

# St Paul's Catholic Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104661
<b>Local Authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	355612
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 February 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Coleman HMI

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>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	493
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Position Vacant
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Paul Ward
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	31 October 2007
<b>School address</b>	Spring Grove West Derby, Liverpool Merseyside L12 8SJ
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<b>Email address</b>	pauls-ao@st-pauls.liverpool.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors. Inspectors observed 17 lessons taught by 16 different teachers. Meetings were held with parents, groups of pupils, governors, staff and representatives from the local authority and the archdiocese. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school policies, safeguarding arrangements, data, pupils' work and minutes from meetings of the governing body and working parties. The returns of questionnaires from staff, pupils, and 155 parents and carers were also scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. Inspectors looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What is the achievement of all groups of pupils and do the teaching and the curriculum ensure that they make good progress?
- Does the governing body provide effective support for the school?
- Do the school's procedures for self-evaluation, including monitoring, result in an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is this used effectively to target and bring about improvement?

## Information about the school

This is a much larger than average-sized junior school located in a residential suburb of Liverpool. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, and that of those who have a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school has national Healthy School status. In October 2010 a 'project group' was established by the local authority and the archdiocese of Liverpool to support the governing body.

**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?**

**2**

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

**2**

## Main findings

St Paul's Catholic Junior School is a good school. The headteacher and school leaders ensure that good teaching, combined with a good and interesting curriculum, enables pupils to progress well in their learning and achieve high standards. Since the last inspection, significant improvement has been made to the use of assessment information, including the quality of teachers' marking. There are rigorous tracking systems to check on pupils' progress and identify any underachievement and these are used well to target extra support and intervention for pupils. The deployment of teaching assistants is very effective, providing structured guidance for pupils' learning. Consequently, all groups of pupils achieve equally well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils' progress and attainment in reading and mathematics is stronger than in writing. Opportunities for pupils to improve their writing across all subjects are underdeveloped.

Parents and carers are right to view the school so highly. Pupils enjoy school, feel safe and are well cared for. The parents' and carers' questionnaires show overwhelming support for the school's work. For example, more than 98% of the parents and carers who responded said that they think the school is well led. A comment from one parent reflected the views of many: 'Impressive school, impressed pupil, very impressed parents.' Staff have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and, in return, pupils show respect for adults; they are polite to visitors and cooperate well with each other. Pupils gain good social skills through participating in the many extra activities which the school offers, including residential trips and exchange visits with another school in Leeds. The school offers many sporting opportunities through the curriculum, after-school activities and trips and pupils learn to adopt good, healthy lifestyles.

Leaders have effective monitoring systems to check on the quality of teaching and learning and the attainment of pupils. Consequently, the senior team is well informed about the relative strengths and weaknesses in the school's performance. The impact of this effective self-evaluation is seen in pupils' high overall achievement and good progress. This demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve. Regular meetings are held to review the outcomes of monitoring. As a result, action plans are formed by curriculum leaders and the senior team, which target areas for school improvement effectively. However, few opportunities are provided for staff to share the best practice and so learn from each other; for example, in the teaching of pupils' writing across different parts of the curriculum.

Since the last inspection, there has been some instability in the senior leadership team. Staff absences have meant that the roles and responsibilities of leaders at all levels have been subject to change. At times, communication between the governing body and leaders in the school has been slow. Strategic support for the school from the governing

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body, to enable the headteacher to organise staffing efficiently and productively, has sometimes fallen short of what is needed. Despite this, leaders have sustained the school's good provision and the outcomes for pupils are good. Decisive action from the local authority and the archdiocese has recently strengthened the effectiveness of the governing body. Additional new and very experienced governors have been appointed and there are plans to elect a chair and vice-chair soon, as these positions are currently vacant. Training has been provided for governors to enable them to learn about their own roles and those of senior leaders in school. Finances are managed effectively and all the required policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding, are securely in place.

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

- Improve the effectiveness of the governing body by:
  - providing further training to clarify and strengthen the governing body's understanding about the responsibilities of the governing body and leaders' roles in school
  - improving communication between the governing body, especially the chair and vice-chair, and the headteacher and senior leaders
  - ensuring that strategic plans are in place to provide a stable staffing structure which supports school leaders effectively by September 2011.
- Improve pupils' progress and attainment in writing by:
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to write across the full range of curriculum subjects
  - sharing the best practice in the school.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Overall, pupils enter Year 3 with levels of attainment which are above average. All groups of pupils make consistently good progress to reach high levels of attainment by the end of Year 6.

In lessons, pupils work hard and apply themselves well. Their good attitudes to learning make a significant contribution to their good progress. During the inspection, work seen in pupils' books showed that they reach above-average standards in English and mathematics. The school's data tracking records confirm this. There are some variations, such as in writing. Opportunities for pupils to write in different curriculum topics or themes are at an early stage of being developed. Consequently, the rate of progress in writing is slower than that in reading and mathematics.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Adults are excellent role models and pupils develop personal skills, such as respect for others' views, because their own opinions are considered courteously by the staff. For example, the school council is a thriving representative group and over 90% of pupils who returned the questionnaire think the school values their views. Pupils enjoy school and attendance is above average. The school guides their personal development carefully, encouraging mature, independent learning. As a result, pupils are reflective and thoughtful. Their self-esteem and confidence are nurtured effectively by the very caring staff. Pupils develop an awareness of other

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faiths and cultures through visits to places of worship, such as mosques and synagogues, and via developing links with other schools.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<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>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<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

## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and learning is good and improving. Most lessons are good, with a small proportion which are outstanding and some which are satisfactory. Typical characteristics of good lessons are well-matched tasks so that all groups of pupils are interested and engaged in their learning; high expectations of pupils' behaviour and opportunities for discussions which are productive and help pupils learn from each other. Teachers use computers and digital projectors very well to illustrate learning and aid concentration. Opportunities for pupils to use computers for independent research and enquiry are a little limited. In the outstanding lessons, teachers' plans show specific, carefully structured targets for pupils' learning, taking full account of what they know and can do already. In these lessons, pupils make rapid progress as the teacher reviews learning regularly and sets increasingly challenging expectations. In the satisfactory lessons, plans are broader and focus mostly on describing the activities to be provided and organised. In these lessons, learning proceeds at a slower pace.

The curriculum provides well for pupils to learn the basic skills, such as in literacy and numeracy. This provision is structured mostly in morning sessions when a setting arrangement is used to put pupils of similar attainment together. This works effectively

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and there are good additional programmes of study to support any pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In the afternoons, the school has developed a creative curriculum which links subjects and helps pupils make sense of their learning. This is not fully embedded and opportunities for pupils to apply their basic skills, such as in writing, are at an early stage. There are many extra-curricular activities which are extremely well attended by pupils to the extent that some are over subscribed. These are run by a mixture of private providers and school staff. The school does all it can to ensure equal access for pupils to after-school clubs. Many visits and visitors make a good contribution to enrich curriculum experiences for pupils. For example, Year 6 have the chance to take part in a residential outward bound week in the Lake District. Spanish is taught to all pupils and this makes a good contribution to the provision.

The school makes effective use of a range of external agencies to provide good support for pupils. These include regular contact with the local authority officers for educational welfare and assessment advice from child psychologists. Good links within the community are used well to support pupils as in the frequent visits by the parish priest to lead acts of collective worship. The school has in place effective arrangements to safeguard pupils and suitable risk assessments are completed, such as for school trips. Strong transition arrangements ensure that pupils starting school are well prepared. Adults in the school know the pupils well and show an interest in and concern for their well-being.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<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>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher provides a clear steer to the school's drive for improvement. He is very well supported by the senior leaders who share his ambition to raise standards and develop the school's provision further. Leaders at all levels in the school have successfully adapted their roles as a consequence of ongoing staffing instabilities to minimise any disruption and to ensure that the provision and outcomes for pupils are good. Leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance through good self- evaluation procedures. Data scrutiny is rigorous and helps to target support and intervention for pupils who are at risk of falling behind.

The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities. Arrangements for safeguarding are good with rigorous vetting for staff appointments and good use of risk assessments. Staff training is up to date for child protection and first aid. Governing body working parties responsible for the curriculum and teaching and learning are well informed and knowledgeable about pupils' progress and attainment. Communication between the governing body and senior leaders regarding important decisions on staff posts and

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responsibilities has been insufficiently robust. This lack of support from the governing body has resulted in staff being required to change roles frequently and has hindered the structured development of leadership in the school.

The school benefits from a good range of partnerships with local schools, links with the parish community and with local sports clubs. Parent/carer partnerships are strong, as is shown by the parents' and carers' association, the frequent newsletters and the number of volunteer helpers in school. Responses to the parental/carer questionnaires, almost unanimously, viewed the school as approachable. Equal opportunities are promoted well, as shown by the good progress of different groups of pupils. Pupils spoke to inspectors about how any bullying is dealt with quickly and about the confidence pupils have in the way staff will sort out any difficulties. There is a clear policy for community cohesion which is regularly reviewed. Pupils' cultural and community awareness are developed effectively through international links with a project in Africa, fundraising for Catholic aid overseas and through the Spanish curriculum. The school's finances are managed effectively and, combined with pupils' good outcomes, the school provides good value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Views of parents and carers

About a third of parents and carers responded to the parental questionnaire. Almost all are supportive of the school's work and performance. A very small number of parental/carer concerns were related to after-school activities and bullying. Inspectors found that the school works hard to provide a range of extra activities and any bullying incidents are dealt with quickly.



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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Paul's Catholic Junior 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 155 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 493 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	92	59	61	39	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	108	70	43	28	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	82	53	65	42	0	0	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	83	54	60	39	10	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	91	59	57	37	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	74	48	72	46	5	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	65	42	83	54	5	3	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)	72	46	74	48	2	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	71	46	73	47	6	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	69	45	71	46	5	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	61	39	81	52	7	5	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	80	52	65	42	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	87	56	62	40	2	1	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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.**



25 February 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Paul's Catholic Junior School, Liverpool, L12 8SJ**

Thank you so much for welcoming the inspection team into your school when we visited you recently. We enjoyed our time with you. These are the main things which we found out about your school.

- You make good progress and reach high standards in your work.
- Teachers mark your work regularly and give you help to improve your work.
- School is a place you enjoy and where you feel safe and cared for.
- The headteacher and staff check on how well you are learning and make sure you have extra help if you need it.
- Teachers are good at making sure lessons are interesting for you.
- The school provides you with opportunities to take part in lots of activities, such as clubs after school, trips out and a residential outward bound week.

We have asked that the governing body works more closely with school leaders to support the school. We have also asked that you are given more opportunities to write in different subjects.

Finally, thank you once again for all your help. We wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

John Coleman

Her Majesty's Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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