

# St John's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 113496            |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Devon             |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 357369            |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 2–3 December 2010 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Hazel Callaghan   |

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>                 | 4–11   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 193  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                           |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Andy Pryce                                   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Sally McCloskey                              |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 26 September 2007                            |
| <b>School address</b>                      | Melbourne Street<br>Tiverton<br>EX16 5LB     |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01884 253630                                 |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01884 242079                                 |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | admin@tiverton-st-johns-primary.devon.sch.uk |

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Sixteen lessons were observed taught by seven teachers. Meetings were held with staff, pupils and representatives of the governing body. The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked at various policies and procedures with regard to safeguarding, the school's recording of assessments and its monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress, the school development plan and minutes of the governing body. Questionnaires returned by staff and pupils were scrutinised, along with questionnaires returned by 73 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The extent to which pupils are making good progress in all areas of the school, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 2.
- The extent to which teaching and the curriculum are enabling pupils to make good progress, especially the more able, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those new to learning English.
- The extent to which the new headteacher, the senior leadership team and governing body make accurate evaluations of the school's effectiveness and are able to ensure it continues to improve.

## Information about the school

St John's Catholic Primary School draws its pupils from the town of Tiverton and across the diocese. It is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The vast majority of pupils come from White British families but there is a small number of pupils from other minority ethnic groups, most of whom are learning English as a new language. The school has an above-average proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, including an above-average proportion of pupils with a statement of special needs. Many of these pupils have both significant physical disabilities and learning difficulties. The headteacher took up post in September 2010. A privately run pre-school group is situated in the school next to the Reception class and a privately run breakfast club and after-school club are held in the school buildings each school day.

**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: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

St John's Catholic Primary provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It is an improving school because well-focused attention has been given to various strategies to improve teaching and learning, especially in English. There has been an upward trend in standards over the last three years in both Year 2 and in Year 6, and attainment is broadly average. These improving standards are the result of an exciting and stimulating curriculum and improvements in teaching, which are having a positive impact, especially in writing. Teaching is satisfactory; there is clear evidence of good teaching through the school but it is inconsistent. Teachers are more accurate in judging levels of attainment but this information is not consistently well used to ensure that activities are correctly matched to pupils' ability and provide the challenge to ensure good progress. There are gaps in assessment that cause difficulties in ensuring all pupils progress as well as they could, and so it is satisfactory overall rather than good. There has been no accurate overview which could identify any fluctuations in pupils' progress from year to year and this led to an inflated view of pupils' achievement in the past. The new headteacher correctly identified the weakness and has introduced a system of monitoring pupils' attainment as they move through the school, but it is still in the early stages of development. Pupils enjoy coming to school and talk with interest about their activities. They don't all recognise how well they are doing but the individualised targets and the systematic form of marking introduced this term are helping them to understand how to improve.

The school's provision for pupils' care, support and guidance is good and this underpins pupils' academic and personal development. Parents and carers are quick to praise the good levels of care and support provided for their children: 'I love the fact that the school has such a warm loving feeling, like it's one big family,' reported one parent. Pupils feel safe and well cared for and know that the staff are there to help and support them. Pupils grow in confidence in this nurturing environment and they get on well together. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their relationships with the pupils who have significant physical disabilities and/or learning difficulties are extremely positive because they are sensitive to their difficulties and enjoy their company. One boy's comment sums it up: 'Our school is all the better for the different people in it, especially those with special needs.' The provision for pupils with significant difficulties is strong. The provision for those with moderate learning difficulties is satisfactory. The needs of these pupils are not always identified correctly and this limits the success of accurately matching the provision to their needs.

The school works well with a variety of outside agencies, local schools, local churches and community bodies to extend pupils' learning and provide positive support for those with both personal and behavioural difficulties. Behaviour is good and the vast majority want to do well and respond well to teachers' expectations. A few pupils with personal, social and

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behavioural difficulties are managed well and pupils say that although there are incidents from time to time, they are confident that the headteacher and other teachers sort out the problems well.

Although only in the school for just under a term, the new headteacher can already be seen to be having an impact. Several parents commented that they could already see many positive changes. A variety of improvements have been introduced that build on previous effective strategies for improvement but most are still fairly new and not yet fully established. The governing body is effective in monitoring the work of the school and was rigorous in its recruitment of a new headteacher. They work well with the leadership team and together are ensuring that the school continues to improve, but until effective systems for monitoring attainment and progress are fully in place the school's capacity for improvement remains satisfactory overall.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve teaching and pupils' progress by:
  - ensuring that teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment is accurate and that they use this information to plan activities that effectively meet pupils' learning needs
  - keeping track of pupils' attainment and progress year on year so any fluctuations are identified and any underachievement addressed
  - using information on attainment to set challenging targets for pupils' progress.
- Improve the quality of learning and progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities by:
  - identifying their difficulties accurately, especially those with moderate learning difficulties
  - providing activities that meet their needs well
  - monitoring the progress of these pupils both individually and as a group so that any common issues can be identified and addressed.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**3**

Pupils enter Year 1 often with skills that are below average, especially in reading and writing. They make good progress in Key Stage 1, especially in Year 2, and standards have risen significantly in the last three years. Progress is broadly satisfactory, however, in Years 3 to 6. Pupils generally want to do well and, in the lessons where activities are interesting and well matched to their needs, they make good progress. This was well exemplified in a Year 5 lesson on the 24-hour clock in which the activities were effectively linked to pupils' topic on the First World War. Pupils enjoyed their tasks, and worked together very well to share ideas and to support each other when they 'got stuck', with the result that they made good progress. Similarly a group of pupils in Year 6 worked together independently on developing a short drama with ideas from a newspaper article. They completed the task sensibly, drawing together all the ideas discussed in class and so providing a very good role model for other pupils to follow. This good learning was evident in several lessons observed but it is not yet consistent across all classes. Sometimes pupils lose interest in their task because it is not sufficiently challenging or they are waste time

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getting started because they are not clear about how to start. Behaviour was good in all lessons observed and most pupils were well focused on their learning, even with the excitement of snow outside. These good attitudes play an important part in pupils' progress but the activities are not always challenging enough to ensure that it is consistently good. Pupils of all abilities ♦ the more able, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those new to learning English ♦ make satisfactory progress in their learning. The school has worked well to increase the rates of attendance, which are now broadly average. This, and pupils' average range of basic skills, prepares them satisfactorily for the next stages of their education.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils show interest in the world around them and show empathy for others. They enjoy taking responsibility and eagerly seek ways to raise money for those in difficulties and those less advantaged than themselves. Pupils get on well with those in the school from different backgrounds. They have good opportunities to learn about people of different faiths but their awareness of the diversity of cultures in the British Isles is less secure. Pupils work well together in pairs and in groups as well as independently. The rich curriculum has enabled them to develop a good understanding of how to develop healthy lifestyles and of how to keep themselves safe.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>   | 3        |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress  | 3        |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress                      | 3        |
| <b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Pupils' behaviour</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>   | 3        |
| <b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>  | <b>2</b> |

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is increasingly positive and is enabling pupils to improve their attainment and progress, but it is not yet consistently effective. Teachers are successful in making activities interesting and often make positive links between subjects to make learning more meaningful. Pupils say their topics are fun and often refer to activities that were particularly memorable to them. When teaching is good, as was seen in about half of the lessons, activities are effectively developed to hold this interest and to help pupils understand. This was seen clearly in a mathematics lesson in Year 2 where pupils were creating tally charts and block graphs of their favourite Australian animals as part of their topic. The teacher skilfully involved all of the children in exploring the information gathered to support their ability to count in fives or twos, to estimate and to investigate new ideas. Questions in this session were aimed at challenging pupils of all abilities, but this is not always the case. In some lessons the tasks do not sufficiently match pupils' age or ability so progress slows. Pupils say that teachers help them to improve but they are not always sure about how well they are doing. They are encouraged to evaluate how well they have learnt new ideas in the lesson but this process is often very simplistic and there is little information with which they can judge their success.

The curriculum is effective in giving pupils opportunities to explore their interests and to extend their skills and knowledge. The focus on developing pupils' personal, social and health education is a particular strength and the range of out-of-school activities and clubs is good. Although the curriculum has many strengths, it is not always sufficiently adapted to meet the needs of pupils new to learning English. Teachers identify new vocabulary appropriately but then forget to focus on it during the lesson so that these pupils are able to understand new ideas. Similarly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities too frequently work with adults and have less opportunity to work on tasks that have been designed to enable them to be successful while working independently.

Pastoral care is good and procedures to ensure pupils' safety are also good. The transition arrangements from Reception into Year 1 and from Year 6 up to the secondary school are good and ensure pupils settle well. Effective links with many outside agencies are used effectively to provide additional support for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with emotional, personal and behavioural difficulties.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The quality of teaching</b>   | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The use of assessment to support learning  | 3        |
| <b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>   | <b>2</b> |

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## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher has given a new impetus to school improvement but it is still too early to see its full impact. Staff monitor the attainment and progress of pupils in their class closely but, because there has been insufficient focus on how well pupils are doing from year to year, senior leaders have not always had an accurate view of the rates of progress being made. Senior leaders have not in the past looked sufficiently closely at how specific groups of pupils are achieving to ensure that the provision responds to their needs and is equally effective for them all. This has limited their ability to look for trends, especially in the progress of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Improvements have been made, however. The senior leadership team correctly identified that the more-able pupils were not making the same good progress as their peers and so greater challenge has been a focus that is working well in some classes.

The diversity of pupils within the school in terms of minority ethnic groups is not large but pupils' backgrounds are celebrated and the school has a strong reputation locally for providing good support for pupils having significant physical disabilities and often profound learning difficulties. It accepts these pupils without prejudice or discrimination willingly into its community. Relationships are good and pupils appreciate each other as individuals. Links with the local community are good and pupils frequently make a positive contribution to local events. The school is in the process of extending these opportunities so pupils meet others of more diverse backgrounds than their own where, because of lack of opportunity, pupils' understanding falls below what is expected.

The roles and responsibilities of the governing body are clear and effective. They play a good part in the monitoring of the school and in ensuring that pupils and staff are safeguarded from harm. All the required health and safety checks and safeguarding procedures are in place and carried out satisfactorily. They are increasingly well informed about the school's development and play an important part in its improvement.



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The leadership and management of teaching and learning   | 3        |
| <b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>   | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>   | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>  | <b>3</b> |

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

There are very good partnerships with the pre-school group that ensure that children entering the Reception class settle extremely quickly. The vast majority of the children have participated in the nursery provision and so are well prepared for learning. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is wide ranging but the range of knowledge and skills is similar to that expected for children of this age. Children enjoy their learning and get on well together to share the good range of resources and activities available in the Reception classroom and the pre-school classroom, which all can access, as well as the shared secure outside area. The curriculum is appropriately planned and takes good account of children's interests. The welfare of the children is uppermost in the minds of staff and children feel safe and secure. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Observations of children's learning are made regularly and they build into a comprehensive range of information about what children can do and what they know. This information is not always sufficiently tracked, however, to ensure that gaps in children's experience are addressed. Children's starting points are appropriately identified but not enough focus is given to how much progress is made to ensure that children are on track to reach not only the standards expected but also the progress of which they are capable. Most children reach the levels expected by the time they move into Year 1. Attainment in mathematics is often better than that expected but children's early reading and writing skills are often below average, especially for the boys. Partnerships with parents are positive. The Early Years Foundation Stage manager has built an effective team who work well together. Improvements to the provision are discussed but there are few clearly stated plans for development.

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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>                   | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:   |          |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage                          | 3        |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage                       | 3        |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3        |

## Views of parents and carers

Of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire, the vast majority are very supportive of the school and are positive about the education and care that it provides. There were many comments about caring staff and how the teachers are approachable and helpful. Several parents commented about the positive changes already evident in the school since the new headteacher has taken up post. The strongest concern was about how the school manages the behaviour of some pupils. These concerns appear to stem from several recent incidents but the situation that caused these concerns has now been addressed. There are still some pupils in the school with personal, social and behavioural difficulties but these are well managed so that this rarely has a negative impact on the learning or well-being of the other pupils. The vast majority behave well and get on well with their peers. Some parents and carers were concerned that the school did not always effectively respond to their child's specific needs. Inspection shows that provision for those with significant needs is good and for the majority of other pupils it is satisfactory and improving.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St John's Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 73 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 193 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |    | Strongly disagree |   |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | %  | Total             | % |
| My child enjoys school  | 41             | 56 | 31    | 42 | 1        | 1  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 34             | 47 | 34    | 47 | 3        | 4  | 0                 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress  | 23             | 32 | 49    | 67 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 25             | 34 | 43    | 59 | 2        | 3  | 1                 | 1 |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 30             | 41 | 42    | 58 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning  | 21             | 29 | 51    | 70 | 1        | 1  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 24             | 33 | 44    | 60 | 4        | 5  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 23             | 32 | 43    | 59 | 4        | 5  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs  | 23             | 32 | 42    | 58 | 7        | 10 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 19             | 26 | 32    | 44 | 13       | 18 | 2                 | 3 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 17             | 23 | 48    | 66 | 4        | 5  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 26             | 36 | 43    | 59 | 3        | 4  | 0                 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school   | 38             | 52 | 30    | 41 | 2        | 3  | 0                 | 0 |

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## 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      | 58  | 36   | 4            | 2          |
| Primary schools      | 8   | 43   | 40           | 9          |
| Secondary schools    | 10  | 35   | 42           | 13         |
| Sixth forms          | 13  | 39   | 45           | 3          |
| Special schools      | 33  | 42   | 20           | 4          |
| Pupil referral units | 18  | 40   | 29           | 12         |
| All schools          | 11  | 42   | 38           | 9          |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement:               | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.   |
| Attainment:                | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.  |
| Capacity to improve:       | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:     | <p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul> |
| 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.   |

**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.**



Dear Children

**Inspection of St John's Catholic Primary School, Tiverton EX16 5LB**

Thank you for making us so welcome and answering our questions when we visited you recently. We can see you are proud of your school and what it does for you. We know that you and your parents think that St John's is a good school but we feel that while it is improving it is currently satisfactory. That means that many things are done well but there are some things it can improve.

Here are some of the things we found out:

- You make steady progress to reach standards that are similar to most children of your age.
- You want to do well and enjoy your work; you are polite, friendly and helpful; you enjoy taking responsibility and have done many things to help the school be a better place and to help people around the world.
- You enjoy your lessons and all your teachers work hard to make sure that your activities are interesting and fun.
- All the staff look after you well so you feel safe and happy.
- The staff work well with a wide range of other people outside the school so that you are given the help you need, have lots of fun activities and are able to improve.

Even though the school does many things well we have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to do two things to make it better.

- Ensure that your activities build effectively on what you already know and can do and to check that you are making good progress in every class as you get older so you can reach higher standards.
- Look carefully at what all children can do and what they find difficult so that everyone is helped to get better at their work, especially those who find it difficult.

You can help by working hard. Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Hazel Callaghan

Lead inspector

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