

Joy Lane Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	135130
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	381810
Inspection dates	1–2 May 2012
Lead inspector	Jeanie Jovanova

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	340
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Mastin
Headteacher	Debra Hines
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 March 2009
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	1–2 May 2012
Inspection number	381810



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Introduction

Inspection team

Jeanie Jovanova

Additional inspector

Desmond Dunne

Additional inspector

Vanessa Tomlinson

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 21 lessons taught by 15 teachers. They held meetings with staff, pupils and a member of the governing body. They attended assemblies, made observations on the teaching of phonics (pupils learning letter patterns and the sounds they represent), listened to pupils reading and evaluated work in pupils' books. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to safeguarding and child protection, the school's self-evaluation, the school development planning, minutes of meetings held by the governing body, records of visits by external advisers and data relating to pupils' performance. They analysed the responses to the 90 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, as well as those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This is larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. Other pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds, with the largest group being from other White backgrounds. There are fewer pupils who speak English as an additional language, than in most schools, a small percentage of whom are at the early stages of language acquisition. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are being supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is nearly double the national average. There is a specialist unit within the school for pupils with autism. The school provides both a breakfast and after-school club. The school has been open since September 2007. The Early Years Foundation Stage is taught in Oyster Bay Nursery for the first year and then in two Reception classes. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are currently taught in mixed-age classes.

There have been a number of staff changes since the previous inspection, including both teachers and managers, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. This view is confirmed by most parents and carers who say that it has a 'lovely, family feel' with dedicated, approachable staff who provide an experience full of 'enriching learning opportunities'. It is not yet outstanding because teaching is not consistently outstanding and, consequently, there are inconsistencies in the progress pupils make in certain subjects and across year groups.
- Most pupils make good progress from their low starting points. Because of improvements to the quality of teaching, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has risen steadily so that it is now broadly average. Pupils make good progress in most subjects in most year groups because teachers plan carefully to meet their needs and check their understanding during lessons.
- Teaching is good overall, and on occasions outstanding. Teachers use a range of strategies to excite and enthuse pupils. Teachers' marking is tightly focused on pupils' individual targets, which ensures that pupils are clear about where they are in their learning. However, teachers do not always identify pupils' next steps and there are limited opportunities for pupils to respond to such developmental marking. In a few lessons, the quality of teachers' questions is not sharp enough to promote careful reasoning in pupils' responses.
- Pupils show very positive attitudes to learning and treat each other with a respect and maturity beyond their years. They behave well around the school and in lessons and this creates a harmonious environment in which to learn.
- Leaders and managers, including members of the governing body, focus relentlessly on providing high quality professional development opportunities for staff. Good procedures are in place to monitor teaching and learning and the performance of teachers is managed effectively in order to ensure improvements in pupils' achievement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance the quality of teaching so that more of it is outstanding in order to ensure all pupils make consistently good or better progress in all subjects and across all year groups by:
 - developing teachers' questioning skills so that they promote careful reasoning and create a forum for higher order discussions
 - creating opportunities for pupils to respond to marking which identifies the next steps needed for their learning to progress.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Overall, pupils make good progress through the school. The attainment of pupils in the main school has improved steadily and it is now broadly average at the end of Year 6. While attainment in mathematics is still slightly lower than that in reading and writing, there has been an increase since last year. This represents good progress from low starting points in all three subjects. Progress for pupils in the specialist unit is also good because their needs are well met. The responses to questionnaires for pupils and parents and carers showed that they feel positive about learning in the school.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are low, particularly in language and communication and mathematics. They make good progress across Nursery and Reception in most areas, but, despite strong gains in the understanding of phonics, their skills in reading and writing remain lower than those of typical five-year-olds when they enter Year 1. The Key Stage 1 and Early Years Foundation Stage staff work very closely together to provide a transition package that is tailored to pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils are able to take advantage of the outstanding teaching of reading in Year 1 to make progress that sees them catch up with their peers. Attainment in reading at the end of Year 2 is now in line with national averages. The school has successfully eliminated some older pupils' previous underachievement and, as a result, attainment in reading at the end of Year 6 is also now in line with most schools.

Pupils from all different groups, including minority ethnic groups and those learning to speak English as an additional language, make progress at least in line with their peers. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are currently making more than double the rate of progress of all pupils nationally in some subjects. Throughout the school, the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well met so that they make progress similar to, and sometimes better than, all pupils.

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Quality of teaching

In the best lessons, where teaching makes the greatest impact on pupils' achievement, inspectors saw: clarity in the learning intention and the task to be completed; a brisk pace; thought-provoking questions which elicit high quality responses; and a clear focus on checking that pupils know what they are doing at regular intervals, adapting tasks where necessary. In an outstanding Year 1 reading lesson, the teacher asked pupils to remind her what she had in her toolbox to help her read. They were keen to answer and help her demonstrate how to saw a word in half, smash a word into its constituent sounds with a hammer and use goggles to look for picture clues. When they went off to their independent reading activities, they used these techniques very effectively and made outstanding gains in their reading skills. Teaching assistants' able interventions further ensure that pupils are engaged and making gains in their learning. They support key groups at risk of underachievement highly effectively, monitor progress carefully and work closely with class teachers to ensure accuracy in planning. This help has a particular impact on the learning and progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, both in the specialist unit and in the mainstream school.

Where teaching is less effective, teachers miss opportunities to ask insightful questions that encourage pupils to carefully think through their answers and therefore engage more deeply with the learning.

Marking is thorough in evaluating work against the success criteria for the lesson as well as against pupils' individual targets. However, there are sometimes too few comments indicating the next steps in learning and too few opportunities for pupils to respond to teachers' comments.

Teachers understand that learning is more meaningful when it makes connections across and between subjects. In the younger classes, teachers use pupils' experiences to develop learning across a number of subjects, such as linking weddings pupils have attended to drama activities and the study of wedding ceremonies in different faiths and cultures. As pupils get older, teachers skilfully link areas of the curriculum. A cheer went up when Year 3/4 pupils were told they would be reading and then writing a biography of Henry VIII. Pupils approach all subjects equally diligently. For example, pupils showed a great deal of knowledge and understanding of the five pillars of Islam and were thoughtful and reflective in relating the principles therein to aspects of their own lives. Through such links, during assemblies and through carefully chosen trips and visitors into school, teaching promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils treat each other, adults and the school environment with great respect. This approach creates a really cooperative atmosphere where pupils are keen to work and play together harmoniously. Older pupils are clear that they have a responsibility as role models and are committed to supporting younger pupils in a range of ways, for

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example as play leaders, by ensuring that no one feels isolated at playtimes. Pupils are overwhelmingly positive about behaviour, which they say has improved because of initiatives such as house points and special rewards, and most parents and carers agree. School records confirm this as there have been very few behavioural incidents recorded in the main school, and the number of exclusions has fallen. Behaviour in lessons is conducive to good progress because pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning.

Pupils have an understanding of what different guises bullying may come in, giving cyber-bullying as an example, but state that it really does not happen in school. They clearly know what to do should it ever occur but their very good behaviour towards one another makes any such incidences highly unlikely.

Pupils have well-developed social skills. For example, they are open yet sensitive when discussing difficult situations such as loss and bereavement. They welcome pupils who join mid-year warmly, which means new arrivals settle so quickly into established friendship groups that they feel they belong to the school community within days. Parents and carers agree unanimously that the school keeps their child safe, and most pupils do too. Pupils are punctual to lessons and when moving around the school. Attendance has risen steadily year on year and is currently above average.

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers have effected a range of improvements because they focus relentlessly on developing the quality of teaching and learning and respond intuitively to the needs of their pupils. Most staff who completed the questionnaire agree that the school makes good arrangements for their ongoing professional development. The senior team acted decisively on the recommendations from the previous inspection and has successfully embedded the use of both targets and planning, which clearly match pupils' needs. This ethos of listening to support and using it to best advantage is a crucial component in the drive for excellence and has been filtered down to teaching staff. This was evident during the course of the inspection as teachers used feedback points to improve their lessons, though this good practice is not fully embedded in all classes. Leaders and managers are adept at analysing data and the criteria they use when they observe and support teaching are clearly designed to measure their impact on pupils' learning. There is good management of performance. Leaders also take into account the needs of the school community and seek creative solutions to potential hurdles. For example, when their swimming pool became unusable, they bid successfully for lottery funding to refurbish it and it is now a valuable resource for both their pupils and the local area. The extended school provision is flexible and well run and parents and carers appreciate the support it offers.

The governing body is an organised and visible presence in the school. It presents a reasonable level of challenge, its training in areas such as child protection and safer recruitment is up to date and arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory

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requirements.

The curriculum is good, particularly where strong links exist between subjects. Examples of how this practice engages pupils can be seen in the amazing artworks based on the individual loops and whorls in fingerprints created during a science topic on genetics and in the various writing activities inspired by a novel that Year 6 are currently reading. The wide range of after-school clubs are oversubscribed. The school promotes spiritual, social, moral and cultural understanding well. It is reinforced by assemblies that bring pupils together in an act of worship and celebration, lessons that challenge their understanding of moral dilemmas and human experiences and trips and visitors that expand their cultural horizons.

Leaders are committed to promoting equality of opportunity, shown by the harmonious relationships that exist, and by the lower than nationally expected differences in achievement between all pupils and those from specific groups.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



3 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Joy Lane Primary School, Joy Lane, Whitstable CT5 4LT

Thank you for helping inspectors to learn more about your school in our recent visit. We appreciated the friendly welcome you gave us and enjoyed talking to you about your work. We understood why your responses in the questionnaire were so positive and agree with you that yours is a good school.

These are some of the best things we found.

- You make good progress overall.
- You are very positive about the teaching you receive, and we agree that it is good.
- You behave well and are respectful to each other and to the adults who help you.
- You show great enthusiasm for learning.
- You enjoy looking after each other, especially older pupils looking out for younger ones.
- Your teachers explain work clearly to you and then check you understand it during the lesson so that they can change it if need be.
- You know your targets and marking makes it clear when you have met them.

To make things even better, we have asked your school to improve teaching so that more of it is outstanding. This can be achieved by teachers asking you questions which make you think as well as by making sure that marking clearly shows the next steps you need to take and gives you the opportunity to make comments about your learning. You can help by answering their questions thoughtfully and acting on the next steps they suggest.

We thank you again and wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jeanie Jovanova
Lead inspector

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