a secure system for evaluating pupils' attainment when they start and although pupils do make good achievement overall, it slows the initial progress. Teachers are confident

in their subject knowledge and a recent focus on improving pupils' writing has had a positive impact on the standards of pupils' work. It has yet to be as successful in mathematics. This is because there has been less of a focus on developing effective strategies to promote good learning by ensuring that work is always matched closely enough to pupils' differing needs.

Creative use of staff has led to successful improvement in the teaching of physical education and in art across the school. Class management is good, and teachers use a combination of humour, good resources and high expectations to enhance learning. Teaching assistants are well trained and they make a good contribution to all pupils' learning.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is being continually developed to take account of the needs of the pupils in the school. The school is working towards 'Dyslexia Friendly' status, for example, which is already helping pupils to recognise the strategies that help them learn. Personal, social and health education is a strong element of the curriculum and continues to be improved. Provision for children in the Reception class is good. They are encouraged to learn through first-hand experiences and gain from the positive role models presented by pupils in Year 1. Throughout the school, the needs of pupils with learning difficulties are well met so they make good progress. A number of imaginative links are being made between subjects to make learning more purposeful. Information and communication technology (ICT) is much improved and is used effectively to support pupils' individual research. The school has rightly identified that the next important step to improving the curriculum is to ensure every opportunity is made to use pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills in other subjects so that their understanding is further consolidated. The range of additional activities, clubs and sports is good and significantly enriches both pupils' knowledge and their personal and social development. The eco-club, for example, is very active within the school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are highly valued as individuals and so feel safe and well cared for. All procedures for safeguarding the pupils are well established and effective. One parent's comments typify those of many: 'I am confident that the school has my child's best interests at heart'. Any pupil who is vulnerable or unhappy is given tremendous support so they can succeed. Outside agencies are used well to support pupils when required. The school has a good partnership with parents and works successfully with them to promote pupils' learning, especially those with learning difficulties. Some parents would welcome even stronger levels of communication. Close links with local schools ensure pupils' transfer from one stage of their education to the next very smoothly. Academic support and guidance is good overall, but assessments are not yet secure at the start of the Reception year, making it difficult to check progress. The attainment of all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is checked carefully and effective targets for future attainment regularly set and reviewed. Targets are shared with pupils and this supports their good progress because they recognise what they have to learn next. When there is concern about any pupils' progress, additional support is provided. The work of pupils with learning difficulties is systematically monitored and effective targets for their next steps help them to achieve well.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The school has made good improvements since the last inspection because the headteacher has given a strong lead and clear view to what was required. There is a strong focus on ensuring that pupils achieve well in their academic and personal development. Considerable effort has gone into improving the accommodation so it now provides a welcoming and stimulating learning environment. Good systems for monitoring teaching and the curriculum ensure that good progress is being made in improving the school.

Priorities for school development are well chosen. Assessment has improved and effective procedures enable senior leaders to monitor pupils' individual progress and employ additional support for those who are likely to underachieve. Staff recognise, however, that the current system does not support their evaluation of trends in learning or the progress of different groups, such as boys and girls, minority ethnic groups and those with learning difficulties.

The governing body is well led by the chair and vice chair but several recent changes have limited the involvement of governors in developing or monitoring the school improvement plan. Potential staffing difficulties caused by a large number of staff going on maternity leave were very well managed so that pupils' learning was not disrupted.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

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

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

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

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

29 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of St John's Church of England Primary School, Swindon, West Midlands, DY3 4NB

I am writing to say thank you for making me feel welcome in your school and for helping me with my questions. I really enjoyed chatting to you and found everything you said very interesting. I thought you would like to know what I found out about your school.

- What works well.
- This is a good school that helps you to make good progress in your work so many of you achieve above-average standards when you leave in Year 6. At the moment you do slightly better in English than in mathematics.
- Teaching is good and you enjoy school because there are lots of interesting things to do both in and out of lessons.
- You try hard and teachers help you to understand how to get better in your work.
- You behave well and try to help one another in school and people around the world who are in difficulties.
- All staff look after you well and you feel safe and well cared for.
- The school is well led by your headteacher and all the staff work well together.
- What I have asked the school to do.
- Carefully check what children know and can do when they start school in the Reception class so that the progress you make can be measured accurately.
- Use information about your work and progress to help teachers check how well everyone is doing from year to year and identify the best ways to make sure everyone achieves well.
- Help you to do better in mathematics by giving greater support to those who find it difficult and make sure work is pitched at the right level for all of you.

Thank you again for being so polite and helpful.

Mrs Callaghan Lead Inspector