



# St Jude's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 103463  
**Local Authority** Birmingham  
**Inspection number** 286667  
**Inspection date** 18 October 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Martin Kerly

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	St Jude's Close
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Maypole
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11		Birmingham B14 5PD
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 4645069
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	152	<b>Fax number</b>	0121 4646411
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Margaret O'Reilly
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Bernadette Johnston
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 November 2001		

<b>Age group</b> 4-11	<b>Inspection date</b> 18 October 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 286667
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector over one day.

## Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. Pupils are taught in seven small classes, each comprised of just one year group. They come from a range of backgrounds but a significant majority are from families experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. More than half the pupils are entitled to free school meals. Most pupils are of White British background. A substantial minority are from various minority ethnic groups but all are becoming fluent in English. The proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and with statements of special educational need are considerably higher than usually found.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. The excellent leadership of the headteacher and the good teaching lead to good achievement by pupils, with some making outstanding progress. Standards on entry to the school are below those usually found but by the end of Year 6, standards are above the national average. However, there is some variation year on year between standards in mathematics and English, particularly writing. Last year a major whole-school focus on writing, recognised as a previous weakness, led to significantly improved standards, whilst standards in mathematics declined despite remaining just above average. This was due to the fact that the attention being given to improving writing resulted in not enough attention being given to sustaining standards in mathematics. Provision in the Foundation Stage is excellent and consequently children settle very quickly and make exceptionally good progress.

Pupils' personal development is good. The Catholic ethos and commitment to pupils' well-being successfully promote all aspects of their personal development, including their excellent spiritual development. This is endorsed overwhelmingly by parents. One wrote, 'St Jude's is a wonderful school,' and another reported 'they cater for all the needs of my children, from extra support to their moral and spiritual needs'. Pupils behave well and reflect thoughtfully on their support of one another. Attendance has improved and is in line with the national average. Teaching is good, and sometimes excellent, and this leads to good learning by pupils of all abilities, including those with complex learning difficulties. The curriculum is good, with careful arrangements to adapt it to the needs of specific pupils. Previously identified curricular weaknesses have been addressed well. The school provides excellent care, guidance and support. Exceptional provision and attention to the substantial proportion of vulnerable pupils and those with complex needs enables them to be fully integrated into the life of the school. Clearly spelt-out short-term learning targets provide very clear guidance for all pupils.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, together with the very effective deputy and the good support of governors, has developed a strong ethos of continuous improvement. This involves colleagues in systematically monitoring the performance of the school, celebrating what is good and setting high expectations of those areas found to be in need of improvement. This gives the school a very accurate picture of its performance. It has made good progress in the four areas identified as being in need of development in the last inspection and is well placed to improve further. The school has extensive data on the performance of individual pupils, which is used very well to respond to their needs. However, the school does not always pull this together clearly enough to demonstrate trends and patterns of progress across year groups. Although pupils make good progress, the school has identified the need to ensure that long-term performance targets are both realistic and challenging, as a substantial proportion of these targets have been either unrealistically high or too low.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Reduce the fluctuations in standards between English and mathematics by ensuring a consistent and balanced approach to the development of both subjects.
- Improve the use of existing detailed pupil performance data when looking for overall trends in performance and setting long-term targets.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, achieve well. Attainment on entry varies from year to year but many children arrive with attainment levels below national expectations, especially in personal, social and emotional development and language skills. They make excellent progress in the Foundation Stage and by the end of the year most are securely in line with, and some exceeding, the nationally agreed learning goals. In Key Years 1 and 2, standards are consolidated and pupils make steady progress as they begin to record their work more formally. Progress accelerates in later years so that by the end of Year 6, some pupils have achieved exceptionally well and standards in English, mathematics and science are above the national average. In 2006, following a whole-school focus on writing, standards in English rose. At the same time standards in mathematics declined, although they remained just above the national average by the end of Year 6. The school's performance targets are not always based on what pupils are already achieving. For example, the long-term targets previously set for 2007 are not sufficiently challenging because some Year 2 pupils, who are making good progress in their writing, are already exceeding their summer 2007 target.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Within the good overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, spiritual development is excellent as a result of the many sensitively presented experiences. Children respond very well to the individual 'welcome blessing' in Reception. Pupils throughout the school show great respect for and involvement in the prayer corners in their classrooms. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now in line with the national average as a result of some excellent support for specific pupils. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe. One told the inspector, 'teachers would take massive action if you said you were being bullied'. They have a good awareness of the importance of a healthy diet and physical fitness. In response to a question about taking care of yourself, one pupil had written, 'I walk to school every day to get some exercise'. The recently elected school councillors meet too infrequently to be really effective as a body. Despite this, pupils take pride in their good contributions to the school community through, for example, requesting an extension to the range of fruit available at playtime, and when the oldest pupils read to younger ones. Pupils are gaining a good range of skills needed for the next stage of their education and eventual economic well-being.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teachers create a rich and stimulating learning environment in classrooms and around the school. This helps to capture pupils' interests and promotes their learning. The small numbers in each class, the expertise of key staff and the extensive team of teaching assistants all combine effectively to provide pupils with lots of individual attention and opportunities to work in small groups. In the very small Reception class, children's learning is excellent. Throughout the school, work is carefully matched to pupils' different needs following accurate and regular assessments of what pupils know already. Teachers set pupils clear targets in literacy and numeracy. They frequently draw attention to these during lessons and when marking the pupils' work. This helps the pupils understand what it is they are learning. However, some long-term targets set last year are too low, tending to off-set otherwise high expectations of pupils. Despite low numbers, the learning styles in Years 3 and 4 are restricted by the very small classrooms that can limit the opportunities for pupils to move around and work independently.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is adapted well to the needs of specific pupils. Outdoor provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage has been improved, although there is limited direct access and little protection from sun and rain. The junior playground and grass areas make relatively little contribution to the curriculum for older pupils. The school makes sure that there are good links between subjects, which helps to motivate pupils and make learning more relevant. There is strong emphasis on pupils' personal, social and emotional development, with effective additional support programmes for vulnerable pupils and others, for example, through anger-management sessions and the use of circle time.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support of all pupils is a major strength of the school. This results in the successful integration and good personal development of many pupils who would otherwise struggle to cope with learning. Parents wholeheartedly acknowledge this. One wrote, 'the headteacher and teachers are always ready to help if I am having problems'. Members of staff work closely and tirelessly with families and other agencies in order to gain the support and promote the structures needed for the most vulnerable pupils, including those who have met failure in previous schools. One-to-one mentoring supports pupils experiencing emotional problems and all pupils receive effective academic guidance. Their specific learning targets are shared regularly

with parents and displayed prominently. Governors and staff effectively implement the statutory procedures designed to ensure the safety and protection of pupils.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher has high aspirations for all pupils and works very hard to lead and inspire those around her. She has very effectively and resourcefully established a successful staff team, many of whom arrived at the school with little or no previous teaching experience. Staff show a commitment to continuous school improvement and their own professional development, enabling them to take on increasing responsibilities and initiate change where needed. There is excellent leadership of the Foundation Stage. Subject leaders fulfil their roles well, as do support staff, who are carefully deployed to meet the various needs of pupils. The comprehensive systems for monitoring the performance of the school are good and the school's priorities for the future are well chosen. The school responded very energetically to the need to improve writing but did not manage to ensure sufficient focus remained on mathematics. The limited way pupils' individual performance data is formally collated to provide the bigger picture across whole-year groups makes it more difficult to be sure about responding to patterns and trends. Governance is good. Governors are committed to the school. The chair of governors has a good knowledge of the work of the school and is in close touch with the community. The governors provide the right balance of support and challenge to the school, while maintaining good value for money.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I visited your school for a day recently to find out how well the school is doing. I thoroughly enjoyed talking to a number of you in lessons and around the school, and meeting members of your school council. Thank you for making me so welcome.

I am pleased to say that for lots of reasons I found that St Jude's RC Primary School is a good school. Here are some of the most important things I found to be good

- You work well in lessons and make good progress.
- You behave well and are thoughtful about how you can help and care for one another.
- Your teachers plan interesting work in all subjects and make sure it is not too hard or too easy.
- Everyone who works in the school takes exceptionally good care of you and helps those of you who have problems or when you are worried.
- The headteacher and others work extremely well to make the school so good.

To improve the school still further, I have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to work together on two things

- Help you to do equally well in English and mathematics.
- Make better use of the information about how well you are already doing when looking at the performance of each class and when setting long-term school targets.

I hope you all continue to enjoy your time in the school.