



# St John's Catholic Junior School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 105080  
**Local Authority** Wirral  
**Inspection number** 287119  
**Inspection dates** 1–2 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Ian Thompson

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 address</b>	Old Chester Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Bebington, Wirral
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11		Merseyside CH63 7LH
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 6459615
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	224	<b>Fax number</b>	0151 6456673
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs J Davis
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr P Sharp
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 November 2001		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This average size school serves an urban area of mixed social and economic circumstances. Almost all pupils come from a White British background and none is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is about average. A broadly average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the proportion with a statement of special educational need is also average. The school has been awarded the Sports Council Activemark and has the Health Promoting Schools award.

## **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 provides a satisfactory standard of education and satisfactory value for money. Although the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory, its performance in one respect is inadequate. Before its next section 5 inspection, Ofsted inspectors may visit the school to monitor the progress that it has made in remedying this weakness. The school would receive two to five days notice of such a visit.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and his staff have set a tone and developed an atmosphere in the school where pupils feel safe, valued and comfortable. Managers at all levels recognise many of the school's strengths and can identify areas for improvement. Nevertheless, systems for checking the quality of the school's performance are inadequate. These are mainly informal and do not have sufficient rigour or accuracy to help move the school forward. The issues from the last inspection have, however, been tackled adequately and the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

By the end of Year 6, standards are just above average and improving, but doing so more slowly than nationally. Pupils' achievement in relation to their above average starting points is satisfactory. Achievement in science is better than in English and mathematics because teaching in science is lively and makes pupils think. There is little difference in the progress made by different groups of pupils, although those who are capable of high attainment do not consistently do as well as they should.

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. The school's Christian mission is clearly reflected in pupils' standards. Pupils behave well and show courtesy and respect to others. This influence also means that they develop a strong sense of the importance of making a contribution, both in school and in the wider world.

The school's evaluation of teaching and learning lacks precision; inspectors judge it to be satisfactory. The school's evaluation takes insufficient account of the impact of teaching on the pace of learning. This is particularly so for the more able pupils and results from too much whole class teaching that does not meet individual needs well enough. The school has a wealth of assessment data but it is not used consistently well enough to plan work that matches all pupils' needs and challenges them sufficiently. This reflects the findings of an HMI visit earlier this year. Some good teaching was seen during the inspection. At its best, teaching is planned well to meet the diverse needs of pupils. In good lessons, teachers expect hard work. Pupils have fun learning because the tasks are interesting and make them think; as a result, learning proceeds at a fast pace.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It provides well for pupils' personal development, particularly through programmes of work that emphasise health, well-being and social awareness. Provision for academic development is satisfactory. In some areas, such as art, this provision is good but pupils have too few opportunities to develop skills of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. The school cares well for its pupils, rightly seeing this as a key part of its mission. However, the school does not use assessment and target setting to best advantage to support academic progress.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Check more rigorously and accurately how well the school is doing and take action to improve standards and provision.
- Improve teaching by planning work that stretches all pupils so that they achieve as well as they can.
- Make better use of assessment to identify potential underachievement at an early stage and to increase the rate of pupils' progress.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Although pupils achieve satisfactorily, they are capable of reaching higher standards. Too many are held back because teaching does not stretch them enough and systems for monitoring their progress and the impact of provision on learning lack rigour. Standards have fluctuated over recent years and are now a little above average. Provisional results in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2006 were broadly average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Almost double the number of pupils reached the higher levels in science as in the other two subjects – showing what pupils are capable of when challenged sufficiently.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The school helps its pupils achieve a good understanding of what constitutes danger and how to stay safe. It is particularly successful in enabling pupils to understand and practice healthy lifestyles. For example, pupils are quick to point out the importance of 'five-a-day' and older ones know the good impact of exercise on health. Pupils have the habit of good attendance. This, along with good social skills, good information and communication technology (ICT) capability and broadly average standards in literacy and numeracy means they are being well prepared for the world of work. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The school is particularly effective in helping its pupils to express themselves with sensitivity and creativity. A strong moral code promotes this aspect of development well. However, the school's provision for developing pupils' awareness of cultural diversity is limited and this holds back pupils' developing awareness in this aspect of their education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

In practice, teaching does not always match the quality of planning so that there is too often a lack of challenge, particularly for more able pupils. Classroom assistants work sensitively to support pupils with additional learning needs so that they make similar progress to their classmates. Assessment is used effectively by some teachers in target setting but the system is at too early a stage of development to be fully effective in helping to promote progress across the school. The provision of ICT has improved since the last inspection and teachers use it to good effect to support learning. Teachers build on good relationships and clear expectations so that little time is lost in managing behaviour. Pupils enjoy their work and most are eager learners who respond well to challenge and cooperate well together. Clear, established routines mean that pupils are confident in expressing their ideas and they listen to each other well.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The formal identification of links between subjects to maximise opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of writing and number is not yet fully established. The school enriches the curriculum well through a good range of visits and visitors. Pupils speak enthusiastically about visits from 'The Fire-fighters' and of the chance to make a residential visit to Wales. They also appreciate the good range of activities provided outside lessons, mentioning, amongst others, dance club, choir, cross country and tag rugby.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Pupils feel safe and are very positive in their view that adults are there to help them. The comment from one that, 'Teachers speak to us in a nice manner,' aptly sums up the good relationships evident throughout the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support that motivates them to learn and helps them to progress at the same rate as others. The school's links with specialist support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, allied with good help in lessons, plays a strong part in promoting the self-esteem of these pupils. Child protection procedures are in place and the school complies with government requirements for checking the suitability of staff to work with children. Recently, the school has revised its procedures for checking pupils' progress but it is too early to judge their impact. Pupils do not yet have individual learning targets that will challenge them to improve. The school has a considerable amount of evidence about pupils' progress but is not making the best use of it to help pupils reach their potential.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory but monitoring of the school's work is not rigorous enough to identify what needs doing to improve. The process of checking the school's performance is not systematic enough to enable progress towards targets for improvement to be evaluated with enough precision to be helpful. For example, available data are not used well enough to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning that have an impact on pupils' progress. Similarly, although the governing body supports the school well, it does not have the information necessary to hold it rigorously to account for its performance. Sound financial planning has enabled the school to balance its budget and to improve its facilities. Nevertheless, for reasons outlined above, it is difficult for management to properly evaluate spending decisions. What the school's leadership does well is to maintain a warm and caring atmosphere, firmly rooted in Gospel values, in which pupils develop confidence in themselves. It is for this reason, and the way in which the school welcomes and works with parents to support their children, that the school has their overwhelming approval.

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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>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### 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	2
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>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<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>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

As you know, Mr Ravey and I visited your school to check on how well it is doing.

Thank you very much for the way you made us welcome. We enjoyed talking to you about your work and your life in the school. We were impressed by the courtesy and help you gave us. We agree with you that the school is a safe and happy place where everyone can enjoy learning.

During our time in the school we particularly liked the way:

- everyone in the school makes sure that you are looked after well
- your teachers and the teaching assistants give those of you who find learning a little difficult a lot of help
- you behave well, concentrate in lessons and help each other
- you form good relationships with all others in the school, including visitors like ourselves
- the school makes it clear that it is important for you to have a healthy way of living; we could see at lunchtime that you take this seriously.

We have asked Mr Sharp and your teachers to improve some things to make your school a better place to learn. These are to:

- check more carefully how well the school is doing and take action to improve it
- make sure that work is planned to stretch you and make you think so that you all do as well as you can
- make better use of information about your progress to make sure that you do as well as you should.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection of your school. We hope you will carry on enjoying learning at St John's and wish you well for the future.