

# St Begh's Catholic Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112354
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	354370
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Law

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>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	280
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Fr Matthew Carney
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Barbara Mayer
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Coach Road Whitehaven Cumbria CA28 7TE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01946 852663
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. 25 lessons were seen and ten teachers were observed teaching. Inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the improvement plan, school policies and evidence from the school's self-evaluation. Account was taken of teachers' curricular planning and their assessment of pupils' progress. Samples of pupils' books were also reviewed. Inspectors evaluated the views of parents and carers and of pupils by analysing questionnaires from 149 parents and carers and 100 pupils. Twelve staff questionnaires were also analysed.

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

- the learning and progress pupils are currently making in their lessons and the achievement of the more able in mathematics and English
- the use of assessment to match learning to pupils' individual needs, including how well pupils know their personal targets
- the quality of leadership and management in raising achievement and enabling improvement during a time of significant changes of staff.

## Information about the school

This is a school of above-average size. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, although the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is average. There are no pupils from minority ethnic groups and none who speak English as an additional language. The school has achieved a number of awards including the Healthy Schools Award, International Schools Award and the Inclusion Chartermark. Breakfast and after-school clubs are provided at the school, but these are not managed by the governing body and are subject to a different inspection.

In the last two years, the school has experienced significant changes of teaching personnel at the senior leadership level. This has included two periods with an acting headteacher and arrangements for an acting deputy headteacher. At the time of the inspection, both the acting headteacher and the acting deputy headteacher were in post. A substantive appointment has been made for the post of headteacher from September 2010.

**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

St Begh's Catholic Junior School provides a satisfactory education. The pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to take responsibility. Achievement is satisfactory. The pupils' good behaviour and considerate approach to others ensure their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The pupils feel safe in school and the procedures for safeguarding are good. Good partnerships, for example, within the local community, promote pupils' learning and personal development and have sustained the school through a period of leadership change.

Pupils' attainment on entry is above average. Results in the Year 6 national tests have mostly been above average, but in 2009, fell to average in both English and mathematics. Currently, pupils' learning and progress is satisfactory. However, the match of work to pupils' needs is not always effective and the use of assessment to support learning is inadequate. As a result, more-able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and others find some work too difficult, although pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. The pupils work cooperatively and are keen to use their reading and writing skills. This, together with their average attendance, gives pupils a satisfactory preparation for their future economic well-being. Satisfactory teaching enables pupils to make expected progress. The pupils get on well with their teachers and when lessons are interesting, they learn with great enthusiasm. The curriculum is satisfactory with numerous good features to enrich pupils' experiences, such as participation in sport. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory with relevant help provided for pupils needing additional help.

The school has a satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement. Its leaders and managers are committed to pupils' well-being. Staff teamwork and morale are good. The present acting headteacher has provided much needed stability at a time of leadership change. By enthusiastically stepping up to further responsibility, middle leaders have acquired new skills. The governors have worked diligently to fill the vacant post of headteacher, which they have now achieved. Everyone contributes to self-review, targets are challenging and there is a realistic and relevant development plan. Monitoring and evaluation are satisfactory and the school has an accurate view of what needs to improve. However, evidence of pupils' progress is not used well enough to intervene promptly and to arrest potential underachievement by pupils. The school makes a good contribution to promoting community cohesion. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well together. There are positive relations with parents and carers.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

**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

- Raise achievement in English and mathematics, by:
  - ensuring pupils are challenged well and consistently
  - matching learning effectively to pupils' different needs.
- Develop the use of assessment to improve learning, by:
  - ensuring that information to track pupils' progress reflects their current learning and for staff to take timely action to improve pupils' progress
  - helping teachers, through further training, to be more aware of the levels pupils are reaching and to use this information to plan appropriate work
  - making sure that the marking of pupils' work helps pupils to understand what they need to improve to reach their targets.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, by:
  - ensuring that monitoring and evaluation is sharply focussed on pupils' progress
  - acting quickly and strategically to address any emerging underachievement.
- 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.

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

The pupils' positive approach to learning helps them to make satisfactory progress in their lessons. They concentrate well, participate cooperatively in group activities and can be tenacious in solving problems. There are often good levels of enjoyment, particularly when activities are of a practical nature. For example, in Year 6, pupils thoroughly enjoyed working with visitors to the school, including architects and artists, who had come to talk about their jobs. In 2007 and 2008, attainment in national tests was above average. However, it fell to average in 2009 and this cohort of pupils did not make the progress that was expected. There has been some recovery and all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are now making satisfactory progress. An emphasis on improving pupils' writing is enabling them to write in a sustained way and for a range of purposes. The pupils like working with numbers and solving mathematical problems. They are eager to use computers and show good thinking skills in practical science activities. The pupils have a good knowledge of how to live healthily. They are keen to help each other and take responsibility as members of the school council. The pupils are tolerant and treat each other thoughtfully. Their satisfactory achievement, good behaviour and positive attitudes provide a firm platform for the next stage of their education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

**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

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

**How effective is the provision?**

Teaching is well organised and of satisfactory quality, with examples of good and outstanding practice. It is particularly strong in Year 6. In the best lessons, there are clear intentions for learning, the pace is brisk and pupils are encouraged to work in groups, which stimulates their interest. Where teaching is satisfactory, the pace of learning is slower and pupils spend too long listening to the teacher and not enough actively learning. The use of assessment to support learning is inadequate and this results in work that is not matched well enough to pupils' needs. Information held in the school's system for tracking pupils' progress is over-reliant on tests and does not always give an accurate picture of what pupils can currently do, so its use is limited. Marking is completed regularly and praises pupils' efforts, but is inconsistent in informing them about what they need to improve.

The curriculum is satisfactory with good provision for enriching pupils' experiences. There are stimulating visits and activities. For example, pupils enjoy gardening and the vegetable patch is doing well under their care. Satisfactory care, guidance and support include systems to ensure pupils' regular attendance. Provision for pupils in need of additional help, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, ensures that they make the progress expected of them. The school has worked effectively in the last two years to build secure links with the infant school so that pupils have a smooth transition between the two schools.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
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<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>3</b>
	4
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

All leaders and managers have demonstrated a strong commitment to forming good links with parents and carers and other partners. Due to vacancies at senior level, other leaders from within the school have taken further responsibility and guided the school through a period of uncertainty. Senior leaders have ensured regular self-review of the provision, for example, the curriculum, and leaders at all levels have made a valuable contribution to this. All leaders have worked cooperatively to monitor the quality of provision, contribute to improvement planning and manage appropriate professional development. However, the monitoring is focussed more on what is provided than the outcomes achieved by pupils. Consequently, it is not as sharp as it needs to be in order to ensure timely action for improving pupils' learning and progress.

The governing body provides satisfactory challenge to and support for the school and has a clear commitment to pupils, their families and the community. The school promotes community cohesion effectively because it knows its context well and there are good opportunities for pupils to learn about the range of cultures in Britain and elsewhere. All pupils have an equal opportunity to learn and there is no discrimination. Safeguarding procedures are good, with well-established policies and procedures. The budget is managed efficiently and, taking account of the outcomes for pupils, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b> Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	<b>3</b>
	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>

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

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<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## **Views of parents and carers**

Parents and carers are supportive of the school and nearly all feel that their children enjoy being there and are kept safe. Inspectors endorse these views. A very large majority of parents and carers felt the school was well led and managed. A few were not happy with their children's experience at the school. Some wrote on their questionnaire that they had misgivings about the unavoidable changes of staff. The inspection team understand these views, but find leadership and management to be satisfactory.



### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Begh'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 149 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 280 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	89	60	56	38	4	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	101	68	47	32	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	71	48	67	45	9	6	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	74	50	62	42	9	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	81	54	62	42	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	69	46	70	47	6	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	66	44	76	51	5	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)	71	48	65	44	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	77	52	61	41	7	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	57	38	73	49	11	7	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	60	40	77	52	4	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	76	51	67	45	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	86	58	57	38	4	3	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



28 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Begh's Catholic Junior School, Whitehaven, CA28 7TE

The two other inspectors and I enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for making us welcome. You contributed well to the inspection by being eager to talk to us. Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. One of you said 'everybody gets on well with each other at this school.' We agree and these are some of the things we think your school does well:

- you feel safe in school and adults work well together to keep you safe
- you have a good knowledge of how to keep healthy
- your behaviour is good and you work and play well together
- there are interesting activities, such as Victorian Day and gardening
- there are good partnerships with other schools that give you a chance to take part in sports
- you are keen to take responsibility – for example, being on the school council

We have three recommendations to help your school improve and these are:

- we think you can achieve more in English and mathematics and have asked your teachers to make sure that they set you work which is at the right level for each one of you
- we have asked teachers to improve the assessment of your work by checking the levels you reach and to use the assessment information to plan learning that better meets your needs and also for them to mark your work in a way that helps you to know what to improve
- we have asked the leaders and managers to improve how they check up on the school's performance and use the information to make things even better.

Yours sincerely

Mr David Law

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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