

# St John The Baptist Catholic Comprehensive School, Woking

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125302
<b>Local Authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	315228
<b>Inspection date</b>	1 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Maria Dawes 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>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1164
6th form	196
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Wells
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Ani Magill
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 September 2003
<b>School address</b>	Elmbridge Lane Kingfield Woking GU22 9AL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01483 729343
<b>Fax number</b>	01483 727578

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<b>Age group</b>	11-18
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector. The school was visited for one day. Inspectors investigated the school's overall effectiveness and in particular the following issues in detail: teaching and learning, academic guidance, leadership and management, the school's languages specialism and the impact on achievement and standards. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form (SEF), national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, other documents provided by the school, observation of the school at work, interviews with staff, students and governors and the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

St John the Baptist School is a larger than average Catholic comprehensive school serving a wide area. The proportion of children from minority ethnic groups is slightly above average as is those whose first language is not English. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities, including statements, has increased over the last few years; however, it is still below the national average.

The school is a specialist languages college and in addition is a leading edge school and a mentor school for the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

What makes St John the Baptist School outstanding is the focus on each student as an individual and an almost unrelenting drive to ensure that all achieve their very best both personally and academically. The head provides inspirational leadership and is held in the highest regard by staff, governors, parents and students alike. She has used her talents to build a highly motivated and tremendously effective school leadership team that is constantly striving for excellence, resulting in a school with a very supportive ethos committed to providing the highest quality of care and education. In addition to this, middle leaders are also extremely effective, sharing the same vision and high expectations and this leads to the consistent application of the school's systems and procedures. A key to the school's success is the quality of the teachers and support staff; the school leadership team and governors work hard to recruit those of the highest calibre. All staff are highly valued by the school leadership team and are nurtured, monitored and supported in order to give of their best. The school knows itself very well; monitoring and evaluation at all levels are exemplary and have directly led to the outstanding level of education delivered. Governors are supportive, critical friends that hold the school to account in addition to celebrating its success. The school has made very good progress in addressing the issues identified in the last Ofsted inspection. However, the leadership team is not complacent and is constantly looking for where further improvement can be made, demonstrating excellent capacity to improve.

Students enter the school with above average attainment although within the school there is a comprehensive range of abilities. They make excellent progress and attain examination results at the end of Year 9, Year 11 and in the sixth form that are exceptionally high. For example, provisional results for 2007 show that 89% of students achieve five or more good GCSE grades. This continues the trend of previous years. Many subjects reflect a significantly high number of A\* and A grades at GCSE. The great majority of students reach or exceed the challenging targets they are set. The progress of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language is at least in line with, and in many cases better than, that of other students. The outstanding achievement of students results from a combination of high quality teaching and excellent care, guidance and support. The tracking and monitoring of students' progress is very rigorous and rapid and effective advice and additional support is given when there is evidence that any are underachieving.

Learning and teaching are at the heart of what the school does and together form a continual focus in all its work. In the words of one student, 'The quality of the teachers is top notch.' A very close check is kept on the quality of learning and teaching and all lessons are expected to include ten strategies to enable outstanding learning, 'the SJB 10'. There are strong systems and procedures to facilitate teachers' development including exemplary induction for new staff, regular peer observation and learning and teaching bursaries. One teacher new to the school commented, 'The school buzzes with learning, it's really exciting.' Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent and they use this to plan relevant and engaging lessons that motivate students to achieve highly. A multitude of engaging teaching strategies are used to challenge, stretch and support all students and their thinking skills and independence in learning are effectively developed. Students are keen to do well and demonstrate a genuine enthusiasm for learning.

Students are extremely well served by the excellent curriculum. At Key Stage 4, in particular, the curriculum is carefully matched to students' individual needs in order to both facilitate achievement and give a clear pathway for learning after the age of 16. Literacy, numeracy and

information and communication technology (ICT) skills are well supported especially for those who most need it. The curriculum is further enhanced through the school's specialism in languages with a wide range of languages on offer both as part of the main curriculum or as extra-curricular activities. All students study at least one language until the end of Year 11. One member of staff said 'it adds colour' to the school in addition to 'getting children to be open-minded about other countries and cultures'. The school is meeting its specialist school targets and is providing effective support to local primary schools. Although classrooms are stimulating and vibrant learning environments there is limited accommodation in some specialist areas despite concerted efforts of governors to address this issue. Students value the impressive range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities they are offered in sporting activities, trips, clubs and societies and participation rates are high. The strong house system contributes to this. In particular, the school provides opportunities for all students to travel, learn and work abroad.

The personal development and well-being of students are outstanding features of St John the Baptist because their needs are so well met within the Christian ethos that permeates all of the school's work. A group of students described SJB (St John the Baptist) as 'A community that is a family, where each student is treated as an individual and as part of a team.' Students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is outstanding. They have very high levels of respect for everyone within their community, resulting in exemplary attitudes and behaviour and in addition an immense pride in their school. The school puts a great emphasis on caring for others within both the school and the wider community and the students readily respond by engaging in extensive charity and community work. In the last year students raised £16,000 for a variety of charities including sponsoring, 'Hope for Children', where they aim to raise enough money to build a school in Uganda. Students know how to lead safe and healthy lives and are supported in this through a range of provision from a healthy food campaign to a strong physical, social and health education programme. Students' views are actively sought and taken seriously through a variety of formal and informal means. The high profile student council has been recently reorganised into 'STudents As ResearcherS' (STARS) enabling them to play a significant part in the development of the school.

The excellent relationships between staff and students mean that staff know the students very well, enabling them to care for, guide and support them with empathy and understanding. No student is allowed to 'slip through the net'. The full-time, non-teaching chaplain is totally committed to the support of all students and staff but in particular of those most vulnerable families. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities receive outstanding support. The school's arrangements to help students make a smooth transition from primary to secondary school are excellent and ensure barriers to learning are removed as early as possible. Pupils have access to excellent careers advice, and guidance for the next stage of their education is tailored to their individual abilities and aspirations. All aspects of child protection and health and safety procedures are secure.

The school bases every decision on what is best for the students. In addition, a determined commitment to high expectations enables students to develop into happy, confident and successful young adults. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school with many writing in praise. As one parent says, 'We have been extremely impressed with the school over the last four years. The enthusiasm and commitment of the staff to the complete education of the students, academically, socially and spiritually are exemplary.'

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 1**

Sixth form provision is outstanding. The overwhelming majority of Year 11 students stay on into the sixth form. They make excellent progress and achieve examination results that are well above those found nationally. The great majority go on to higher education. A key factor behind its effectiveness is the outstanding level of care, guidance and support in addition to outstanding teaching. Students' progress is monitored in detail and effective and rapid support given if issues are identified. They are well supported by the non-teaching sixth form manager, who oversees independent supported learning in well-resourced accommodation as well as coordinating university applications.

Students enjoy school and take up significant roles in the rest of the school, willingly giving their time to contribute to all areas of school life and the wider community. They provide exemplary role models for the younger students and are excellent ambassadors for the school. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities to enrich students' experiences. Leadership and management are excellent with total commitment to students' achievement and well-being.

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

- Find ways to bring the accommodation and physical resources up to the standard required for the highest quality 21st century education.

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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	16-19
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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?	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

<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>	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	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

12 November 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of St John The Baptist Catholic Comprehensive School, Woking, Woking, GU22 9AL

Thank you for assisting us with the recent inspection of your school and for making us feel so welcome during our visit. We very much enjoyed meeting you and valued the discussions we had with you. We hope that you take the time to look at the full report but we thought you would like a summary of our findings.

We think your school is outstanding. There are many reasons for this, but in particular I would like to highlight the following.

- You are respected as individuals and the care and support you get from your teachers and other staff is outstanding.
- The quality of the teaching you receive is of a very high standard and you are keen to engage with this, leading to very high levels of learning.
- The Roman Catholic faith is central to the way in which your school operates.
- Your behaviour is exemplary and relationships between you and your teachers are excellent.
- You develop into confident young people, readily take on responsibilities and make a very valuable contribution to the community - you are excellent ambassadors for your school.
- The leadership of the school at all levels but in particular that of your headteacher is outstanding.

St John the Baptist strives for excellence in everything that it does and we agree that space is at a premium and in particular you lack enough classrooms in some of the specialist areas. We have asked the school's leadership team and governors to continue to investigate ways in which this could be improved so you have all the facilities needed for the highest quality 21st century education.

You have a school to be proud of. I wish you all a successful and happy life at SJB and for the future

With best wishes

Maria Dawes

Her Majesty's Inspector