

St John's Catholic Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105080
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	336420
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Stephen Wall

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Baxter
Headteacher	Mr P Sharp
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2006
School address	Old Chester Road Bebington Wirral CH63 7LH
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons and saw eight teachers. The inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the tracking of pupils' progress and the school's monitoring, self-evaluation and planning for improvement. The inspectors also analysed 120 questionnaire returns from parents and carers, and 181 from pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' achievement, especially in English, mathematics and science
- the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning and progress
- the quality and impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning and progress.

Information about the school

This is an average size school in which the proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is above average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils believed to have English as an additional language is lower than average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is broadly average. The school has gained the Healthy Schools and the Activemark awards.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Leaders and managers have improved the school's systems for collecting and using assessment data. These are now good and represent a big step forward in this aspect since the last inspection. There are some early signs that attainment in English, mathematics and science is rising as a result. However, other key aspects of the school's work have not improved at the same rate and have remained satisfactory. Procedures for evaluating the school's effectiveness are satisfactory. They result in leaders and managers having an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and where it needs to improve. Hence the school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory. However, although school planning satisfactorily identifies the main priorities for improvement, these are not sufficiently sharply focused. The strategies for tackling them, although improving, are not consistently robust.

Pupils enjoy school. They comment on the school being like a big family. Good care, support and guidance ensure that pupils feel safe and valued as individuals. Their behaviour in lessons and around school is good. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a firm grasp of right and wrong and treat each other and the adults working with them respectfully.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Some teaching is good. In many lessons, teachers go to great lengths to provide a wide range of activities that promote good levels of enjoyment. However, teaching does not concentrate sharply enough on the impact of the activities on pupils' learning and progress, which are too often only satisfactory. Teaching too often misses opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) creatively to add extra interest to lessons and support pupils' learning. The satisfactory curriculum meets pupils' needs and statutory requirements. However, it does not provide pupils with enough opportunities to apply their skills in English, mathematics and ICT across a range of subjects. This limits the development of their skills as independent learners.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leadership has established good links with parents and carers, with the result that most parents are very supportive of the school's work and particularly appreciative of the good care, guidance and support it provides.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' learning and progress and thus raise achievement, by:

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

- making sure that teaching has a sharper focus on pupils' progress and learning
 - improving the use of information and communication technology in teaching
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to apply their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills across a range subjects to promote their skills as independent learners
 - making sure that leadership and management provide the school with a more sharply focused set of priorities for improvement and clearer strategies to tackle them effectively.
- About 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They participate eagerly in lessons and enjoy working together in pairs and small groups. They behave well in lessons because relationships with the adults working with them are strong. Pupils listen well, but their attention wanes quickly when teachers talk too much. They take pride in the presentation of their written work. Pupils join the school with broadly average levels of attainment. They make satisfactory progress as they move up through the school. By the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is broadly average. Overall, therefore, achievement is satisfactory. All groups of pupils including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. The school's much improved assessment procedures show that pupils' learning and progress are starting to improve because underachievement is now identified and tackled more quickly. Pupils are confident and mature. They are welcoming to visitors. They show good levels of respect towards each other and the adults working with them. Pupils understand the importance of healthy lifestyles. They know which foods are good for them and what they need to treat with caution. They understand the dangers of smoking and substance abuse. Pupils enjoy contributing to the school community by taking on responsibilities, such as becoming members of the school council. However, such opportunities are limited. Pupils are active in their local community where they willingly support fund raising for local charities. Pupils' preparation for their future education and economic well-being is satisfactory. They have average levels of basic skills in English, literacy and ICT. Their attendance is average.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

All teaching is at least satisfactory. Occasionally it is good. Teachers go to great lengths to provide pupils with a wide range of activities in each lesson. Pupils enjoy these activities and the variety this brings. However, teaching does not relate the activities closely enough to their impact on the quality and pace of pupils' learning. Too much planning concentrates on teaching at the expense of learning. Consequently, although pupils' enjoyment in lessons is high, their learning and progress are generally only satisfactory. Where teaching is good, activities are planned with a sharp focus on how they are going to accelerate pupils' learning.

The curriculum meets the needs and interests of pupils. It provides pupils with satisfactory basic skills in English, mathematics and ICT. However, there are not yet sufficient opportunities for pupils to use these skills in other subjects. The school is keen to develop topic and themed work to provide pupils with more opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in more meaningful ways. It will also support their development as independent learners. However, planning for this is at a very early stage. The range of enrichment activities is satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support are strengths of the school. Support and guidance are especially strong for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and vulnerable pupils. This enables pupils to develop positive attitudes towards school and boosts their confidence. Good liaison with the local infant school enables pupils to settle quickly when they join the school. Pupils are supported effectively for their move to secondary school. All pupils are known and valued as individuals which adds to their feeling of safety and security in school.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors provide satisfactory levels of support and challenge. Leaders and managers know what the school does well and where it could do better and promote their vision for the school satisfactorily. However, development planning, although successful in identifying priorities for improvement, lacks some sharpness. For example, the monitoring of teaching and learning takes place regularly. However, without a clearer focus to guide the monitoring, its impact is not specific enough to show teachers what they need to do to move satisfactory teaching to at least good.

The school is an inclusive community committed to promoting equality of opportunity. Much improved use of assessment data enables the school to track more accurately the learning and progress of individuals and groups of pupils. As a result, the school is secure in knowing how much progress pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other groups, such as those pupils with English as an additional language are making.

Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory. Appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and visitors to the school. Relevant personnel receive training to update them on safeguarding and child protection procedures. Risk assessments are in place, although more rigour is needed in assessing risks related to the school site.

The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. The school has an action plan, but more detail is necessary to give the school a clearer way forward. The school itself is a harmonious community. Effective links with the local community have been forged, especially through its association with the church. Pupils' understanding and appreciation of other religions, races and societies is satisfactory and developing. The school accepts the need to evaluate its promotion of community cohesion with greater rigour.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
	3

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers are supportive of all aspects of the school's work. A few questionnaires returned indicated some concern at the school's handling of unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors observed behaviour around the school and in lessons and talked to pupils at length. Inspectors saw good behaviour at all times. Pupils did not consider behaviour to be a problem in lessons or around the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St John's Catholic Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 120 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 219 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	68	57	48	40	3	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	74	62	45	38	0	0	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	60	50	56	47	2	2	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	55	46	55	46	8	7	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	59	49	55	46	2	2	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	55	46	58	48	5	4	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	48	40	64	53	4	3	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	52	43	56	47	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	59	49	52	43	7	6	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	51	43	47	39	16	13	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	48	40	57	48	7	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	59	49	48	40	10	8	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	66	55	44	37	6	5	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



18 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's Catholic Junior School, Wirral, CH63 7LH

Thank you for your warm welcome during the recent inspection of your school.

Your school is providing you with a satisfactory quality of education. However, there are several things it does well, such as how well it cares for you and how effectively it tracks the progress each of you is making in your learning. You get on with each other well and with the adults working with you. Your behaviour in lessons and around school is good – well done! You know how important it is to lead healthy lifestyles. Your school provides you with a good understanding of what is right and what is wrong. Your learning and progress are satisfactory. You enjoy lessons but too often you only make satisfactory progress when you could and should learn much more. In order to help you learn more and make faster progress, I am asking the school to do four things:

- make sure that the activities you do in lessons have a clear focus on helping you to learn and make good progress
- improve how effectively ICT is used to support your learning
- make sure that you have more opportunities to apply your basic skills in English, mathematics and ICT across a range of subjects to help you develop as independent learners
- make sure that the school is clearer in its planning for the future about what needs to improve and how to bring it about.

I am confident that you will help your teachers to bring about these improvements.

I wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Stephen Wall

Lead inspector

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