

St John's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104894
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	377144
Inspection dates	23–24 January 2012
Lead inspector	Clare Henderson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Canon P Green
Headteacher	Vivienne Ainsworth-Brown
Date of previous school inspection	19 June 2007
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Introduction

Inspection team

Clare Henderson
Kirsty Haw

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 12 lessons and small groups taught by eight teachers and four teaching assistants, listened to individual pupils reading in Years 1 and 2 and scrutinised pupils' work. They held meetings with members of the governing body, parents and carers, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, looked at documents relating to safeguarding, pupils' progress and attainment and the way in which the school evaluates its own performance. There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to consider when planning the inspection. The inspectors scrutinised the questionnaires completed by staff and pupils and analysed the 60 received from parents and carers.

Information about the school

This is an average size primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. There is an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and of those who are disabled. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A few are from minority ethnic groups. Mobility into the school is above average. The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has gained Healthy School status, Eco School and Bike It awards. There has been a high turnover in staff in the years since the last inspection, including a new headteacher who has been in post since January 2012.

The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs, the provision of which were considered during this inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- The overall effectiveness of this school is satisfactory. Achievement is satisfactory, and from their starting points, all groups of pupils make satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics. When they leave in Year 6, their attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average.
- The attainment of pupils in Year 2 in reading has been below average in recent years. However, it is currently broadly in-line with the national average for pupils in Year 2. This is the result of the high priority given in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 to developing pupils' reading and comprehension skills.
- Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. In a minority of lessons, low level disruption is seen when learning is not suitably matched to meet pupils' abilities and interests. Furthermore, there are some pupils, particularly those who have transferred into the school, who have not acquired enough strategies to fully manage their own behaviour in lessons.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory rather than good because assessment information is not always used well enough to identify how learning can be fully accelerated. Consequently, tasks in lessons do not always challenge all pupils to achieve their full potential in reading, writing and mathematics. Marking does not consistently inform pupils as to how they can improve their work further.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher has rapidly identified the key improvements needed to move the school forward. However, senior teachers, subject leaders and members of the governing body, do not have enough involvement in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - assessment information is more rigorously used to identify how learning can be fully accelerated to enable all pupils to achieve their full potential
 - tasks set in lessons consistently match pupils' interests and abilities and are sufficiently challenging for all pupils to achieve their best
 - marking consistently provides pupils with clear direction in what they need to do next to improve their work
 - some pupils, in particular those transferring in from other schools, acquire more effective strategies to manage their behaviour better in lessons.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by developing the leadership role of senior teachers, subject leaders and members of the governing body, so that they are able to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning more effectively.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

In all the lessons seen during the inspection, the majority of pupils behaved well, were keen to learn and responded with enthusiasm to teachers' questions. When learning is most effective, pupils show good levels of concentration and enjoy their work, especially when discussing learning together. Pupils often learn at a good rate when working alongside adults. Progress slows and occasional low level disruption occurs, when pupils sit for too long listening to their teacher or when working independently, particularly when activities are insufficiently challenging or matched closely enough to their interests and abilities.

Most pupils begin school with skills that are below age-related expectations. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, priority is given to extending children's personal, social and emotional development and their reading, writing and calculation skills, which are often low on entry to the school. This is accompanied by a good range of opportunities to follow their own interests in learning through play.

The effective and well-structured promotion of reading skills continues through Years 1 and 2. In the past few years, learning during Years 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly for boys, did not fully build on the good learning they experienced in the Early Years Foundation Stage in all the areas of their learning. However, the school has been quick to attend to this with the introduction of small, well-focussed guided reading groups and mental mathematics sessions. As a result, the gap in their learning is closing overall and those pupils affected, who are currently in Years 3 and 4, now make satisfactory progress in English and mathematics. The current attainment of pupils in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics is broadly average. This is higher than in previous years because of the increased focus on providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their reading, writing, communication and mathematical skills within other subjects of the curriculum. The majority of pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 make satisfactory progress in English and mathematics, while a minority make good progress. Their attainment in English, including in reading, and

in mathematics is average by the time they leave Year 6. Lesson observations and a scrutiny of pupils' work show attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average.

Individual learning programmes and constant review of pupils' learning needs help to successfully narrow the gaps in learning and enable pupils who are disabled, those with special educational needs, and those who join the school during the school year to make the same satisfactory progress as others. This ensures that progress in learning is satisfactory for all groups of pupils. Most parents and carers agree with the findings of the inspection and are pleased with their children's achievement, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, a few feel that their children are not receiving enough challenge in the work provided in lessons. The inspection findings agree with these views.

Quality of teaching

In all lessons, teachers have good relationships with pupils. In the best lessons, the pace of learning is brisk and teachers and teaching assistants show a good awareness of pupils' learning by reviewing their learning and understanding in lessons to check and, if required, redirect learning. For instance, this was evident in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, where pupils were highly motivated, in a practical way, to learn and practise their calculation skills by enthusiastically and ably adding three numbers together. In such lessons, progress is good. However, this was not evident in all the lessons observed. The quality of teaching is satisfactory rather than good, because assessment is not always used rigorously enough and this results in work being repeated, or work set that does not fully challenge all pupils to achieve their full potential. Furthermore, although marking in some year groups gives pupils clear guidance in how to improve their work, this is not consistent across the school. The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is promoted satisfactorily within other subjects of the curriculum.

The impact of teaching on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Their spiritual development is accelerated well, through thought-provoking assemblies, drama, art and music lessons. Pupils are taught about others and the world around them. Their cultural experiences are enhanced effectively through visits to places of worship and the opportunity to meet with others from cultures and religions different from their own. Pupils' broadly average attainment by the time they leave in Year 6 means that they are adequately prepared for the next stage in their education. The vast majority of the parents and carers who spoke to the inspectors or those who responded to the questionnaires, are pleased with the quality of teaching the school provides. The inspection finds that their views are justified in some ways but the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour, as seen in class and around the school during the inspection, and from records held by the school, is typically satisfactory overall. Most parents and carers who spoke to inspectors or responded to the questionnaire are happy with behaviour and praise the pastoral care the school provides, including a strong start in reception. A few parents, carers and pupils raised concerns over the low level disruption, which occurs in some lessons. The inspectors agree that this is evident when the tasks in lessons are not matched closely enough to pupils' needs and abilities, or where pupils, in particular those transferring in from other schools and who found it difficult to settle there, have not acquired enough

strategies to fully manage their behaviour in lessons. The school behaviour management procedures are clear and contribute to a safe school environment. Pupils report that instances of bullying are rare and there is no racist bullying in the school. This view is supported by parents and carers and pupils' views and school documentation. Pupils say they feel safe at school and have good relationships with staff. They are confident any issues will be resolved quickly and effectively.

Pupils say they enjoy school. Attendance is broadly average. Policies and procedures for both behaviour and safety are up to date and were recently approved by the governing body. Pupils have a clear understanding of the need to lead a safe lifestyle. This is reflected in the way they explain their understanding of possibly unsafe situations, such as on the road. For instance, pupils have gained a 'Bike It' award in recognition of their work in encouraging regular, safe cycling to school. Pupils with responsibilities take their roles seriously, for example, older pupils care for the younger ones at playtime and during lunch breaks, helping them to develop their confidence and to learn the skill of cooperation.

Leadership and management

Staff changes mean that there has been limited training for all staff to help them drive on school improvements. Despite this, the pace of improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory and, under the current leadership, is improving quickly, as evident in the rapidly closing gap between the attainment of boys and girls, and between pupils with special educational needs and all other pupils.

Self-evaluation is accurate and the school knows its strengths and weaknesses well. However, there has been limited time for the new leadership team to fully embed the planned changes. Consequently, the capacity to improve is satisfactory rather than good. The governing body is supportive and keen to play its part in promoting improvement. However, together with senior leaders and subject leaders, they have had limited involvement in monitoring or evaluating the quality of teaching in the past. They ensure that all safeguarding requirements meet statutory requirements. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. The school has made a start at linking subjects through themes, to increase pupils' understanding and enjoyment, and to provide a focus for developing their reading, writing and mathematical skills within other subjects of the curriculum.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good because it is interwoven well into all the subjects that pupils study. Pupils respect and reflect about differences in beliefs and values, and respond positively to the good range of cultural opportunities provided by the school. Their social and moral development is satisfactory rather than good, because not all pupils have acquired strategies to manage their own behaviour or to adhere fully to expectations of behaviour in lessons.

Discrimination, racist behaviour or harassment of any form are not tolerated and the ethos established in the school, that every child matters, promotes equality of opportunity for all effectively. This is evident in the availability of curricular enrichment and of access to before- and after-school clubs for different groups of pupils. Most parents and carers say how pleased they are with the school and how welcome they are made to feel. A few say that they would value further opportunities to find out what their children are learning. Inspection findings agree with these views. The school is aware of this from recent canvassing of parents' and carers' views, and has plans in place to address it.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



25 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's Church of England Primary School, Southport – PR9 8JH

Thank you for talking to us and helping us when we inspected your school. We enjoyed talking to some of you and hearing some of you read. In your questionnaire responses, most of you say you are happy with all aspects of school life. However, a few of you say that behaviour could be better in some lessons.

You go to a satisfactory school. These are some of the best things about it.

- Reception children have lots of fun and enjoy learning while they play in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- All adults take good care of you and you told us that you feel safe and that adults are always there to listen and help you if a problem arises in school.
- You make satisfactory progress and reach broadly average standards in English and mathematics by the time you leave Year 6.
- Your behaviour is satisfactory rather than good overall because in some lessons a few pupils do not listen and learn as well as they should.

To make the school even better, I have asked it to:

- check that each one of you is given work in lessons which will enable you to achieve as well as you can and to see that you make enough progress in each class
- make sure that all teachers consistently plan tasks in English and mathematics lessons which match your needs and extend your learning
- give senior leaders and governors time to check that you are achieving as well as you should
- develop more ways to help those of you who find it difficult to concentrate in all lessons.

I hope you will play your part by working hard and to do your best to make your school even better.

Yours sincerely

Clare Henderson
Lead Inspector

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