

# St John's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113496
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	311296
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Marion Wallace

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 category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	183
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Teresa Cummings
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dianne Carr
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2003
<b>School address</b>	Melbourne Street Tiverton EX16 5LB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01884 253630
<b>Fax number</b>	01884 242079

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St John's Catholic Primary School is an average-sized primary school. The great majority of pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is significantly lower than average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average, but the proportion with statements of special educational need is above average. A new purpose-built area for the Foundation Stage opened in October 2006. Children from the Nursery and Reception class are taught alongside each other. They start school with very different levels of skill and ability but attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. Most children have attended the Nursery before they enter Reception. Over the last five years, the school has experienced a turbulent period of changes in staffing and long-term staff absence, including the absence of the headteacher for a year from 2005 to 2006.

## 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's is a happy school and its overall effectiveness is satisfactory. All individuals are valued and respected in this friendly, caring community and, as a result, pupils enjoy school and have a positive attitude to their work. In their responses to the inspection questionnaire, parents frequently mentioned 'strong pastoral side', 'mutual respect' and 'caring environment'. The frequent changes of staff over the last five years and the long-term absence of the headteacher have had an adverse effect on standards and achievement. Pupils in some classes have not achieved as well as they should have done. However, the situation has improved in recent months, now that the school has a full complement of permanent staff and is receiving good support from local consultants to help rectify identified areas of weakness. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school's leaders have an awareness of what needs to be done to bring improvement, but their systems to check the quality of teaching and pupils' work and their use of data are not yet rigorous enough to identify the finer details of what needs to be improved. Standards are broadly average at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics. In science, however, standards are below average. Achievement in science is not as good as it should be because the school has not focused on this subject as much as on literacy and numeracy. Standards in the current Year 2 are broadly average in writing and mathematics and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards in reading are below average, but they are improving because of strategies recently put in place. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There is some good teaching which engages pupils' interest and motivates them to learn. In some classes, however, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving, and lessons lack pace and challenge. Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are polite and take on roles of responsibility with mature sensitivity to the needs of others. They adopt healthy lifestyles, such as eating healthy snacks at break time, and they say they feel safe because there is a strong focus on these aspects. They are developing a good awareness of the environment and their part within local community, and talk enthusiastically about their recycling project. Pupils feel their views are valued. Staff provide good pastoral care, but procedures to ensure academic progress is maintained are less well developed. As a result, work is not always matched as closely as it could be to the needs of all pupils. The curriculum is satisfactory, but is improving as the school develops a more creative approach to developing pupils' knowledge and understanding.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress in the Nursery and Reception class, and the great majority reach the expected level by the time they enter Year 1. They make good progress in their personal development because relationships are strong. They also make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world because the staff provide an interesting curriculum with practical activities which interest the children. For example, children greatly enjoyed discovering how plants grow as they prepared the soil, planted seeds and then took care of the emerging plants. Personal aspects of care are strong and, consequently, children make a positive start to their education. Children make satisfactory progress in developing literacy and mathematical skills, but tasks are not always matched carefully enough to children's prior understanding. The transition from the Nursery to the Reception class is very smooth because children work alongside each other and share resources. The Foundation Stage leader and his staff have made a good start in establishing a positive learning environment for the

children in the new unit, but there is not yet enough rigour in the way assessment information is used to ensure that all children make the progress of which they are capable.

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

- Develop more robust procedures to check the quality of teaching and pupils' work and ensure that data and assessment information are used effectively to identify and meet the needs of all pupils.
- Raise pupils' achievement in reading at Key Stage 1 and science throughout the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching by raising teachers' expectations and ensuring that all teachers provide sufficient challenge and pace in their lessons. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Although there is some variation from one class to the next and between subjects, pupils' achievement is generally satisfactory and standards are broadly average throughout the school. Staffing difficulties which led to inadequate teaching resulted in below average standards in the national test results for Year 2 in 2007. Standards in writing and mathematics have since improved to their previous average level. Standards in reading are still below average, but new strategies are starting to have an impact and pupils' achievement in reading is improving. At the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average in English and mathematics but are below average in science. National test results were lower in 2007 than in 2006 as only a small proportion of pupils reached higher levels. However, these results reflected a weaker cohort than previous years. Pupils in Year 6 achieve high standards in information and communication technology. The presentation of pupils' work throughout the school is not as good as it could be. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as their peers.

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

### **Grade: 2**

This is an orderly community where pupils display good behaviour, positive relationships with others and a willingness to take on responsibilities. They are courteous and polite, holding doors open for others and greeting adults with a smile. They behave well and have good attitudes towards their learning. Most pupils want to learn and say they enjoy school. They feel that 'it's the people who are special.' They feel safe and confident that adults will provide support should it be required. Pupils gain a good awareness of healthy eating. Many choose to buy fruit for break and lunch times from the shop run by pupils in Year 5. They show awareness of safety, for example, in moving sensibly about the school. Skills important for their future success, such as their ability to work cooperatively with others, develop well, but standards of literacy and numeracy are only satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Although it has improved recently, the attendance rate remains just below the national average.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory but there is some variability from class to class. In some lessons, there is insufficient challenge and the pace is not brisk enough to ensure all pupils make maximum gains in their learning. Some teachers, however, challenge pupils well to extend their writing, although expectations with regard to the presentation of pupils' work are not high enough. Relationships are good and pupils respect their teachers. Consequently, behaviour in lessons is good and pupils respond readily to the tasks they are given. They have a good attitude to their work. The teachers often plan lessons which the pupils find interesting. Although they are starting to make better use of assessment information, they do not always identify the needs of the more able pupils accurately enough or set targets for individual pupils. Teaching assistants provide satisfactory support.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The satisfactory curriculum is improving as the school develops more creative approaches to teaching various subjects. Pupils find that this topic-based approach makes learning more interesting for them. It is too early, however, to judge the full impact of these changes. Now that resources have improved, staff are beginning to make good use of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology across the curriculum. All pupils have access to laptop computers and these are used well to enrich learning in most subjects. Provision for extra-curricular activity is good. Pupils talk enthusiastically about out of school clubs, especially football, Starmaker, residential trips and many school visits. These activities contribute well to their social development.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

The school ensures that pupils are safe and well looked after and that safeguarding arrangements are secure. Relationships are good and pupils have a voice in the school through the school council. The attention given to pupils' health and safety is good. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and are given plenty of opportunities for exercise. Academic guidance is improving and the level of pupils' engagement in their own learning is increasing. Older pupils know their National Curriculum levels but they do not have individual targets. As a result, they do not always know what they need to do to improve. The marking of pupils' work is satisfactory. The best marking challenges pupils to improve their work, but this quality is not found consistently throughout the school. Pupils with additional needs are soundly supported and make satisfactory progress.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 3

The headteacher and her relatively new staff are fully committed to improving the learning for all pupils. With the effective support of external consultants, they are working as a team to overcome recent significant staffing difficulties. The main focus has been to improve literacy

and numeracy and there are signs of improvement. Procedures to track pupils' progress have improved and are being used to identify areas for development. Senior leaders have a realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, but are not always using information from their data as effectively as they could. The leadership team demonstrates a satisfactory capacity for further improvement through its enthusiastic and rigorous approach to developing new strategies which are helping to improve standards. Short-term priorities are well planned to match the needs of the learners, longer-term planning is less clear. Subject coordinators provide satisfactory leadership. They are enthusiastic and have realistic plans for improving standards and identifying how their subjects will contribute to the creative curriculum. Governors have a realistic view of the school. They are knowledgeable, supportive, well organised and challenge appropriately.

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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
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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
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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

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	3
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	3

### The quality of provision

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

## Annex A

**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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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

- 28 September 2007 Dear Pupils Inspection of St John's Catholic Primary School, Tiverton, EX16 5LB Thank you for helping with the inspection. We enjoyed visiting your school and talking to you and your teachers. We liked the way you sang joyfully in assembly and are responsible, for example, by answering the phone and running your own healthy fruit shop. These are the main things we found out about your school:
- You make a sound start to your education in Reception and you make satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 6 because your teachers plan lessons you enjoy. The teaching you receive is satisfactory.
- Your personal development is good. You are all well behaved and enjoy what the school has to offer, especially the after-school activities and the trips and visits.
- You told us that you feel safe and well cared for and that the school helps you learn to lead a healthy life. The school is making good progress working towards the 'Healthy School' award.
- The way that your school is run is satisfactory. Your headteacher and senior leaders are working well together to improve your school and they are well supported by the staff and governors of the school.
- We think St John's is a satisfactory school. We have suggested these things that need to be improved to make things even better:
- We want the school to help you achieve as well in maths and science as you do in English.
- We would like some of your teachers to encourage you to work a little bit faster, do a little bit more and tackle harder work. You can help by making sure that your work is always neat and tidy.
- We would like your leadership and management team to check on how well you are doing and how well teachers are planning challenging lessons for you.
- We would also like to see some of you improve your attendance. We wish you well for the future. Marion Wallace (Lead Inspector)

**Annex B**



28 September 2007

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St John's Catholic Primary School, Tiverton, EX16 5LB**

Thank you for helping with the inspection. We enjoyed visiting your school and talking to you and your teachers. We liked the way you sang joyfully in assembly and are responsible, for example, by answering the phone and running your own healthy fruit shop.

**These are the main things we found out about your school:**

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- Your personal development is good. You are all well behaved and enjoy what the school has to offer, especially the after-school activities and the trips and visits.
- You told us that you feel safe and well cared for and that the school helps you learn to lead a healthy life. The school is making good progress working towards the 'Healthy School' award.
- The way that your school is run is satisfactory. Your headteacher and senior leaders are working well together to improve your school and they are well supported by the staff and governors of the school.
- We think St John's is a satisfactory school.

**We have suggested these things that need to be improved to make things even better:**

- We want the school to help you achieve as well in maths and science as you do in English.
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- We would like your leadership and management team to check on how well you are doing and how well teachers are planning challenging lessons for you.
- We would also like to see some of you improve your attendance.

We wish you well for the future.

Marion Wallace  
(Lead Inspector)