

# St John's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	132796
<b>Local Authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	316019
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Clare Henderson

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	345
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Robert Gittins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms E McBirnie
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 July 2003
<b>School address</b>	Sessions Road Liverpool Merseyside L4 1SR
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 9221924
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 9330915

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is larger than average and serves an area of high social and economic disadvantage. The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals and with learning difficulties or disabilities are higher than average. Most pupils are White British. A small but increasing number are from minority ethnic families. A small minority of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement. Significant improvement is required in relation to: pupils' progress and standards in English, mathematics and science; the quality of teaching and learning; the curriculum; care, guidance and support; and leadership and management.

Staff and governors provide satisfactory pastoral care and support for pupils and their families. However, this concentration on care masks an insufficient focus on raising standards and on identifying and eradicating the root causes of pupils' considerable underachievement. Leaders and managers, including governors, have failed to monitor or address this quickly enough. As a result, significant groups of pupils underachieve, including the more able and pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. This has been particularly so as pupils move through from Year 3 to Year 6. The school's results in national tests at Key Stage 1 and 2 have not improved significantly since the last inspection. Given these weaknesses, the school does not have the capacity to bring about the necessary improvements. Most pupils enter the Foundation Stage with standards below those typically expected but leave Year 6 with standards well below average. For example, in 2007, standards by the end of Year 6 were well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science. The governing body has not held the school to account for this inadequate progress and fails to meet some statutory requirements.

Although teaching and learning are inadequate, there are strengths in the pastoral care teachers provide for pupils. However, the teachers do not use assessment information well enough to plan lessons that meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. As a result, pupils receive insufficient guidance on how to improve their work. Systems for checking how well pupils are doing and identifying the next steps in their learning are not rigorous enough and this hampers progress.

The curriculum is inadequate and does not fully meet the needs of all pupils. This is because it is not sufficiently well planned to ensure all groups of pupils achieve their best. Strengths in the curriculum include the opportunity for pupils to learn Spanish and to develop their talents through attending the out-of-school activities provided.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. The pupils' contribution in and around the school, particularly through the work of the school council, is effective. Pupils say they like their school but this positive view is not reflected in the low rate of attendance. The school has introduced rewards and certificates to improve attendance, but it remains stubbornly below average. In most classes, pupils have a positive attitude to learning. However, they are not well equipped for their future life because their basic skills are poor. The school makes satisfactory links with other schools and outside agencies to promote pupils' well-being.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Parents appreciate the care their children receive. Staff go 'the extra mile' to help children settle and enjoy school and to involve parents in their children's education. Children behave well and are keen to learn. Most enter the Foundation Stage with skills that are below the level expected for their age, in particular in

their social, language and communication development. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. At times, children and, in particular, boys, spend too long sitting listening to adults and classmates when they could benefit from learning through more active tasks. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Because the school does not have an accurate picture of the children's starting points, it is unable to track their progress through to Year 1 well enough. Children enter Year 1 with below average standards.

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

- Raise standards and increase pupils' rates of progress in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 1 and 2.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and meeting statutory requirements.
- Make better use of assessment information to plan work which meets the needs of pupils of all abilities and provides the pupils with guidance on how to improve their work.
- Raise the level of attendance to at least the national average.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Achievement is inadequate. There has not been a significant improvement in the pupils' test results in Year 2 and Year 6 since the last inspection. Standards are well below average and significant groups of pupils underachieve year on year. For instance, the more able pupils and those with learning difficulties or disabilities make inadequate progress. This is because assessment information is not used well enough in lessons to match pupils' work to their needs. Leaders and managers do not robustly monitor or evaluate the quality of teaching and learning or the curriculum in order to have a clear picture of what is needed to improve pupils' progress and raise standards. The introduction of a new science scheme led to a slight improvement in science for the more able pupils at Key Stage 2, as seen in the school's national test results in 2007.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. However, many pupils have a limited knowledge of life in multi-ethnic Britain. They enjoy coming to school, although levels of attendance are below average. This is in spite of the school's strenuous efforts to improve them. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. Most pupils say that they feel safe from oppressive behaviour, although a small minority expressed concern about some poor behaviour and fighting which sometimes occurs at lunchtime. Pupils feel they have a voice in school and that their views are listened to. Many make a good contribution to school life as buddies or school councillors. Their work resulted in buying new toys for pupils to enjoy at break times. Through their charity work, within the local community and further afield, they help those less fortunate than themselves very well. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and understand that a healthy diet and regular exercise contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Pupils enjoy getting a taste of secondary school life through effective links with the local high school. This promotes their interests in music, dance and drama well.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 4

Relationships between staff and pupils are sound and, as a result, pupils are keen to work hard and do their best. Praise and rewards are used effectively to raise pupils' sense of self-confidence. However, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, they do not plan work that will help pupils move quickly enough from one level to the next in their learning. Assessment information is not used effectively, so tasks set are not challenging enough, especially for the more able pupils. Class teachers do not make enough use of the individual learning plans of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities to devise work that will fully meet their specific needs. Senior and middle managers have not held teachers sufficiently to account for the progress that pupils make.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 4

The curriculum is not cohesively planned or monitored to ensure pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are built upon systematically. This is partly because no one has a complete overview of the curriculum. Several initiatives are under way to address specific areas of underachievement but they are not evaluated rigorously enough to gauge their impact on pupils' progress. Curricular planning is variable and the use of assessment to inform planning to meet the needs of all groups is not secure. Pupils have some opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy and skills in information and communication technology across the curriculum but, because year group teams work too independently, progression is not assured. The curriculum provided for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is inadequate, as is that to ensure the more able pupils reach the levels of which they are capable. Enrichment opportunities are good overall; for example, all pupils from Year 1 to 6 have the opportunity to learn Spanish. There is good provision to promote the health of pupils and to develop their musical, artistic and sporting talents through a range of out-of-school activities.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 4

Teachers pay close attention to pupils' well-being. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and health, safety and welfare procedures are well established. Pupils trust teachers and say teachers willingly help them. However, some pupils and a minority of parents raised concerns over some poor behaviour and the management of pupils at lunchtime. A significant minority of parents do not support the school by ensuring their children attend school regularly and on time. The learning mentor and teaching assistants give good support to the most vulnerable pupils and those pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The quality of individual educational plans for pupils with specific learning needs is very variable and most are not sharply enough focused on measurable outcomes. The marking of work does not ensure that pupils are consistently given information on the progress they are making and what they need to do to improve.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 4

The headteacher has made a start in identifying significant underachievement and weaknesses in provision, but the measures introduced have not raised standards for all groups of pupils quickly enough. The school has a wealth of information from tracking pupils' progress. However, senior managers and subject leaders do not make rigorous use of this to evaluate the progress pupils make. Furthermore, school leaders do not hold staff to account sufficiently for the progress pupils make, nor do they use challenging enough targets to raise standards. The governors do not meet all statutory requirements or challenge the school well enough. Inadequate progress has been made in addressing the key issues identified at the last inspection. The school's self-evaluation is inaccurate because insufficient account is taken of the impact of the curriculum, teaching and assessment on pupils' learning. The school provides inadequate value for money.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
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	4

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	3
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	4

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	4

<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>	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

On behalf of the inspection team I wish to thank you for being so friendly and welcoming during our recent visit. We enjoyed talking to you and listening to what you had to say about your school and what you like best about it. It is good that you enjoy school, know why it is important to lead a healthy lifestyle and that you try to do your best for your teachers.

It is our judgement that your school needs extra help to give you a good education. For this reason the school is placed into 'special measures', which means that your headteacher and governors will get additional support to improve the school for you. Inspectors will return to check that the school is doing the best it can. In particular they will check that:

- you are learning new things quickly enough to raise standards
- the leaders and managers of the school are making their own checks and taking appropriate action on what they find out and follow all the government's regulations
- assessment is used well to help you all learn at the right level and that your teachers help you know what you need to do to make your work better.

You can help your school by attending regularly and on time. Your parents can also help with this by making sure that you understand why attending school is very important.

We wish you and the school well for the future.