

# Deepcar St John's Church of England Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107117
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sheffield
<b>Inspection number</b>	319421
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joan McKenna

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 aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	217
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs K Bullock
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Beverley Cordle
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	St Margaret Avenue Deepcar Sheffield South Yorkshire S36 2TE
<b>Telephone number</b>	0114 2883878
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The overwhelming majority of pupils attending this average size junior school are of White British heritage. Only a very small number are from minority ethnic groups and all pupils speak English fluently. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little above average. Most pupils come from economically secure homes and the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than average. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award, the Activemark, the Greenfingers School mark and the Travel Award.

The school has experienced several changes in staffing recently. A new permanent headteacher took up post in September 2008. Two teachers are also new to the school this term.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

There has not been enough improvement since the school's last inspection when it was given a notice to improve. Although the pastoral care given to pupils and their personal development is good, pupils' academic achievement is still inadequate. This is because there has not been accurate assessment of their standards and progress and teaching does not move pupils on quickly enough. Leadership and management are inadequate. The new headteacher has quickly and accurately identified the weaknesses in the school, and has already taken some steps to tackle them. These changes are very new, however, and have not had time to make a difference. Leadership and management at other levels are underdeveloped, and governance is not effective.

Pupils enter the school with standards that are above the national average, but leave with standards that are only average. Pupils do not make sufficient or consistent progress during their time in school. The school's inaccurate view of pupils' standards and progress means that teaching lacks precision and work is not matched closely enough to pupils' needs. This limits their learning and the rate at which they progress. There is some good teaching which promotes better learning, but overall teaching is inadequate and is not strong enough across the school. Academic guidance is also inadequate. The feedback given to pupils through the marking of their work is too variable. Some is of high quality with detailed comments and suggestions given to individuals to help them understand how to reach the next steps in their learning, but much marking is cursory and unhelpful to pupils. The setting of targets for pupils to help them understand what they need to do to improve is too new to have had any impact. The curriculum is satisfactory, with action being taken to develop it further.

The school's strengths lie in the pastoral areas. Positive relationships between adults and pupils mean pupils feel safe. All pupils are well cared for and good partnerships with external agencies help the school meet the additional needs of any vulnerable pupils. Pupils enjoy school, attend regularly and behave well. They are keen to learn and they willingly follow school rules and routines. They make a mature contribution to school life and to the local community.

The inaccurate understanding of how well pupils are achieving has restricted the effectiveness of leadership and governance. It has resulted in actions taken to bring about improvement not being well enough informed or targeted. Furthermore, too little account has been taken of whether these actions have had any impact when reporting on their effects. This lack of rigour in monitoring and evaluation has resulted in the school having too positive a view of the progress it has made.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the standards pupils reach and improve their achievement across the school.
- Ensure that assessments made of the standards pupils are reaching and the progress they are making are accurate and that the information is used to provide effective academic support and guidance.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching so it enables all pupils to learn effectively.

- Ensure that all leaders, including governors, have an accurate understanding of the effectiveness of the school and that they play a full part in improving it.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Pupils enter the school having reached above average standards by the end of Key Stage 1. They make insufficient progress during Key Stage 2 so that by the end of Year 6 they are only attaining standards in line with the national average. This has been the case for several years and there is little evidence of improvement. Indeed, provisional Key Stage 2 results in English and mathematics in 2008 were not significantly different from those in 2007, despite the fact that the 2008 cohort entered the school with higher standards. The challenging targets set in English and mathematics were far from being met. Pupils' progress across the school is insufficient and inconsistent. While there are examples of some individuals and some classes making satisfactory gains overall, especially higher up the school, this is not the case for enough pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive some helpful support at times, but make inadequate progress overall as planning for lessons does not take enough account of their specific needs. A lack of challenge in the work given to higher attaining pupils contributes to their inadequate achievement.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils, including the very small number from minority ethnic heritages, get on well with each other, work and play together harmoniously and have positive attitudes to learning. They can be imaginative in identifying areas they want to pursue; "especially the ologies; palaeontology, geology and archaeology", was one pupil's response. Behaviour is good, although some pupils can lose concentration when not engaged by lessons. They relish taking on responsibility, for example as school council members and road safety officers. New pupils spoke of the kindness that older pupils had shown them on their transition from infant school and how this had helped them to settle in well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are thoughtful and reflective in assemblies. Class recycling bins for waste paper show their awareness of environmental concerns. Pupils understand how to live a safe and healthy life. They enjoy their healthy tuck shop and participate in a wide range of sporting activities. They make a good contribution to their local community, for example through the local church's Harvest Festival, but their knowledge of life in more ethnically diverse societies is fairly limited. Pupils are developing many skills that prepare them well for their futures, but this is restricted by underachievement in literacy and numeracy.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 4**

Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching were identified at the last inspection. This is still the case, and teaching does not enable pupils to learn effectively enough. There are some positive features of teaching common to all lessons. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and manage them well; pupils respond by doing as they are asked, being keen to learn and generally behaving as expected. However, there are also common weaknesses. The lack of accurate information about pupils' standards and progress means that work planned for them is not

targeted specifically enough to meet their different needs. Some tasks given to pupils, such as the worksheets often used in mathematics, are too structured and do not give pupils opportunities to demonstrate what they can do or to apply their knowledge and understanding to new situations. This particularly limits the achievement of the most able pupils. Some teaching is good, more typically with the older age groups, although even here it is of variable quality. In the good lessons tasks capture pupils' interests, there is a good balance of teacher input and time for pupils to work independently, and detailed feedback is given to them. However, the absence of these features in too many other lessons results in learning being inadequate overall.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum includes all required subjects. There are plans to develop it further to strengthen pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. For example, more relevant and exciting opportunities are to be created for pupils to write in other subjects besides English. Through their successful work on media studies, pupils have demonstrated their potential to use information and communication technology, but this is not used to support pupils' learning on a regular enough basis. Programmes delivered by the learning mentor to promote pupils' personal, social and health needs are making an effective contribution to pupils' well-being and safety. Curriculum enrichment has been enhanced by the appointment of a part-time sports coach to promote extra-curricular and physical activities. There are a good number of interesting visits and visitors, including a residential week for Year 5. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to experience what it is like to live in an ethnically diverse society.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils feel safe because they have good relationships with staff and they know who they can go to if they have problems. Good attention is given to meeting any additional needs that pupils have. Arrangements for targeting teaching assistant support for pupils with learning difficulties, for example, have just been revised and strengthened. Quick action is taken if any pupil's absence is starting to cause concern. Health and safety and safeguarding procedures are in place to ensure pupils' well-being, and, with some new staff in place, training is being updated to ensure that all requirements are met. However, while pastoral care is good, the effectiveness of academic guidance has been limited by inaccurate and unreliable information about pupils' progress. It has resulted in guidance and support not being targeted specifically enough at the needs of individuals or groups. Another weakness is the lack of use of targets to help pupils improve. These have been introduced very recently, but they are not in a language that pupils can readily understand and this limits their usefulness. Pupils do not receive consistently helpful guidance through marking.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 4**

The new headteacher, in post only five weeks, has already gained a realistic view of the school's effectiveness and the weaknesses that need to be tackled to improve it. The priority of monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision rigorously and accurately so that effective steps can be taken to improve pupils' learning and achievement is recognised. The action that

has started to be taken, and other action planned, is positive, but it is much too early for it to be having the required impact. Leadership at other levels in the school is not effective enough. Subject leaders have not had the time or training necessary to equip them with the knowledge and understanding to be able to lead effectively. Governors are supportive of the school and have recognised the need to sharpen the challenge they provide, but they too have lacked the knowledge and information necessary for them to ask searching questions and to hold the school to account sufficiently strongly. The majority of parents responding to the questionnaire were positive about the school, but around a third expressed some concerns, mainly about the quality of teaching, their children's progress and the quality of communication with them.

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## Annex A

**Inspection judgements**

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	4

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Deepcar St John's Church of England Junior School, Sheffield, S36 2TE

As you know, your school was inspected recently and this letter is to let you know the inspection team's findings. However, first I would like to thank you for talking with us and being so friendly during our visit.

Your school has some positive features. It cares for you all well and it provides extra personal support for those of you who need it. You feel safe because of the good relationships you have with adults. You also know how to keep healthy, and you enjoy the healthy tuck shop and doing sport during school and in the clubs afterwards. You get on well together; older pupils are kind to younger ones. You enjoy school and are keen to learn. You generally behave well and your attendance is good. You also make a helpful contribution to school life and the local community.

Overall, however, we judge that your school has not improved enough since the last inspection and it is not effective enough. This is because you are not achieving as well as you should or reaching the standards you are capable of. Although in some lessons you are given interesting and challenging work, too much teaching is not helping you learn fast enough. The school has not gathered accurate information about how well you are progressing, and this means that the work and support you are given is not meeting your different needs well enough. It also means that your school leaders and the governing body do not have the right information to help them improve the school. We have asked the school to improve all of these areas.

Your new headteacher knows what needs to be done to make the school better, but we think the school needs some extra support to help it increase its rate of improvement, and we have therefore placed it in 'special measures'. This means that extra support will be given to the school and regular checks will be made on how effectively it is improving.

You can help the leaders and teachers in your school by continuing to attend regularly, behave well and work hard in lessons.