

St John's Catholic Primary

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112008
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	337812
Inspection dates	28–29 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Stephen Lake

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicholas Talbot
Headteacher	Annette Gardner
Date of previous school inspection	9 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited thirteen lessons and held meetings with governors, teaching and support staff, groups of pupils and a parent. They observed the school's work and looked at the most recent school self evaluation form, the school development plan, governors' minutes, the school's assessments of pupils' attainment and progress, the records held on vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs, school policies, and reports from the local authority and School Improvement Partner. Inspectors analysed questionnaires from pupils, staff and 57 parents.

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

- Achievement across the school with a special focus on Years 3 to 6, particularly in mathematics and the achievement of boys.
- The way in which the information from the school's revised assessment procedures is used to plan work that challenges all pupils to make good progress.
- The use of the outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The impact of the changes in leadership and management, especially the changes of headteacher.

Information about the school

This is an average-size school although the number on roll has fallen since the last inspection. A small number of pupils come from minority ethnic groups, with fewer pupils than average speaking English as an additional language. Fewer pupils than average are entitled to free school meals, although the school serves an area where many families face challenging circumstances. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below average. When the school was last inspected an acting headteacher was in post. The school has found it difficult to recruit a substantive headteacher and a different acting headteacher is currently in post.

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

The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' academic development. Its strengths lie in the good quality care and support for all pupils which helps them grow into well-rounded young people. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to keep safe and healthy and their behaviour is good. They were very keen to tell inspectors how much they enjoy school. Visitors and visits to places of interest help to make learning fun for pupils and ensure their good involvement in the local community. Pupils' understanding of the wide range of cultures in Britain is less well developed. Productive partnerships with external agencies provide valuable additional support for vulnerable pupils and those who find learning difficult. The school works closely with parents to support their children's learning.

Children get off to a good start in Reception due to good teaching and an exciting curriculum. This good progress continues in Years 1 and 2, so that standards are above average by the time pupils start Year 3. Historically, progress has slowed in Years 3 to 6 and this has pegged back attainment to average levels in Year 6. There are now encouraging signs of improvement, especially in English where standards are above average. Attainment in mathematics and science is improving steadily and standards are broadly average. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

Inconsistencies in teaching quality account for these differences between year groups and subjects. Teaching is strongest in Reception, Year 2 and Year 6 and in English, which has been a major focus for improvement throughout the school.

The recently revised systems for assessing how well pupils are doing are already helping to accelerate their progress, but this is inconsistent. In particular, assessment information is not always used rigorously enough to plan work that matches different pupils' needs, especially in mathematics.

The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and has taken effective action to bring about improvement. Much of the improvement is driven by the headteacher and the subject leaders in English, mathematics and science. The roles and responsibilities of other senior leaders are not sufficiently well defined or developed. As a result, leaders are not involved well enough in monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of recent initiatives and have too little impact on securing improvement. Despite the good levels of care, the management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has a number of shortcomings. The systems for recording the progress of these pupils and for setting out the actions needed to support them are not rigorous enough and are not readily available to staff. The targets set for each pupil are too general so it is difficult to measure their progress. Nevertheless,

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pupils who find learning difficult are supported well in lessons by skilled teaching assistants and this ensures they make satisfactory progress in their learning.

A minority of parents expressed concerns about the impact of the changes of headteacher on the school's effectiveness. Inspection evidence shows that the school is improving because the acting headteacher has brought the staff together into an effective team with a firm focus on school improvement. Standards are rising and achievement is improving. The roles of subject leaders have been strengthened with several key staff undertaking leadership training. All of this demonstrates the school's satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the roles, responsibilities and effectiveness of every member of the senior management team, by:
 - giving them a more prominent role in implementing the school development plan and rigorously evaluating the impact of strategies to bring about improvement.
 - This should be achieved within the current academic year in order to increase the momentum of improvement.
- Improve the management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities by:
 - identifying more precise short-term targets for learning for each pupil
 - devising secure and effective systems to track pupils' progress and identify and record the provision that is required to address their individual needs
 - ensuring that this information is readily available for all staff.
- Make more rigorous use of assessment information to plan work that is more closely matched to each pupil's needs, so that all are challenged to achieve as well as possible.
- Make better provision within the curriculum for raising pupils' awareness of the rich variety of cultures to be found within Britain.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' learning is improving as a result of the improved teaching. In many lessons, especially in Year 6, progress in mathematics and science is now good. Very challenging but realistic targets have been set for attainment at the end of Year 6 and pupils are well on their way to achieving these. For example, in an English lesson, pupils made excellent progress when developing ways of describing a character in a fantasy story. More able pupils showed excellent use of adjectives and alliteration and were always challenged to see how they could improve. By contrast, in another English lesson, pupils made too little progress because the expectations of what they could achieve were too low. In a mathematics lesson, excellent progress was made, especially by pupils with English as an additional language, because the learning was broken down into small

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easily manageable steps. More able pupils were continually challenged to achieve more. This is not happening consistently across the school. In too many lessons the pace of learning is too slow because pupils are not clear about what it is they have to do. This limits the progress that pupils make.

The progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities varies. These pupils are making good progress in their personal development because of the good care and support that they receive, but their academic progress, although satisfactory, is not as rapid because the targets set for them are not sufficiently detailed to reflect their learning needs.

Pupils say that there is almost no bullying in school and they trust teachers to deal with any that might happen. Pupils are polite, friendly and courteous. They make a good contribution to the life of the school by taking on responsibilities such as prefects and playground friends. The school council makes suggestions on how the school can be improved and has recently had a say in improving the library and in changing playtime arrangements to allow for a wider range of games on the playground. Pupils' skills with a Diablo are particularly impressive. Older pupils look after younger ones well. Pupils make a good contribution to the local community by taking part in church activities and by singing in local care homes. Pupils clearly know right from wrong and show respect for themselves and others. They have a good awareness of their local culture, taking part in such events as 'Trevithick Day' and learn about other cultures, such as Japan, from visitors to the school. However, pupils' understanding of the rich diversity of cultures to be found in Britain is more limited.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	2

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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<p>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</p> <p>Taking into account: Pupils' attendance¹</p>	3
	2
<p>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</p>	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is improving steadily as teachers extend their skills through professional development. For example, the training on how to motivate pupils to write has played a large part in raising attainment in English. Teachers prepare lessons that motivate and stimulate pupils to learn. In many lessons, probing questions extend pupils' learning and assess their understanding. Recent changes to the way teachers use assessment information to plan pupils' work are starting to have a positive effect, but this is not yet consistent in every class. Support from the local authority is strengthening the teaching of mathematics in Years 3 to 6, although it is too early to see the full impact of this. During the inspection a number of good, and some outstanding, lessons were seen where tasks ensured that all pupils learnt well. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to motivate and stimulate pupils, but at present ICT is not used enough to support learning across the curriculum, with the result that standards are average but no better.

The broad and balanced curriculum has several good features. Pupils enjoy music and the opportunities to learn modern foreign languages. A good variety of visits and visitors enhance their learning. Strong links with local secondary schools and colleges provide enrichment and support for those deemed gifted and talented. The many after-school clubs are particularly valued by pupils, as reflected in their enthusiastic attendance. The lunchtime dance and keep fit routines on the playground are especially popular. The school has identified that there are too few opportunities to develop mathematics through other subjects and this is limiting pupils' attainment. Staff have also identified that the curriculum does not support pupils' cultural development well enough and are investigating links with a school in a large city to help with this.

Pastoral care, especially for vulnerable pupils and those with additional needs, is a real strength of the school. Good links with outside agencies ensure high levels of support for vulnerable pupils and for those who speak English as an additional language. Although the progress of most pupils is tracked and recorded to enable easy identification of where support is needed, there are significant inconsistencies in the way this information is recorded and used. In particular the records of those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are not sufficiently detailed to ensure that the impact of support programmes can be evaluated.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	3
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?

The acting headteacher and governing body have high expectations for the school and a shared commitment to its continuing improvement. They have yet to successfully embed this drive for improvement within the whole leadership team. At present, too much responsibility for this important work rests with the headteacher. There are satisfactory arrangements for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. Most of this is carried out by the headteacher, whilst other senior leaders are being given increased opportunities to become more proficient in this aspect of their roles. By contrast, subject leaders are having a good impact on improving practice and pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility.

Careful financial management has enabled the school to make important changes to the outdoor areas for Reception children in order to enrich their learning. It has also allowed for the appointment of an assessment coordinator to intensify the focus on raising standards and achievement. The school is taking appropriate steps to ensure equality of opportunity in learning. For example, more rigorous analysis of assessment data has already highlighted differences in attainment between boys and girls. These have been eliminated through improved planning and teaching.

The supportive governing body is led well by a knowledgeable and skilled chair who attends almost every meeting of the school council in order to ensure pupils' views are heard. Governors visit the school regularly to observe its work and meet with staff. They ensure that safeguarding requirements are met, but their monitoring of the school's performance in other areas is not rigorous enough. For example, they do not give enough attention to monitoring how well the school promotes community cohesion, particularly with regard to pupils' appreciation of cultural diversity in British society. Nevertheless, the school is effective in ensuring cohesion within its own community and eliminating any discrimination.

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
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	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 school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Well-established routines and strong links with parents help children who are new to the school to feel really secure and cared for and ensure they get a good start to their education. Children achieve well from starting points that are below those expected for their age. The good teaching ensures that children start Year 1 with above average standards and are well prepared for learning. Teachers are skilled at ensuring a good balance between direct teaching and opportunities for children to learn through purposeful play. Whole-class activities are planned well but, occasionally, the individual needs of children are not met well enough. For example, in some whole-class sessions there are not always enough opportunities for all children to contribute to the discussion.

The new outside area provides opportunities for children to move freely between indoor and outdoor activities, although the lack of an all-weather cover limits the amount this can be used at present. The strong teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that the welfare and needs of the children are met well. This enables all children to grow in confidence and build securely on their previous experience. The well organised and attractive environment is used effectively to support a stimulating curriculum that provides a good degree of challenge to children. The Early years Foundation Stage is led and managed well because the expertise and skill of the adults and the good systems for checking on children's progress ensure that all individuals are gently, but effectively, challenged to achieve well. The school shows great care for the children and their welfare needs are effectively met.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

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Views of parents and carers

Almost all of the parents who made written comments are happy with the school. They find the teachers supportive, warm and kind to the pupils. Parents say the school provides a warm and friendly environment. They are particularly pleased with the after-school clubs. Parents appreciate that teachers are available to speak with about concerns, although a few suggested that communication between teachers and parents was not as good as it could be. The school is aware of the need to continually review its practice in this respect. A small minority of parents were concerned about behaviour. Inspectors do not share these concerns. Behaviour is managed effectively and pupils' behaviour is good.

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 Primary 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 57 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 178 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	79	10	18	2	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	47	83	8	14	1	2	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	47	27	47	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	61	17	30	5	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	34	60	18	32	3	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	58	20	35	3	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	51	27	47	1	2	0	0
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)	29	51	23	40	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	51	19	33	6	11	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	42	18	32	12	21	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	49	21	37	5	9	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	25	44	24	42	6	11	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	67	15	26	3	5	0	0

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.



30 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's Catholic Primary School, Camborne TR14 7AE

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. We were impressed with your politeness and your eagerness to tell us about your school.

Yours is a satisfactory school that is improving. You attain standards similar to those attained in most schools. Here are some of things that we liked about your school.

- You get off to a good start to school in the Reception class. This helps you reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are above average by Year 2.
- Standards in English have risen to above average in Year 6 and you learn well in this subject.
- The school looks after you really well and makes sure that you know how to stay safe and healthy.
- You make a good contribution to school life through responsibilities such as the school council.
- You behave well and this creates a warm atmosphere in your school.

In order to help the school to improve, this is what we have asked the headteacher and governors to do.

- Find ways for other senior teachers to help the headteacher in checking on the work of the school.
- Find better ways of organising the information about those of you who need extra help and give you small steps for improvement to help you reach your targets.
- Make sure that teachers check on how well you understand new ideas and use this information to plan your next steps in learning. You can help by telling your teachers when you find work too hard or too easy.
- Give you more opportunities to learn about all the different cultures to be found in Britain

Thank you again for your help.

Yours faithfully

Stephen Lake

Lead inspector

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