



St John's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109260
LEA Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number 278168
Inspection dates 3 May 2006 to 4 May 2006
Reporting inspector Peter Callow AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Pulteney Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Bath
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		BA2 4EZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01225 461887
Number on roll	275	Fax number	01225 442306
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Peter Daly
Date of previous inspection	17 July 2000	Headteacher	Mr Robert Coleman

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The infant department and the junior department of this primary school are on sites two miles apart in the centre of the city. The present headteacher was appointed just over two years ago following a considerable period of instability of leadership and a rapidly declining roll. Pupil numbers have increased considerably since then and pupils come from a wide catchment area. There is an above average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages, although the number that speaks English as an additional language is below average. Nearly three quarters are from Catholic families and pupils transfer to and leave the school more than average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's effectiveness and value for money are satisfactory and improving rather than good as is the school's view. This is because, although the school has some notable strengths, strategies to improve the progress of pupils are only just beginning to have some impact. In addition, monitoring, evaluation and the use of assessment data are not sufficiently developed for leaders to have an accurate view of the school's performance.

Pupils make at least satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage so that at the end standards are broadly average. This results from good teaching and a curriculum that meets the needs of young learners, particularly those that start school with below average skills. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make satisfactory progress, but in mathematics and particularly in science some pupils are capable of doing better, especially the more able. This is because assessment information is not being used effectively to plan work that is sufficiently challenging.

The school has a special atmosphere, which is a major reason why it is so highly regarded by pupils, parents and the wider community. Each individual receives a very high quality of care that supports the outstanding personal development of each child. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are exemplary and their enjoyment of school is evident throughout.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and there is some that is good. Inconsistencies, particularly in the quality of marking, are limiting pupils' progress. The curriculum is considerably enhanced by the emphasis on personal, social, health and citizenship education and an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities. However, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning and help raise standards across the curriculum remains underdeveloped.

Whilst progress since the last inspection has only been satisfactory overall it has been good since the appointment of the present headteacher. He has demonstrated his ability to bring about successful change and together with the support of staff, governors and parents the school has a secure capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make more effective use of assessment information by teachers and leaders so that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable, particularly the more able in mathematics and science.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders' monitoring and evaluation to ensure a consistency of good teaching, including marking, and a more accurate assessment of the school's performance.
- Make better use of ICT to support learning and help raise standards across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The achievement of pupils is satisfactory and standards are average at the end of each key stage. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those whose first language is not English also make good progress.

Many pupils generally have the knowledge and skills expected for their age when they start school, but there is a wide spread of ability with a significant number that have below average skills. Progress in the Foundation Stage is at least satisfactory and good for those who need to catch up with their peers. As a result, standards are broadly as expected at the end of this stage.

Some pupils, particularly the more able, are not making the progress they are capable of as they move through the school. This is because the targets they are given and the work that is set are not sufficiently challenging, based on the standards they currently reach. The problem has been most evident at the end of Key Stage 2 where the limited progress of more able pupils was a major factor in the significantly below average achievement in mathematics and science in 2005. However, current assessments of pupils in Year 6 and work in books show that progress is improving in mathematics, where pupils look set this year to make satisfactory progress. This is as a result of strategies to raise standards that are beginning to have an impact. However, there is not yet the same evidence for science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils are very confident, have high self-esteem and their behaviour is exemplary. They show a very high degree of respect and consideration for each other, staff and visitors to the school. They are proud of St John's and extremely happy to come to school as shown by their first-rate attitudes. Attendance is broadly average and the school works hard and successfully to discourage the few families which take holidays in term time. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and has improved considerably since the last inspection. Pupils are given excellent opportunities to marvel at the power of God's creation and to consider the need to make the right moral choices. The Year 5 trip, spoken of by the pupils as a retreat, was described by one pupil as 'more spiritual because you are encouraged to think about the talents God gives you'. The school's efforts to encourage a healthy lifestyle have been very successful and even the youngest children know what they should do to keep safe. Pupils make a significant contribution to the community, for example by participating in church services, writing a school magazine, raising money for various charities and putting on drama productions. The high quality of pupils' personal development means that they are learning to take responsibility and to be good citizens who are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some good teaching in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2. Where teaching is good, there are high expectations and appropriate challenge. In some lessons, particularly mathematics and science, the use of assessment for the planning of work is a weakness. As a consequence, the lesson does not always build on what pupils already know and can do and they do not make the progress of which they are capable. There are inconsistencies in teachers' marking, with little or no information provided for pupils on how they can improve their work and attain at a higher level. This again limits pupils' progress.

Pupils greatly enjoy their lessons, have excellent attitudes to learning and their behaviour is exemplary. Relationships in all classes are outstanding. Pupils work extremely sensibly with partners and in groups and go out of their way to help each other. Good support is given by teaching assistants to those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall but it has some outstanding features. Statutory requirements are met and the curriculum meets the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities well. However, planned activities are less effective in meeting the needs of all pupils, particularly those attaining at a higher level in mathematics and science.

The strong and highly effective focus on developing personal, social, health and citizenship education is a significant factor in pupils' outstanding personal development. The provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection but there are too few planned opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their learning and to help raise standards across the curriculum.

There is an outstanding range of clubs for pupils of all ages and very well attended music tuition. There is particularly good provision for physical education (PE) and sport and individuals reach high standards, both in and out of school. The good links with its partner secondary school extend the opportunities for pupils in art, sport and drama.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. The extremely high standard of pastoral support given to pupils contributes significantly to their great enjoyment of school and their outstanding personal development. Staff provide very effective role models, which pupils successfully emulate in their attitudes to one another. Staff also

implement child protection and first-aid procedures effectively and are vigilant about health and safety.

Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good but that for other pupils is insufficient for some to make the best possible progress. This is because of the inconsistencies in the standards of marking which gives limited guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work. Systems for tracking pupils' academic progress are in place and developing. However, not enough use is yet made of the information gained to help all groups of pupils, particularly the most able, make good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has successfully changed the culture of the school and overcome many of the difficulties presented by a split site. He has brought about significant improvements, based on the 'uniqueness of each child' which is at the heart of the school's mission statement and the school community. His concern for pupils' and adults' personal development and well-being has led to this being a strength of the school and to a special ethos in which everyone feels included and valued. Parents overwhelmingly recognise this and have a good partnership with the school. Parents and pupils confirm that their views are sought and acted upon as part of the school's self-evaluation in order to help bring about school improvement.

Leaders at all levels are developing their skills and strategies for monitoring and evaluation but these are not yet rigorous enough to bring about consistently good teaching or to have an accurate view of the school's performance. The role of subject leaders is satisfactory and improving. However, they and the senior management team are not making enough use of assessment information to ensure that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable.

Leaders are becoming more focused on raising standards and on pupils making better progress. For example, as a result of an analysis of pupils' performance and the introduction of some good improvement strategies, progress in mathematics is starting to improve across the school, particularly at the end of Year 6. There has not yet been the same impact in science because it has not had the same priority as mathematics. Governors are developing their role in self-evaluation and are helping the school to focus on school improvement. Recent progress demonstrates that the leadership and management provide the school with the secure capacity to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

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

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for making us so welcome at St John's when we visited recently.

You treated us in the wonderful way that you treat each other and everyone in the school; that is with politeness, courtesy and respect at all times. You went out of your way to tell us how happy you are at school and how proud you are to be there. We understand why, because the headteacher, staff and governors have worked hard to create a very special place where each one of you is valued and cared for. As a result, your personal development, attitudes and behaviour are outstanding.

The youngest children are making good progress, which many more of you are capable of. To do this your teachers need to give you work that challenges you, particularly in mathematics and science. They need to make more use of the assessments they make of how well you are doing to plan your work and mark it more carefully in order to always let you know how you can improve.

All of the teaching that you have is satisfactory and some of it is good. We have asked the leaders of the school to look more carefully at the teaching and how well the school is performing so that all the teaching becomes good and you make better progress. You have an outstanding range of clubs and activities, which you told us help to make school even more enjoyable, and good access to lots of computers. We have asked the school to make sure you use these more to support your learning and help to raise standards in different subjects.

Your school has improved a lot since your headteacher came to the school. We are sure that it can improve even more.

Yours sincerely

Mr P Callow Lead Inspector