

St Jude's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116376
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	326375
Inspection dates	5-6 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Joy Considine

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

Type of School	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Docherty OBE
Headteacher	Mrs Christine McGrew
Date of previous school inspection	18 January 2006
School address	Bishopsfield Road Fareham PO14 1ND
Telephone number	01329 235131
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Jude's is a smaller than average primary school with provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception class. There is a privately run nursery on site which also offers extended provision for pupils at the beginning and end of the school day. The school serves the local community, and its intake includes a sizeable number of pupils whose parents serve in the armed forces. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, and that of pupils whose first language is not English, are below average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties or speech, language and communication difficulties. The school has achieved Healthy School Status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Jude's Primary School provides a safe and welcoming environment in which pupils feel secure and valued for the unique contribution they bring to the school. The Christian ethos of the school provides all pupils with a moral and social code in which all faiths, cultures and backgrounds are respected and valued. Staff know pupils well, and they take care to ensure that they are well looked after in and around the school. Pupils are happy, and they enjoy school. This is reflected in the positive attitudes they show and in the good behaviour they demonstrate in lessons and in the playground. They have a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle and are keen to make a positive contribution to the community. They are developing skills that will enable them to become responsible citizens of the future. Most parents are pleased with the school. One parent wrote, 'My son comes home telling me about his day enthusiastically and is eager to show me what he has learnt.'

Pupils enter school with skills lower than those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress, so that by the end of Year 6 they reach standards that are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Progress is satisfactory, although it is uneven between subjects and between classes. The school acknowledges that progress in mathematics has been too slow, and it now provides additional support so that all pupils can be better challenged to reach higher standards.

Pupils have a good understanding of their role within school and within the wider community. They enjoy participating in the range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school. The school council provides opportunities for pupils to share in decision making and to put their views forward. However, in many aspects of their school life, opportunities for them to develop independence and take initiative are restricted because teachers direct them too much, particularly in their lessons. Their personal and social skills, together with their standards in English and mathematics, prepare them adequately for their future economic well-being.

Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers use a variety of methods to capture pupils' interest and imagination, but sometimes the pace of teaching is too slow and does not offer enough challenge for all pupils. Teachers plan individual lessons in detail, but they do not always make the best use of assessment information to build on what pupils already know. This means that these lessons do not always meet the learning needs of all pupils, and their progress slows. There are increasing opportunities for pupils to apply their skills of literacy, numeracy and information communication and technology in other subjects, and this is helping to improve rates of progress. The curriculum is satisfactory in meeting the learning needs of pupils. It makes use of the local environment and of places further afield to provide wider experiences for pupils.

There have been recent changes to the leadership team arising from the retirement of some long-term serving teachers. The new leadership team evaluated current provision and has an accurate view of the strengths and areas for improvement. The team has prioritised appropriate actions for development and has plans in place to bring these about. Currently there is no long-term strategic plan in place to guide the direction of the school, which means that there is a lack of clarity regarding development in longer term. Senior leaders monitor the work of the school, but this is not always done with sufficient rigour, and this has led to some inconsistencies in practice across the school. The school makes good use of partnerships to support its work. For example, the local authority provides instrumental tuition for pupils in music, and professional coaches provide good support for sports. The headteacher and governors were instrumental in establishing the nursery and extended provision on-site, and this has been welcomed by parents and pupils. Links with the local parish are good and provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to become involved in their local community. The school actively promotes community cohesion through its curriculum. For example, pupils learn about the beliefs of other faith groups through their religious education lessons. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and has satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Staff in the Reception class have created a bright, attractive environment in which children feel safe and secure. Children enter the Reception class with skills lower than that normally expected at this age. They make good progress in all areas of their learning, although boys do not do as well as girls. At the end of the Reception Year, children's attainment is broadly as expected. Teachers use assessment information well to plan activities that are well matched to children's needs and interests. Staff are skilled at asking questions which develop children's knowledge and understanding and promote their speaking and listening. Children are developing their sense of curiosity through exploring the environment. This was seen in a gardening session that fascinated children as they explored the soil. There is good balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities, and good use is made of the outdoor visits and role-play area to develop knowledge and understanding. Children's personal development is good. They play collaboratively and are able to share and to take turns. They respond well to questions and interventions from staff. Children feel safe and enjoy the activities which are enhanced by good resources and a spacious outdoor area. The Early Years leader has good links with pre-schools and the nursery on-site, and parents are fully involved in their child's welfare and learning. There are also good links between the Reception class and Year 1 so that children enjoy a coherent learning experience as they move into the main school. The Early Years provision is well led and managed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can, particularly in English and mathematics by making better use of assessment information when planning lessons.
- Improve the quality of teaching by increasing the pace and providing learning activities which stimulate and challenge pupils.
- Improve strategic planning by identifying focused targets which can be rigorously monitored to bring about necessary improvement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 2 in 2008, they reached standards that were broadly in line with those expected in reading and mathematics. Standards in writing were below those expected, and were much lower than in reading and in mathematics. Girls performed better than boys in reading and writing, and boys reached higher standards than girls in mathematics. This is because girls started school with higher standards in reading and writing. A scrutiny of pupils' current work shows that pupils are on course to reach standards which are above average and that they are now making better progress. At the end of Year 6, pupils made satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science, although girls made better progress in English. There are variations between rates of progress between subjects and between boys and girls. Pupils who have English as an additional language and pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they receive targeted support from skilled teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school, and this is reflected in their positive attitudes, good behaviour and good attendance. They feel safe in school and say there is no bullying, and that most pupils are friendly and helpful. Pupils say there is always someone to help if occasional issues do arise. The school has achieved Healthy School Status in recognition of its work to promote healthy lifestyles for pupils. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to live a healthy lifestyle, and they appreciate the quality of school meals. They understand the need to take regular exercise. They are pleased with recent improvements to the playground, because they now have more equipment and facilities to encourage physical activities at break times. They are able to take part in a wide range of sporting activities including hockey, football, table tennis and netball. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is good. They respect and value the faiths, cultures and backgrounds of people whose backgrounds are different from their own. There is a strong Christian ethos that permeates the life of the school, so that each individual is valued for the unique contribution that he or she makes to the school. Pupils have a secure understanding of the part they play in the school and the wider communities, and they are developing their understanding of the global community beyond. The school council is involved in making decisions about the school, but meetings are led by teachers and this restricts the opportunity that pupils have to develop further independence. Pupils are prepared adequately for their future economic well-being because they are developing good personal and social skills and their academic achievement is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There are variations in the quality of teaching, and this leads to inconsistent progress made by pupils. In all lessons, relationships are good, and the majority of pupils have positive attitudes towards learning. Where teaching is good, the pace is brisk and engages pupils. There are opportunities for pupils to collaborate and learn from each other. For example, in one lesson, older pupils were encouraged to apply mathematical knowledge to a practical task in which they were designing a play area. They discussed strategies and commented on and evaluated each other's work. In the better lessons, teachers make good use of assessment information to plan learning tasks that are well matched to the needs and interests of pupils, and this enables them to make good progress. Where teaching is less effective, there is insufficient challenge and the pace is slow. Tasks are sometimes too easy and do not build on what pupils already know, and this slows the progress that pupils are able to make. The quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work is also variable. Teachers offer supportive and encouraging comments, but they do not provide enough information about what pupils need to do to further improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a curriculum that is topic-based, so that pupils can learn through linking subjects together to make learning more relevant to their needs and interests. There is an overall plan in place to show what is to be taught, but this has not yet been broken down to identify the specific skills and knowledge needed to ensure good progression in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. More-able pupils in particular do not have enough opportunities to build on their previous achievements. There is a good range of enrichment activities such as visits and after-school clubs, which pupils enjoy. Older pupils have the opportunity to take part in residential visits, which helps them to develop team-building skills through outdoor pursuit activities. The school has developed the school grounds to increase the access to outdoor learning for all pupils. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching and support arising from their links with other schools and organisations. For example, the local authority provides specialist instrumental music tuition and professional coaches who work with pupils to develop their sporting skills. Music is a strength of the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Parents and pupils value the high level of pastoral care that the school provides for pupils. There is particularly good provision for the needs of most vulnerable pupils and the results are evident in the progress made by pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has robust procedures in place to ensure pupils' health, safety and security. Procedures for safeguarding pupils, including child protection arrangements, are secure. Staff have a thorough understanding of the pastoral needs of pupils, and they provide good support to help meet them. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils' progress is recorded and tracked, but this information is not used consistently by teachers to plan learning, and to ensure that all pupils are appropriately challenged. Targets for English and mathematics are set for pupils, but they do not underpin classroom practice in all lessons and so are not helpful in increasing rates of progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

There have been recent changes to leadership after a period of turbulence, resulting in a newly formed senior management team led by the dedicated headteacher. Members of this new team are building their skills of leadership and contributing to self-evaluation and school development planning. The current school improvement plan shows the short-term actions to be taken, but there is no long-term strategic plan in place to provide staff and governors with a clear direction. The priorities for improvement are appropriate, but they lack the necessary clarity to drive improvement. The school uses data and other information to evaluate its performance and has an accurate understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. The school is inclusive by nature, and works hard to ensure that all pupils, including those who are more vulnerable, are able to participate in the broad range of activities it offers. The school has effective partnerships with the local parish and actively promotes community cohesion. For example, they have been jointly raising funds for Sri Lanka. Members from the parish visited school to talk to pupils about the appeal and how they could help. They have also worked together to raise funds for a charity to support children with cancer. There are good links with the nursery, and the 'Kool Kids Club' provides facilities on-site for pupils at the beginning and end of the school day. Governors are actively involved with the school, and provide focused support and challenge to the headteacher. They have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development because they visit the school regularly. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection and the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are the children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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
How well 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

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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

² IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

18 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Jude's RC Primary School, Fareham, PO14 1ND

Thank you very much for making my colleague and I feel so welcome when we visited your school earlier this month. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing what you had to say about your school.

Your school is giving you a satisfactory standard of education. Your teachers care for you a great deal, and they work hard to make sure that your school is safe, bright and attractive. They also provide lots of activities for you to do which keep you healthy and fit. They enjoy being with you and help you to learn and behave well. They try to make lessons interesting and fun, but we found that sometimes they do not always give you work that is hard enough, and some of you do not always do as well as you could.

So that more of you could achieve even better, we have asked your school to:

- make sure that you make better progress in English and mathematics by building on what you already know and can do
- make teaching even better by planning interesting activities which are well paced and enable you to learn even more
- plan improvements over a longer period of time so that you have a clearer view of what you need to do.

Yours faithfully

Joy Considine
Lead Inspector

