

# St Paul's Catholic Junior School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 104661          |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Liverpool       |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 308644          |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 31 October 2007 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | John Heap       |

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>                     | Junior   |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Voluntary aided  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 7-11   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed  |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |  |
| School                                    | 512  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mr S Roche   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Mr Robert Ward   |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 1 December 2003  |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Spring Grove<br>West Derby<br>Liverpool<br>Merseyside<br>L12 8SJ |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 0151 228 1159  |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 0151 259 3045  |

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- How far have pupils' levels of achievement improved in writing and mathematics?
- Are systems for checking and tracking pupils' progress/achievements having an impact on teaching and standards?
- How well do leadership and management evaluate the school's work and set challenging pupils' achievement targets for all staff?

The inspector gathered evidence from school documentation; interviews with pupils, staff and governors; observing lessons and other activities and analysing parents' questionnaires and comments. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This large primary school serves an area of average social and economic circumstances. The majority of pupils are of White British origin. A few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a small number of pupils are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average as is the proportion who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has successfully achieved Healthy School status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school rightly judges itself as good and it provides good value for money. Improvement since the last inspection has been strong, particularly in the way that standards have risen in mathematics, the better use of assessment and the greater impact of subject coordinators on pupils' achievements. This has come about because good leadership and management have been focused effectively on making sure that staff know and understand pupils' achievements and the importance of maintaining good levels of provision. As a result, the school is well placed to improve further. Parents and pupils like the school and judge that it provides, at least, a good education. Replies from parents confirm that the school is right to judge care, guidance and support as good. One parent's view reflected many: 'My child is very happy in school, I feel he is well educated. Also I feel secure knowing that he is in a safe environment.' Another writes: 'The teaching staff seem to recognise the individual needs of each child and try to help promote optimum achievement.'

Personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils say that they enjoy school and feel safe and secure. Parents' questionnaires overwhelmingly endorse this view. This is not a surprising outcome because the good curriculum provides lots of stimulating and challenging activities for pupils. For example, pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are enriched well by visitors and visits. Partnerships with other schools and outside agencies develop challenging activities, such as learning modern foreign languages. Pupils know the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and the school's work on this has earned an award. Out-of-school activities, such as sport, give pupils the opportunity to develop teamwork and competitive skills. Attendance and behaviour are good because pupils' moral and social development is particularly strong. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and recognise that they have responsibilities towards other pupils and the adults in the school. As a result, relationships in the school are very good. All agree that there is very little aggressive or oppressive behaviour and on the few occasions it occurs the school has speedy and robust practices to deal with it effectively. Pupils make a good contribution to this happy and thriving school through the effective school council and the tasks they complete around the school. The council consulted pupils across the school and provided leadership in improving the provision on the playground at break times and in developing healthy eating. Pupils recognise the needs of others who are less fortunate through their regular charitable donations. They also provide entertainment and inspiration for local people through links with the church and performances.

Pupils have very good attitudes to school and their work. This is a major factor in pupils' consistently high academic standards and good achievement that mean they are well prepared for their future. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and the small proportion learning English as an additional language make good progress from their starting points. In national tests, results have been consistently and significantly above average with English and science showing the strongest pictures. The trends are upwards, but with occasional blips such as in 2005 when there were more pupils with extra learning needs. Mathematics appears to be the stronger trend from a lower starting point and this is due to the good improvements since the previous inspection. By the end of Year 6, pupils have maintained the high standards and all groups progress well. Until 2006, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher than average Level 5 was significantly above the national figure in English and science and a little above average in mathematics. Results for 2007 show

improvements in mathematics. Nevertheless, the good monitoring and analysis of test papers showed that pupils did less well in practical topics, such as shape and measures, and this has led to the modification of the curriculum so that these topics can be highlighted and given specific and additional time. Girls did better than boys in 2007, but this is not a trend in the results.

Pupils learn well in lessons that challenge and spur them to make good progress. Teaching is good. Teachers' strong management of lessons ensures that pupils' learning is rarely disrupted. Lessons move at a good pace so that little time is wasted. Teachers make increasingly effective use of pupils' achievement data to match work and guidance accurately to individual learning needs. Good support is provided for pupils with additional learning needs to enable them to make good progress. As a result of good teaching, pupils having strong basic skills and the means to apply these skills confidently in wider activities, such as working with representatives of a national company on designing buildings. Nevertheless, across the school, there are some inconsistencies in the way that individual learning targets are set and this means that there is variation in the challenge for pupils, particularly the highest attainers. Equally, the often good marking of pupils' work sometimes lacks clear indications of what the pupils need to do to achieve their next learning goal.

The headteacher is leading the school very well and benefits from the effective support and leadership of senior management in their various areas of responsibility. As a team, they actively seek ways to improve further the current position, particularly in raising standards, the development of better and more rigorous self-evaluation and the effective use of robust procedures to safeguard and protect pupils. This is recognised and much appreciated by many parents. One parent expressed the views of many in this way: 'From the management team to the wonderful support staff, my daughter is made to feel part of a caring and safe community.' As a result, the school has an accurate and realistic view of its current position and recognises that there are still areas that need continuing attention and development. This is seen in the continued drive to raise standards, particularly in writing and mathematics. The evidence is that these two areas are improving well. School development planning identifies the correct priorities and the school uses data well to evaluate progress towards challenging targets. Nevertheless, the criteria for measuring success within the plan are not as sharp as they could be to form a fully effective tool for evaluation. For example, it is not clear in the plan what the academic achievement targets are for each year group. Effective governance benefits from the detailed information and analysis that all levels of management provide for governors. The wide-ranging expertise on the governing body is important in providing appropriate support and challenge, for example, in financial, personnel and health and safety matters. Moreover, they have effectively overseen the significant improvements to the school premises over the last two years.

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

- Ensure that there is consistency and challenge across the school in the setting of individual learning targets and the marking of pupils' work.
- Include measurable success criteria in the school development plan, particularly the academic achievement targets for each year group.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|----------------|

### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve?  | 2 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 1 |
| 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

|   |   |
|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?                                  | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 2 |
| The attendance of learners  | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 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

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

<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.

## Annex A

**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 | 2   |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards  | 2   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 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**

Inspection of St Paul's Catholic Junior School, West Derby, L12 8SJ

I thoroughly enjoyed my day in your good school this week. I am most grateful for your warm welcome, courtesy and the help you provided. These are some of the key findings about your school.

What I really liked about your school was:

- the consistently high standards that you achieve, including the recent improvements in writing and mathematics
- the support of your parents for the good academic achievements and pastoral care shown by the school
- the happy atmosphere in the school and the way you support and consult each other
- the good teaching and the strong teamwork of all the adults that promote the good progress you make
- your enjoyment of school, the good behaviour and attendance and the very positive attitudes to work
- the good contribution that you make to a safe and caring atmosphere in the school
- your response to the good and interesting range of activities that enrich your curriculum
- the good leadership and management and the contribution of the school council to day-to-day and longer term matters, such as advising on improving the playground and healthy eating.

To make your school even better I have asked that your learning targets and marking are always challenging. You will want to be a great help by continuing to always do your best work and by following the advice and guidance from your teachers. I have also suggested that the school development plan holds information about the learning targets for all year groups.

Good luck for the future and best wishes.