

St John's CofE (C) First School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 124236 |
| Local Authority | Staffordshire |
| Inspection number | 292929 |
| Inspection date | 1 May 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Arnalena Bee |

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

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| Type of school | First |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4–9 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 48 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Sue Groom |
| Headteacher | Karen Shaw |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 March 2002 |
| School address | White Oak Drive Bishopswood Stafford ST19 9AH |
| Telephone number | 01785 840318 |
| Fax number | 01785 840318 |

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|--------------------------|------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St John's is a Church of England, voluntary controlled school situated in the village of Bishops Wood. It is smaller than the average sized school. Most of the pupils live in nearby villages and almost all pupils are of White British origin. Their attainment on entry to school is average as is the proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities. Since the school was inspected last the teaching staff, including the headteacher, have changed.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St John's is an outstanding school. The school motto, 'Where everybody is somebody special', says it all. All pupils feel special and thoroughly enjoy their time in school. One boy said, 'The school is so good I would like to pick it up and take it around the world for everyone to see.' Both academic and personal skills are promoted very well. By the time pupils leave, they are all very well prepared for the next phase in their education. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage and most exceed the expected levels by the time they start in Year 1. Pupils achieve very well and they reach standards well above the average in Year 2 and in Year 4. Teaching and learning are outstanding and this contributes significantly to the pupils' high level of achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils learn at a good pace because teachers usually use assessment information very effectively to plan activities to suit their individual needs. Occasionally, when pupils work in subjects other than reading, writing or mathematics, and at times when the same worksheet or activity is given to all pupils, a few find the activities too challenging. Pupils' personal development is outstanding and their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils take responsibility very seriously and learn from an early age that they too can make changes. They speak proudly of the Fun Trail, instigated by the very well organised school council, which is to be developed on the school field. Others talk about raising money for people in the wider world who are not as fortunate as they are. The way the school cares, guides and supports its pupils is exemplary. Pupils feel safe and confidently say that if they have a problem there is always someone who will help them. A major strength in the excellent curriculum is the way that personal and social and health education (PSHE) is covered. As a result, pupils have a very good knowledge of the reasons why they need to eat healthily and keep themselves safe. Pupils particularly enjoy the weeks that are dedicated to 'Healthy Eating' and 'Safety'. Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher has a very clear view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. She and her three teachers know all the pupils extremely well and are continually striving for high standards in all that they do. In addition, everyone else who works in the school is also highly committed to giving the pupils the very best education they can. Governance is good. The governors are effectively involved in the running of the school. They support the staff and the pupils well. Issues from the previous inspection have been effectively addressed. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that when working in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics, pupils are always given work that is suitable for their ability.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The few children in the Foundation Stage achieve well. As one parent wrote, 'The school gives them the best possible start.' Pupils achieve very well as they move through the school. The standards pupils reach in Year 4 are well above average. The 2006 national assessments for pupils in Year 2 were above average and an improvement on those in 2005. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, did better in writing, indicating that the focus on improving pupils' writing during the last two years has had a positive impact. The school's own data indicates that standards in 2007 are on course to improve further in Year 2 and the well above average for standards in Year 4 will be maintained. Systems that are in place to track

progress are very effective and enable pupils to reach their targets for literacy and mathematics. In addition, they clearly identify any pupil who needs extra support to get them back on track to meet their challenging and realistic academic target.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

All pupils get on very well with each other, respect the adults who help them and are polite to visitors who come into the school. The school's philosophy that 'Learning together we will be learning for life' is reflected in the response from pupils. Their attendance is above average demonstrating that pupils enjoy coming to school. They work hard and concentrate well because they say that 'teachers make it fun to learn'. Another pupil said, and classmates agreed, that they like school so much 'we don't like going home'. Relationships between pupils and adults are excellent. Consequently pupils are very confident in having a go at all that is offered to them. Pupils develop a very good understanding of the need to live a healthy and safe lifestyle because it is very well promoted in the curriculum. They talk extremely knowledgeably about which foods are good for them and the importance of taking regular exercise. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and 'special spiritual displays' in all classrooms encourage pupils to think and reflect. In addition, pupils have very good opportunities for reflection such as when listening to stories during acts of worship and identifying how well they have done during some lessons. Exciting activities, such as an Indian tea party, successfully help pupils' understanding of the different cultures around the world.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

There are many reasons why pupils do so well in their learning. The stimulating and vibrant learning environment, which is created throughout the school, encourages pupils to want to learn. Lessons are very interesting and exciting and adults value all that the pupils say and do. Relationships between all adults and pupils are outstanding and consequently the pupils are extremely confident, enthusiastic and willing learners. Teachers give pupils many opportunities to use computers to develop learning in many curriculum areas. In Years 1 and 2, pupils very confidently use the computers to work out mathematical problems using numbers and different shapes. Teaching is underpinned by careful attention to the needs of each pupil, through making good use of assessment information and continually asking searching questions that challenge pupils. At times, though, teachers do not always involve as many pupils as they could in question and answer sessions during lessons. Pupils' previous work in subjects, other than literacy and numeracy, shows that when the same activity is occasionally given to the whole class, a few pupils sometimes find it too challenging. Pupils are correct when they say that teachers' marking is really helpful and helps them to get better. It is very good and is both supportive and informative.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is extremely effective in making sure that pupils acquire a very good set of basic academic and personal skills. The provision for information and communication technology is very good. Teaching arrangements and other facilities ensure that the children in the Foundation

Stage are well provided for. For example, areas for these young children to dress up and pretend are well resourced and there are also good resources and facilities for them to develop in all areas except for outdoor physical activities, although, an outdoor area is being developed next term. Well-organised visits and visitors invited into school stimulate and reinforce learning very well for all pupils. For example, a ceramic artist has recently been in and worked with all pupils as they made and decorated clay tiles. These are effective in showing the pupils' understanding of the importance of healthy eating and taking exercise. Pupils say that they enjoy the wide range of after school activities. Those pupils with particular talents are identified, nurtured and allowed to grow. For example, budding musicians are supported and encouraged to play the piano as their classmates enter and leave the hall during acts of worship.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The outstanding level of care, guidance and support, which is provided for all children, is a key factor in why this school is so successful. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are very rigorous and robust and as a result parents are very pleased with how well the school cares for and supports their children. Academic and personal guidance and support are excellent. Very good links have been developed with a wide range of outside agencies to support all pupils, but in particular those few with specific needs. Targets for literacy and numeracy are given a high profile. Pupils know them and through their target books take them home and share them with their parents. Pupils are very well supported in their academic work. Marking is very good and because of the outstanding relationships developed, pupils feel confident to ask for guidance to improve their work further. Information collected on pupils' work in reading, writing and mathematics is used very well to ensure that pupils move easily on to their next step of learning but this is not always done as well in other subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school is managed exceptionally well by the headteacher and her three teachers, which enables pupils to achieve as well as they do. Since the headteacher was appointed in 2003, she has greatly improved the teaching and learning environment and the accommodation. Staff, governors, parents and pupils endorse this view. One parent said it all as she wrote, 'The ethos is set by the headteacher who sets a fantastic example, and her passion and caring nature is evident for all to see.' Pupils' achievement and standards have improved in reading, writing and mathematics and the school's financial situation is much improved. Additionally the teachers have successfully developed assessment procedures to enable pupils to be regularly assessed in all subjects. There is excellent capacity to improve further. All teachers are very well involved in managing subjects, for example, developing action plans and working towards identified priorities. The headteacher manages how well teachers are performing extremely well and keeps the governors well informed. They in turn support the work of the school well.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 |
| 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 |

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

- 01 May 2007 Dear Pupils Inspection of St John's Church of England First School, Bishops Wood, ST19 9AH Thank you for making me so very welcome when I visited your school the other week to see how well you were getting on. You were so friendly and I really enjoyed talking to you about all the interesting and exciting things you do as you learn. I am writing to let you know what I found out about your school.
 - Lessons are fun and well planned and adults make sure you achieve very well.
 - Your behaviour is excellent and you are all very kind towards each other.
 - Your school is very well led and managed and you are taught very well.
 - By the time you leave, you are all very well prepared for your next school.
 - The way you are looked after in school is excellent. You all know that if you have a problem someone will help you.
 - You are all learning, very well, about the importance of eating healthily and keeping yourselves safe at all times. To make the school even better I have asked your teachers to:
 - make sure that when you do work in lessons that are not literacy and numeracy, the activities you are given allow you to achieve your best.. Keep smiling, working hard and having fun.
- Yours sincerely Nina Bee Lead inspector