



# St John the Evangelist RC Primary School, Bromley Cross, Bolton

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 105249  
**Local Authority** Bolton  
**Inspection number** 287172  
**Inspection dates** 13–14 December 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Angela Westington 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 address</b>	Darwen Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Bromley Cross, Bolton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11		Lancashire BL7 9HT
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01204 333440
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	184	<b>Fax number</b>	01204 333441
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr G Dobson
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr R McGloin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 February 2003		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

St John the Evangelist Catholic Primary School is a smaller than average school. It serves an area with few signs of disadvantage and the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. An average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attend the school but a much higher number of these pupils than is usual have a statement of special educational need. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and only a small proportion are from minority ethnic groups. The school population includes a few pupils learning English as an additional language and there are three looked-after pupils.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

St John the Evangelist Catholic Primary School is a happy, caring community. Parents overwhelmingly support the work of the school and value its commitment to the needs of every child; it welcomes children with a range of learning disabilities. The school has good links with partners to support pupils' well-being. Pupils behave extremely well and their personal development is good. They are well cared for and looked after.

The school has a tradition of gaining high results in the national tests but in recent years they have been broadly average in Key Stage 2 and better in Key Stage 1, although with fluctuations year on year in different subjects. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 has declined, especially in English, and the school has recognised this and has looked at reasons for the decline. Last year, for example, there was a high number of pupils in the Year 6 class with a statement of special educational need who were included in the figures.

Children enter the school in the Reception Year with skill levels in line with expectations and make good progress so that by the end of that year they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Their progress through the rest of the school though is satisfactory: more able pupils could achieve more, especially in writing in Key Stage 2.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. There is no unsatisfactory teaching but there is too little teaching that is good or very good and this has a particular impact on the achievement of more able pupils generally, and specifically in English. The school has recognised that it needs to raise the standards achieved by more able pupils but not that it needs to raise the profile of teaching overall to do so. It has had some success supporting groups of lower achieving pupils through additional support but has been less successful in implementing improvements in class teaching generally, to raise, for example, standards in writing across the school. It has set more challenging targets for the future but progress towards achieving these has been delayed by staff absences and a lack of understanding and knowledge on the part of some teachers of how to implement changes to assessment and teaching that will cause standards to rise.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and the school has an accurate view of its work. The headteacher manages the school well on a day-to-day basis. Since the last inspection he has established a leadership team structure to promote a stronger, more unified whole school approach to improvement. As yet, the impact of the team's work has been somewhat limited, although the subject leader for English, who is holding the post temporarily, has made a good start at reviewing her area. Progress on the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection has been satisfactory: for instance, the provision in the Foundation Stage has improved. There is still some work to be done though on assessment and on ensuring all lessons meet pupils' varying needs. The school's capacity to improve further is satisfactory.

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. However, given the recent decline in pupils' progress by the end of Key Stage 2, and the mixed results of the school's efforts to tackle this, provision is, in one respect, inadequate: namely, how the school's

performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets. 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.

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

- Improve standards in English and specifically writing for more able pupils.
- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching.
- Improve teachers' use of assessment to plan lessons in order to have a more secure knowledge of where pupils are up to and how to move them on.
- Strengthen the ways in which the leadership team monitors and evaluates initiatives aimed at improving the school's performance.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Test results in Key Stage 1 over the last four years has been positive, with pupils doing better than the average overall, though with some variability in different subjects year on year.

In Key Stage 2, the drop in test results in recent years from previously high levels to around the average caused the school to look again at its provision particularly in writing and in mathematics. This year, the numbers of pupils gaining the higher levels in mathematics and in science picked up but the school had less success with English.

Standards observed in lessons reflect the inconsistency in results. Overall they are broadly average but there are elements that could be improved. In Key Stage 1, pupils' phonics knowledge is insecure and reveals itself in their writing, which is otherwise of a reasonable standard. It is not clear whether all pupils in Years 1 and 2 receive their entitlement to a daily, structured and rigorous lesson in phonics following recently recommended national guidelines. In Key Stage 2, too much of the pupils' writing is marred by basic spelling, grammar and punctuation mistakes that ought to have been mastered in earlier years. The pupils produce a lot of work. In writing, for example, the volume of work they complete is very high and they cover the full range of writing styles that is required of them showing a good level of understanding, but too frequently their writing lacks polish and is not well presented. In mathematics, across the school, pupils' oral and mental skills are not well developed and this hinders their ability to undertake problem solving activities confidently.

Pupils' speaking and listening skills are good. Even the youngest children are confident speakers: speaking clearly and happily in front of audiences and initiating conversations with adults. They enjoy their drama lessons and these contribute to their overall good levels of speech.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils learn to respect and understand their own feelings well and those of others. Relationships in the school are very good and pupils are extremely polite, friendly and courteous. Their good behaviour and very good attitudes to work create a happy, productive and enjoyable learning environment. Attendance is above average and pupils enjoy school. School council meetings involve pupils in making decisions, such as deciding on new play equipment. All pupils show great initiative in lessons because teachers provide many opportunities for them, helping them develop confidence in being responsible for their own learning. They successfully adopt safe and healthy lifestyles and know the benefits of regular physical activity and healthy eating. Learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their good grounding in social and basic skills prepares them well for the next stages of learning and life in their community.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory. Inspectors observed 14 lessons or parts of lessons and of these only a minority were good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This rather flat profile of teaching is not strong enough to raise standards to the level that the school wants to achieve. It accounts, to some extent, for the dip in overall standards attained by pupils by the end of Key Stage 2. The lack of good and very good teaching most adversely affects the more able pupils who thrive on rigour and challenge.

The best teaching was observed in one of the upper Key Stage 2 classes. Here, the teacher's good subject knowledge was matched with very sharp assessment skills: she knew exactly where each child was up to and what was needed to move him or her on at that point. In the less effective lessons, although they were satisfactory overall, the common weakness was a lack of sharpness in the teachers' assessment skills. In one part of the lesson or another, the match of work to pupil or group of pupils missed the mark. For example, in a Key Stage 1 mathematics lesson, in the oral and mental starter, the pupils were asked to count backwards and forwards from 1 to 10 in ones and from 0 to 100 in tens. The pupils recited the lines easily. The evidence from previously collected assessments showed that this particular class had achieved very good results in mathematics and that the content of this part of the lesson was therefore likely to be too easy for many of them.

The school is rigorous in collecting assessment data on the pupils: this activity is led by the headteacher. Generally though, the teachers are not sufficiently skilled at translating that data into more tightly matched lessons and work so that all pupils make as much progress as often as possible and as quickly as possible. This has been particularly the case in writing, where the school has struggled to redress the dip in

standards by the end of Key Stage 2. Teachers' understanding of how to assess and level pupils' writing against national curriculum norms is underdeveloped.

In all lessons observed, key positive features were pupils' good behaviour and their willingness to learn. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils, use praise and support well and, as a result, pupils respond positively. The relatively newly introduced interactive white boards are used well by teachers to sustain pupils' interest.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum satisfactorily meets the needs of the vast majority of pupils. It contributes well to the development of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and is a key factor in pupils' good personal development. The curriculum is, however, less effective in ensuring pupils' academic progress and the needs of the more able writers in particular. Curriculum provision is being reviewed in order to develop pupils' creativity fully and to make learning more relevant to their lives. Subject planning is being adjusted to enable the development of the skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology in all subjects. Pupils' speaking skills are well catered for through a programme of drama. Good links with other organisations enable pupils to participate in a range of activities, for example, fencing, art and drama. Personal, social and health education and citizenship is developing. It is beginning to ensure that pupils have access to good quality information, for example, related to healthy living and how to keep safe.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory with strengths in support for pupils' personal development. Parents are accurate in their view that the school is very caring. Procedures for maintaining pupils' health and safety and child protection are effective and ensure that the school is safe and secure. The staff are particularly effective in supporting vulnerable pupils. They work closely with pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their parents. Good use is made of the support of outside agencies in education, health and community policing. The support for pupils' academic development is satisfactory. Although group target-setting is established, systems to check on individual achievement are not embedded in every class and are not yet linked closely enough to raising the achievement of the individual. This results in a lack of challenge for pupils at times.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher is dedicated to the school, is very caring and very committed to opening the school to pupils with a range of needs. In response to the Every Child Matters agenda he led a parish and school audit which highlighted areas for further

development such as gaining the healthy school award and dyslexia friendly school status. He manages the school well and has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. He is also focused on standards and on tackling the recent dip in test results. His time though, and that of the governing body with the support of the local authority, has sometimes been taken up with dealing with difficult staffing issues.

However, currently he has in place a relatively newly established, and promising, leadership team focused on raising standards. The team has completed an accurate self-evaluation, correctly identifying priorities for development. The subject leader for English has held her post only since September has made a good start in reviewing provision in this subject.

Last year the school implemented a programme to improve writing in Key Stage 2 but this had mixed results and, after some consideration, was dropped. Currently the team are looking at alternative measures, including a greater focus on reading. The school development planning focuses on English and mathematics and on additional support for pupils who may be falling behind but it does not identify the overall quality of teaching as something that needs improving.

The governing body satisfactorily carries out its duties. Governors are very supportive of the school and the headteacher but know that standards could be higher: they are not complacent. Given previous performance, those with responsibility for leading the school have satisfactory capacity to improve it further.

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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 quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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	1
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	3

### 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 Alston and I visited your school recently and we would like to thank you for talking to us, telling us about your school and making us feel so welcome. We looked at many of the things you do in school and talked with your teachers and some of the people who help you, as well as a few of your parents. We thought that you behaved very well and we could tell that you and your families are very proud of your school. These are some of the things that we really liked:

- the people in school work very hard to make sure that you learn how to be good, sensible and caring and you showed us that you can live up to their high expectations. The adults in your school look after you well
- you behave very well in lessons and work sensibly
- you enjoy being with each other and get on well with the adults in school. You are trying hard to be healthy and eat sensibly
- we really enjoyed your Nativity performance. Well done!

We have asked Mr McGloin and the teachers to look again at some of your lessons because we think that some of the work you do could be harder (I bet you won't all like that idea!!) and that some of you could do even better in your work, especially in English. We have asked your teachers to try to make all the teaching in the school as good as possible. We have also suggested that your teachers look again at how they find out exactly what you know and where you are up to, so that they can make sure you move on as quickly as possible. Mr McGloin and the teachers will be spending more time looking at these things, so when they do I am sure that you will help them by continuing to work hard and behaving well.

Thank you again for helping us with this inspection. We wish you every blessing for the future.