

# St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120217
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	313554
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Carol Parkinson

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	209
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Martin Stanley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mary Hirst
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 May 2004
<b>School address</b>	Shenley Road Wigston LE18 3QL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01162 882203
<b>Fax number</b>	01162 886930

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The denominational nature of this average-sized primary school means it serves an extensive area with a varied range of social and economic characteristics. The great majority of pupils are baptised Catholics.

## 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 which values its pupils' personal development as highly as its academic work and prepares its pupils well for the next stage in their lives. Pupils say, 'Lessons are fun!' and, 'It will give us a head start in later life.' Outstanding provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins the school's success. Leaders see their pupils' beliefs, their ability to relate to others and to know and understand their own conduct as vital and integral parts of education. This emphasis on personal development, together with above average academic standards, very good cultural development and an outstanding curriculum provides a high quality and rounded school life. Pupils' behaviour and relationships are good. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In the last six months standards have risen rapidly, especially in science in Key Stage 2 in response to teachers' dedicated introduction of the new tracking system. Teachers use the information it provides to set challenging work to stretch pupils' skills and knowledge. As a result of its success so far, the new system is to be introduced to Years 1 and 2 in autumn 2008. Pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards at the end of Year 2 are also above average, but writing is the weakest element because pupils lack basic skills in spelling and presentation. The quality of teachers' marking is variable throughout the school. While in some classes it is consistent, encouraging and instructive, in others it is limited and does not show pupils how to correct errors or consolidate new learning. Academic guidance is satisfactory but because of good pastoral care and strong and effective systems for pupils' welfare, the overall quality of care, guidance and support is good. Children in the Reception class make rapid progress because of the high quality of teaching. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's unswerving commitment to improve provision since the last inspection has been successful. As a result, standards have risen. The curriculum is now excellent. It is well planned, and gives especially good support to pupils' personal development through linking subjects, promoting reflection on their own spiritual development and how they behave in response to their own needs and those of others. The headteacher's open style of leadership means that governors and senior leaders have a very clear perspective of the plan for the school's improvement and so give her effective support in taking the school forward. The strategies in place to raise standards and the capacity for improvement are good.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children come into the Reception class from a large number of settings and their skills on entry vary from year to year from below average to average, with strengths in speaking and listening. They make good progress in response to challenging and lively teaching based on rigorous assessment of children's abilities. By the time children go into Year 1, standards are broadly average although they are above average in speaking and reading. Activities are planned well and they provide many opportunities for children to learn independently, particularly in the outdoor area which has been created since the previous inspection. The provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is very good and has been an area of focus since September. For example, during the inspection children had a trip to the botanical gardens and they were able to describe the life cycle of a butterfly simply. Children in Reception are inquisitive and keen to learn. Adults expect high standards of behaviour and foster an atmosphere of friendliness and openness so that children go into school knowing what is expected of them with confidence.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the teaching and learning of basic skills in writing in Key Stage 1.
- Improve the quality of marking so that pupils in all classes have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well during their time at the school and reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. However, pupils make faster progress in Key Stage 2 than they do in Key Stage 1. Results of national tests have fluctuated since the previous inspection and they were better in 2006 than 2007. Children in the Reception class make good progress in all areas of learning and especially phonics and knowledge and understanding of the world. They enter Year 1 with levels of skills expected nationally but with strengths in speaking and reading. Pupils' achievement in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. Standards in mathematics, science and in reading are above average. Pupils' spelling and presentation are weak, but standards in writing are average because pupils have good sentence construction and can write for different purposes. National test results in Year 6 in 2007 were above the national average in English and mathematics, but the percentage of pupils attaining higher levels in science was significantly below that seen nationally. The school addressed this very effectively. Standards in science have risen dramatically and the rate of progress in science in Year 6 is outstanding. Standards in English and mathematics are above average and pupils in Key Stage 2 have made good progress since September 2007. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress throughout the school because of the very careful analysis of their difficulties and effective support from a range of adults allocated to work with them.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school and its high quality pervades all aspects of school life and is a key reason for the school's success. Pupils are spontaneously caring and understanding of one another. They behave well and respect each other and the environment. Their attendance is above average and this reflects how much they enjoy school, especially practical activities, for example in science, art, sport and music. They find the work hard, especially mathematics, but think they are making good progress. They have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy life although they do not put this understanding into practice as they eat sweets and crisps at playtime. They understand that life has its dangers and they know how to be sensible and how to protect themselves and others. Pupils make a good contribution to the community through the school council, by raising funds for charity and leading 'Rise and Shine'. Pupils' abilities to work together well, their good attitudes to learning and community responsibilities are preparing them well for later life. The school council provides a channel for pupils to make their opinions heard and council members have taken part with outside agencies and the school to raise awareness of bullying and to help others keep safe.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good, but the best teaching is in Years 3 to 6 and in Reception where there are outstanding elements in the teaching of knowledge and understanding of the world. The strongest features are teachers' planning of work for pupils with different needs and learning styles, the pace of lesson delivery, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and curricular links made between different subjects. Teachers are aware of the need to teach subject specific skills and plan for these carefully and effectively. Correct spelling patterns and presentation are not modelled often enough in Years 1 and 2. As a result, pupils' spelling is poor and this undermines their progress in writing, although their knowledge of language is good. Throughout the school, marking is inconsistent from class to class and subject to subject. It can be insightful and give pupils a clear view of how to improve their work or it may point out errors without showing how to put them right. Teachers use assessment well in their planning so that pupils have challenging tasks. Pupils and teachers alike have a very clear understanding of what learning targets are, especially in Years 3 to 6. Pupils have good relationships and communicate well with adults who create a vibrant but orderly atmosphere in which to learn. Teaching assistants work very effectively with pupils and make a good contribution to their learning.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding curriculum. It is broad, relevant and particularly well planned so that pupils have a very wide range of interesting opportunities to learn. The cross-curricular links are strong so that pupils are able to practise basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT while learning new information and subject specific skills, and pupils enjoy this. All groups are well catered for, and pupils with learning difficulties and gifted and talented pupils have equally good opportunities to learn as others. For example, more able pupils throughout the school have the opportunity to work with other year groups and some have special challenges set for them. Pupils' personal development and well-being are strongly supported by the curriculum including the SEAL project. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, conflict resolution was discussed in literacy, while in Year 5 they considered the rights and wrongs of keeping animals in captivity. The school provides specialist support for developing pupils' skills and knowledge in art and music and makes good opportunities for pupils to perform. The provision for physical education is outstanding and the school makes very good use of all the facilities available to it. The curriculum is very practical. For example, four year groups were observed outside at one time, three involved in different aspects of science and one in physical education. There is an exciting range of clubs and activities which are attended by a high percentage of pupils, and these are much appreciated by parents as well as pupils. The pupils say their visits and residential trips are 'brilliant'.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Pastoral care is good. Adults know pupils well and are responsive to their needs, especially those with learning difficulties. Relationships at all levels support pupils' personal development and pupils say they trust adults and they know they are well looked after. Arrangements for

child protection are secure and procedures rigorous. Risk assessments are thorough and health and safety procedures are effective. Academic guidance is inconsistent. Targets are set carefully to help pupils improve their work, and pupils know their targets well and what they need to do next. Marking varies from teacher to teacher and from subject to subject and often does not help pupils to know how to improve their work. Tracking is rigorous and increasingly effective, especially in Years 3 to 6 and the Reception class, where the school is using a new system successfully. The school has not implemented fully its procedures for allowing only healthy snacks at playtime throughout the week.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The leadership and the management of the school are good. The headteacher has worked persistently and tenaciously to put her vision of improved provision into effect and to build on the school's achievements from the previous inspection. Now the outcome of this effort is becoming clear in the rapid improvement of standards from September this year. This has shown the leadership team that aspirations for pupils' achievements should be higher than they have been. The headteacher is consistent in her drive for improvement which she shares with staff, parents and governors. Leaders see the school as a whole, and seek to deliver an education where good personal development and good academic standards are hand in hand. Leaders work together well to decide on areas for improvement and targets are becoming increasingly challenging as the success of their monitoring shows them what pupils can achieve. The school's self-evaluation is effective and leads to improvement. Equality of opportunity is good and pupils who learn at different rates and those with learning difficulties are equally successful. Pupils from different backgrounds flourish in the school community. Governance is good. The governing body is effectively involved in the school, and has a proper understanding of its development and an increasing realisation of how high standards can be. They are true critical friends, hold the school to account and are highly organised.

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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?	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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	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	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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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?	1
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

- 24 April 2008 Dear Children Inspection of St John Fisher Catholic Primary School, Wigston, LE18 3QL Thank you very much for welcoming us and helping us during the inspection of your school. We really enjoyed seeing all the hard work you have done in your books and discovering the interesting things you learn. In this letter, we are going to explain what we have found out.
- Your behaviour is good and you are kind and friendly, especially when people need help.
- You enjoy coming to school, you get on well with your friends and with grownups and feel safe and happy.
- You find some of the work difficult, especially mathematics, but you know you are making good progress.
- You love science and all the practical activities, especially the clubs, sports and visits, and your school provides you with an outstandingly good range of things to learn and do.
- You know what a healthy diet is and this will be even better when you have fruit instead of crisps and sweets every day as well as just on Friday.
- Your school values what you believe and how you treat other people as much as learning different subjects like English and this helps you to understand important things and to get on with your friends.
- We think your school council does good work and that you know your school well. We want to help your school to become even better so we have asked the staff to:
  - help those of you in Year 1 and Year 2 to improve spelling and the way you present your work
  - make sure you always know how to improve your work. We enjoyed seeing your assemblies, and the work you did outside. We hope you all go on enjoying school and working hard, and we wish you every success in the future. Yours sincerely Miss Barbara Parkinson Lead inspector

**Annex B**



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Lead inspector