

St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114540
Local Authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	378884
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2011
Reporting inspector	David Marshall

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 of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Sameer Bagaeen
Headteacher	Ms Carmel Hughes
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. During the inspection, 13 lessons and eight teachers were observed. Discussions were held with staff, members of the governing body, parents, carers and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation including the school's improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, provision for those pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, and minutes of governing body meetings. In addition, questionnaires from 127 parents and carers, and others from staff and pupils were analysed.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- They reviewed the effectiveness of the school's strategies for assessment in providing for pupils' individual needs and analysed the level of achievement of the current pupils, especially boys in mathematics.
- They examined the impact of the school's provision on pupils' personal development, and the effectiveness of the school's measures to enhance pupils' attendance and their cultural development.
- They looked at the extent to which the school's priorities for sharing expertise and improving the curriculum are being achieved and contributing to the overall outcomes for pupils.
- In the light of the school's self-evaluation, they assessed the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels, including the governors, in helping to secure improvement.

Information about the school

St John the Baptist is an average size primary school in the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. The school was built in 1988 to continue to provide a Catholic education for the children of St John the Baptist Church and parish. Approximately two-thirds of the pupils are Catholic. Around two thirds of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A third of the pupils come from other ethnic groups; this is a rising trend and varies between year groups. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. These needs include behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Reception class. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status and the Activemark.

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 John the Baptist is a good school. Since the last inspection, all staff have striven effectively to secure the atmosphere of high expectations. The headteacher and senior staff know the school's strengths well and what needs to improve. They have carefully identified the correct priorities and are systematically tackling them. The school's strong reputation in the community is due to the hard work of all staff and governors who share the senior leaders' values and ambitions for the school. Consequently, the school is well placed to build on its strengths and has a good capacity to improve. As one parent, reflecting the view of the vast majority, observed, 'In my child's time at the school all the children behave well and look out for each other. The school is a very pleasant place, with great community spirit. It is now very well led and has a strong sense of belonging.'

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Due to the effective organisation and careful early assessments, pupils begin to make good progress immediately. This is built on well throughout the school. Attainment has been consistently above average in recent years and although lower in 2010, provisional results indicate strongly improved attainment this year. As the leaders had identified, pupils' attainment in mathematics, particularly of boys, was below that in other subjects last year. It is clear that the carefully planned changes and systems they put in place have already closed this small difference. Achievement is good due to the rigorous systems to track the progress of each pupil and to identify where additional teaching will be most beneficial. One particularly notable aspect of the school's care for individual pupils is the outstanding work of the special educational needs team. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make excellent progress.

The quality of teaching is good and some is outstanding. The curriculum covers all subjects well and is enhanced by an outstanding range of additional activities, visits and visitors. Lessons are planned to make sure that all pupils enjoy learning. Teachers' planning is thorough and is generally pitched at the right level for all pupils. However, on occasions opportunities to provide pupils with activities that excite, interest and are relevant to them are missed and the pace and rate of learning slow. Also missed, on occasions, are opportunities for pupils to consolidate their learning. Recent curriculum initiatives have yet to be firmly embedded and are too reliant on the skill of the individual staff members for their implementation. There is more still to do to ensure that the teachers can share their expertise and that curriculum changes are applied consistently to provide pupils with activities which

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always give them the maximum opportunities to reinforce their learning and challenge them in all lessons.

Pupils' behaviour is good. They are enthusiastic and well motivated. There is purposeful collaboration in lessons. Pupils say that they feel very safe, reflecting the staff's high expectations and effective level of care and moral guidance. Pupils have a good awareness of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Due to the school's efforts and good care and support, and pupils' great enjoyment of school, attendance has improved and is now above average.

The school does much to promote its place in the local community and works effectively with many local organisations and businesses. Pupils' awareness of, and preparation for, living and working in a culturally diverse Britain are also being developed well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure in the next year that all teaching is as good as the best by embedding changes in the curriculum so that:
 - pupils are given the maximum opportunities to practise and reinforce their skills and learning
 - stimulating and relevant activities are always provided to maintain pupils' interest and concentration so that the pace and rate of learning never slow
 - opportunities for staff to observe and share the outstanding practice in the school are extended.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

All groups of pupils, regardless of their ability, are now making at least good progress. However, there are still aspects of learning, although planned for carefully in the curriculum, which have still to become embedded in some classes to further improve outcomes overall. Pupils enter the school with skills and understanding that vary but are usually below levels expected for their age. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is generally above average and the more-able pupils do especially well. Much of the pupils' success in reading and writing is due to the school's strong emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills.

Pupils' attainment in the Year 6 class is above expectations for their age. This was evident in an excellent Year 6 lesson where the teacher very skilfully drew pupils' attention to the different ways of multiplying. Pupils were all able to show how to get the right answer, their well-embedded number skills, and how well they have learned to listen carefully to each other's responses. Pupils' work in classrooms shows that not only is progress in English, mathematics and science now good across the school, but also that pupils do very well in other subjects. For example, outstanding singing and playing showed the school's strength in music. Pupils' good understanding and

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adoption of healthy lifestyles is reflected in their national awards.

The pupils’ keenness to succeed at school and in later life was demonstrated admirably in an awards assembly where they thoroughly enjoyed each other’s successes. Such experiences make a significant contribution to pupils’ good standards in speaking and listening, and good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils consistently show good standards of behaviour and social skills. Their knowledge of how to keep safe is good. They are given a very good grounding in citizenship and in contributing to the community through being playground buddies, or members of the school council. The school has recently reviewed its mission statement and the pupils’ input has been invaluable. They talk impressively about what the school means to them and how they could make it better. The standards reached by pupils, combined with their keen appetite for teamwork, and their interest in learning, prepare them well for the next stage in their education.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	2
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	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

In many lessons, there are strong elements that help pupils of all abilities to make good progress. Teachers are a keen and enthusiastic team who strongly encourage pupils in their learning. They use a range of techniques, such as good use of interactive computer whiteboards, to make lessons enjoyable. Most teachers keep up a brisk pace, provide interesting and relevant activities, and help pupils to meet their high expectations by asking questions that encourage them to think hard. In the good lessons observed, the teachers gave good feedback to test pupils’

¹ 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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understanding, introduced extra challenges and used praise effectively to raise pupils’ expectations of what they were capable of achieving. In these lessons, pupils were given the opportunity to assess their own and each other’s work, identifying what to do next. This helped them to understand what they need to do to improve. However, these effective aspects of teaching are not yet consistently seen throughout the school. Pupils’ progress slows occasionally as these opportunities are missed, and aspects of the curriculum are studied in isolation from each other and are less relevant to pupils’ needs and interests.

Assessment procedures to check pupils’ progress are rigorous and as a new member of staff observed, they are very clear, accurate and easy to use. This information is being used more consistently to plan activities that generally meet pupils’ differing needs and fire their enthusiasm. The curriculum supports pupils’ personal development well through very effective personal, social and health education, and there is a good focus on using visits to widen pupils’ life experiences. The school’s strong emphasis on promoting pupils’ emotional well-being results in them feeling secure and parents and carers agree that children are looked after well. Induction programmes are excellent for those who arrive throughout the year. Good support for vulnerable pupils and close partnerships with outside agencies ensure that the needs of these pupils are met effectively.

Throughout the school, positive relationships between staff and pupils contribute to the supportive ethos for study. As a result, the atmosphere for learning created by the whole staff is caring and supportive. The impact of the school’s effective support, guidance and care is evident in the pupils’ good standards of behaviour and social skills.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher gives strong and effective direction for the work of the school and has ensured that significant progress has been made in improving the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. All staff are committed to her clear vision for further improvement. Self-evaluation is honest and accurate and all subject leaders are closely involved in monitoring the school’s work, which they do with tremendous enthusiasm.

The administrative team plays a central role within the school. Their work is much

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appreciated. The governing body has been completely reorganised in the last two years and is now fully involved in the process of self-evaluation, challenging decisions and requesting explanations where necessary.

The school is zealous in its efforts to promote equality and tackle discrimination. Everyone is valued and supported to achieve their best, irrespective of their social, faith or ethnic group. Procedures to safeguard pupils’ well-being, safety and health are very good and all members of staff are well trained in these matters. The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is good. A plan and clear actions are in place that promote pupils’ understanding from a local perspective extremely well. Links with other local schools and agencies are harnessed very effectively. The school has taken the need to expand its links to provide national and global perspectives very seriously and these aspects are now good.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a good start to their schooling in the Reception class and achieve well. They settle happily into school because of good links with parents and carers and because of the strong nurturing environment. Staff make every effort to ensure all children feel welcome. The good parental relationships are maintained on a daily basis as staff make a concerted effort to talk to parents and carers to enable them to understand how their children learn. As one parent of a child who has only recently joined the school wrote, reflecting the views of many, ‘We have been very impressed with the competence, enthusiasm and thorough professionalism of the staff. Most importantly our son wakes up keen to go to school.’

The Early Years Foundation Stage is managed well and clear priorities are set for

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improvement. The enhancements in provision and outcomes, particularly in the outside environment, since the previous inspection are testament both to the effective overall leadership and the good teaching. Planning is good because careful account is taken of the regular, ongoing assessments of children’s progress. Effective teamwork provides good routines, high expectations of behaviour and achievement, and excellent relationships. Consequently, children develop well personally and engage well with their learning. Stimulating and interesting activities are provided and there is a suitable mix of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. Children’s language skills are being developed well with a clear focus on vocabulary. Children thoroughly enjoy learning but there are occasional missed opportunities as activities are not fully enhanced by the use of richer language, such as signs and questions, and by linking the tasks more carefully to what children already know.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

An above average number of parents or carers returned questionnaires, and the majority, and those who spoke to the inspection team, were happy with the school. They consider that the school has a dedicated team of staff and a warm, supportive and friendly atmosphere. The majority feel their children make adequate progress. Inspection evidence shows that all pupils are now making good progress and that those with special educational needs and/or disabilities often make even better progress. Parents and carers are particularly impressed with the pastoral support their children receive. Inspectors fully endorse these views. The small number of constructive parental criticisms, particularly with regard to how the school helps them to support their children and deals with unacceptable behaviour from pupils, were shared and discussed with the headteacher. Evidence shows the school works hard to make sure parents and carers have a good understanding of their children’s learning. Inspectors judge that pupils’ behaviour is good thanks to the school’s careful guidance.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St John the Baptist 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 127 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 206 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	91	72	33	26	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	91	72	34	27	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	59	46	55	43	6	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	54	43	65	51	4	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	70	55	54	43	1	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	57	45	57	45	10	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	57	45	66	52	3	2	1	1
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)	57	45	57	45	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	50	39	67	53	4	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	59	46	48	38	11	9	4	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	45	35	71	56	4	3	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	72	57	49	39	4	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	76	60	48	38	3	2	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



26 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School, Whitehawk Hill Road, Brighton BN2 0AH

I am writing to thank you for your help when we inspected your school and to let you know what we found out. We spent time in some of your lessons and talked to some of you. We also looked at the work of the school and talked to many of the staff and some of the school governors. We were interested in what your parents and carers think of your school, and we enjoyed listening to what you had to say. We were very impressed with how well you have contributed to your school's new mission statement.

The headteacher and staff at the school work hard to help you learn and enjoy school. St John the Baptist is a good school. These are some of the things the school does particularly well.

- The school looks after you very well and most of you are making good progress in your learning, with some of you making even better progress.
- Children in the Reception class get off to a good start at school.
- The way the school works with your parents and carers is good.
- The way you behave is good and you work and play well together.
- You feel very safe at school and you know how to be healthy.
- You have a good understanding of right and wrong, look after each other well, and help your school to be a happy and better place to play and learn.
- The school provides you with lots of different things to do.

Even in a good school, some things could be better. We have asked your teachers to make sure that all your lessons are not just good, but better, if possible. We want staff to make lessons interesting, and ensure activities are relevant and meet your needs, so that you continue to learn and work at a good pace. In turn, you must all carry on listening carefully and take note of what your teachers say. Then you will all continue to make the best possible progress in your learning.

Yours sincerely

David Marshall
Lead inspector

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