

St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104107
Local Authority	Solihull
Inspection number	355522
Inspection dates	27–28 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Carol Worthington

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Corrigan
Headteacher	Maria Salt
Date of previous school inspection	13 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 12 lessons led by eight different teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other senior leaders, and the Chair of the Governing Body. Discussions were held with three groups of pupils from Key Stage 2. Many pupils were spoken to informally. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at records of assessments of pupils' attainment, tracking of their progress and samples of their work in books. All safeguarding documents were scrutinised. Inspectors analysed 23 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and those completed by 59 Key Stage 2 pupils and 22 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Inspectors looked at how effectively the school raises the attainment and progress of boys and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, especially in writing.
- They investigated whether the school's strategies to improve mathematics are raising standards to match the higher levels reached in English.
- Inspectors looked at how well the 'themed' curriculum is being used to develop literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, and the knowledge and skills of science.
- They looked at how successfully school leaders provide pupils with first-hand experiences of the wide cultural mix in the modern United Kingdom.

Information about the school

This small primary school is in an urban location. Most pupils are White British, with very few from minority ethnic heritages. The proportion speaking English as an additional language is below average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is average. The needs relate mainly to specific learning or behavioural difficulties. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well-above average. The school has a healthy school award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School provides a good standard of education for its pupils. It has improved greatly from the satisfactory judgement of its previous inspection. That is because of the clarity of the headteacher's vision for improvement and the effective steps taken to secure it. The entire leadership team communicates high expectations to staff consistently and makes good use of rigorous monitoring activities to build on strengths and tackle areas needing improvement. As a result, teaching and learning have improved from satisfactory to good since the previous inspection, with a consequent rise in the rate of pupils' progress and the attainment they achieve.

Attainment in English and mathematics is above average by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Effective strategies have been put in place to eliminate differences in performances of boys, girls and the high proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and gaps are closing rapidly. Standards in writing are still lower than those of reading. Although written work is often imaginative, with exciting content, it can be let down by spelling errors and untidy presentation. There is little evidence of sustained writing in all curriculum subjects. Attainment in mathematics has improved because of recent school strategies and now matches that in English. Science receives a high priority in the school and attainment is above average, with good emphasis on the skills of scientific enquiry. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is average and its use in other subjects has improved since the previous inspection.

Assessment is good. A much-improved system for tracking pupils' progress has enabled teachers to plan more precisely to meet the needs of all pupils and to identify specific areas of underachievement to be addressed with targeted support. As part of its excellent partnerships with local schools and agencies, the school leads others in its use of assessment to provide effective guidance for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Those pupils make good progress and achieve well from their starting points as a result.

Children are given an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the outstanding all-round provision for the development of their personal and social skills and early learning opportunities. As a result, their excellent behaviour and rapid acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills provides a firm foundation upon which to build in Key Stage 1.

Most noticeable in the school is the caring family atmosphere, which stems from the strong shared beliefs and values which underpin the school community. All individuals are valued and expected to achieve their full potential. The outstanding care, guidance and support provided by the school enables all pupils to feel very safe in the knowledge that they can always discuss their worries with an adult. The school has an excellent partnership with parents and carers and involves them fully in weekly learning workshops with their children and in decisions about policies, for example relating to behaviour. The

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strength of the partnership has enabled school leaders' strategies for improving attendance to be very successful. Attendance has risen rapidly in the past year and is now average. Persistent absences have been eliminated, but some parents and carers still take their children away from school in term time.

The recent rapid improvements and the strong systems underpinning them mean that the school's self-evaluation procedures are robust and effective. It has good capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the standard of writing by:
 - ensuring that pupils spend time regularly learning to spell common, tricky and technical words correctly
 - adopting a consistently neat style of handwriting
 - introducing more opportunities for writing throughout the curriculum
- Improve attendance by finding ways to discourage parents and carers from taking their children away from school in term time.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enter the school with skills levels and knowledge which are below expectations for their age. They make consistently good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 to reach above-average attainment. Pupils in Year 6 made excellent progress when writing about Kensuke's Kingdom, rising to their teacher's constant challenges to improve their sentences to a higher level. Older pupils' numeracy improved rapidly as they enjoyed calculating the various amounts needed to purchase and keep a large and active dog. Younger children with special educational needs and/or disabilities were able to use real money to purchase goods when their role play was guided effectively by learning support assistants. Gifted and talented pupils achieve high standards and develop some of their talents further through the production of a school newspaper.

Pupils develop as confident individuals who have a good knowledge of how to keep themselves healthy. Their consistently good behaviour and attitudes are major factors in enhancing learning. Pupils' social skills are well developed; the pupils work and play harmoniously together and willingly take on responsibilities as monitors, play leaders and members of the school and eco-councils. The pupils enjoy very active playtimes and a wide variety of clubs. Pupils show their care for others by a wide variety of charitable giving, both in their immediate neighbourhood and abroad, for example, supporting a school in Bangladesh. Pupils' good personal attributes and above-average attainment prepare them well for secondary education.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

How effective is the provision?

The consistently good teaching results in pupils making good progress throughout the school. Some outstanding teaching was seen in Year 6 and the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teachers capture pupils' interest by imaginative planning of work, with interesting and relevant activities, often making use of interactive whiteboard images, for example, when writing about aliens. Usually, they make good use of assessment to plan for groups at different target levels within their classes and use learning support assistants effectively to guide the group-work. In the few satisfactory lessons, tasks went on too long and some pupils lost motivation. Pupils know their targets well and can say how to achieve them and progress to the next level. Teachers use simple self-assessment techniques routinely, such as 'thumbs up or down' to indicate progress. Some lessons for older pupils start with a dialogue between pupils and their teacher, discussing the marking of recent work.

The curriculum is evolving from focusing on subjects to themes. The change is enhancing pupils' enjoyment by increasing opportunities to choose particular themes that match their interests. A creative project in Year 3 motivated boys effectively, in particular, to write enthusiastically about their practical tasks of building houses. Opportunities for developing literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are increasingly being identified, but books show few opportunities for extended writing throughout the curriculum. The curriculum is enhanced by a very wide variety of clubs and enrichment opportunities, including music and sports. They are very popular and have a large take-up.

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All pupils are known well as individuals and very well-targeted support enables them to make the best of the opportunities provided by the school. Excellent attention is given to all aspects of care, guidance and support, including that given to pupils and their families when they start school and leave for secondary education. The school's work with children and families whose circumstances may make them vulnerable is outstanding and includes much support to keep children in school. There are many examples of barriers to learning being overcome for these pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school's expertise in that area is valued and shared with staff in other schools.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team is effective in communicating its high expectations. Consequently, all staff work as a cohesive team with a strong drive for improvement. Subject leaders play important roles in the development of their subjects and monitor the impact of provision on pupils' attainment closely. Challenging targets are set for all pupils, which are usually met and often exceeded in Key Stages 1 and 2.

The governing body's effectiveness is good; it is led and organised well. Governors have specific roles. They gain first-hand experience of the school's work from staff presentations and visits, play a full role in school improvement and are effective in holding the school to account for its standards. The governing body is vigilant in ensuring that good provision for safeguarding retains its high priority. It and school leaders ensure that issues relating to safety and safeguarding, including internet procedures, are integrated fully in the curriculum and that parents and carers are kept fully informed.

This is a school which makes sure everyone has equally good opportunities to succeed. All pupils have individual targets to achieve, based on careful and frequent assessments, so virtually all make good progress. Gaps identified between the progress of different groups of pupils have been tackled and are narrowing rapidly. All pupils have opportunities to take part in the good enrichment programmes. The school's commitment to family learning through the work of the Child and Family support and inclusion teams has a markedly beneficial effect in providing support and guidance to families who find themselves in circumstances that may make them vulnerable.

Staff and pupils have a strong understanding of the common set of values which hold their community together. The school makes a good contribution to its local community and parish and reaches out to other communities through first-hand links with schools in this country whose pupils come from a wide mix of ethnic heritages. It has strong links also

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with schools in Bangladesh and the Ivory Coast. School leaders seek to give pupils opportunities to meet people from other religious and cultural groups through multicultural events, visitors, and visits to other places of worship.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills levels and knowledge below those expected for their age. Excellent teaching by all adults who work with the children ensures that the children make very rapid progress and thoroughly enjoy learning. By the end of the Reception Year, the children's attainment in all areas of learning is above expectation, with three quarters of them working within the Early Learning Goals for children of this age. Staff place a particularly good emphasis on the development of children's personal and early literacy skills. Children's vocabulary is developed strongly through the encouragement of discussion with adults and each other. Many excellent opportunities are provided for early writing to develop through games and role play activities, such as making passports and booking holidays through the 'Travel Agent'. Gaps between the attainment of girls and boys identified in previous years have been closed by the introduction of activities such as the 'Bug Research Station'. In particular, boys show off their bugs excitedly and can identify differences easily, for example, between centipedes and millipedes.

Children are confident and happy in this secure and welcoming environment. Their personal, social and emotional skills develop rapidly and behaviour is excellent. They know that 'good sitting' and 'good listening' are required when sitting on the carpet, and enjoy being allowed to jump as they count from one to ten and back again.

Excellent planning of exciting activities in the very well-equipped learning environment helps to develop children's curiosity, creativity and all the skills expected for children of

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this age. Very good use is made of rigorous assessment by all the adults to move children's learning on. Excellent attention is paid to children's welfare and safety, for example, a 'tatty teddies' camping expedition involved all Nursery and Reception Year children in a camp-fire activity, which was exemplary in its development of children's sense of adventure. Adults paid rigorous attention to children's safe enjoyment of eating marshmallows grilled over the camp-fire. Leadership is excellent, with the highest expectations in all aspects of provision and children's attainment. The excellent partnership with parents and carers extends to home visits and regular learning workshops.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

There was a smaller-than-usual return of completed questionnaires. Most parents and carers expressed positive views about the school. All parents and carers felt their children are safe in school. There were a few comments from parents and carers; most praised the school and said their children are happy and doing well. There were one or two complaints about the frequency of information on progress. Inspectors found the school provides the information as frequently as most schools and has an 'open door' policy for parents and carers to see teachers; other parents and carers reported this as very helpful.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St John the Baptist 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 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 177 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	74	6	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	15	65	7	30	0	0	1	4
My school informs me about my child's progress	13	57	8	35	2	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	57	8	35	2	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	57	9	39	1	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	61	6	26	2	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	48	10	43	0	0	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)	12	52	9	39	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	61	7	30	1	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	48	11	48	0	0	1	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	39	11	48	2	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	14	61	8	35	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	70	5	22	2	9	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 all 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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



29 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School, Birmingham, B36 0Q

Thank you very much for being so friendly and helpful to my colleagues and me during our visit. You told us your school is good and we agree with you. You do well in English, mathematics and science and this prepares you well for your secondary schools. There is an exceptionally warm and caring atmosphere in your school, so you get on well with each other and enjoy being part of your school and parish. You welcome visitors from other communities and enjoy becoming friends with children in other schools.

Your headteacher, deputy headteacher and other leaders do a good job in running the school. Teaching is good, so you enjoy your lessons and work hard. Your teachers expect all of you to do well and so you make good progress. Your behaviour is good and your attendance is satisfactory. You come to school wanting to learn and this helps you make the most of your school days.

All the adults take excellent care of you and you can always talk to an adult if you are worried. You learn how to keep yourself safe and healthy. You are very responsible and do a lot of jobs in school.

Your school has good links with the local community and church. It has excellent links with your parents and carers. You enjoy getting to know some new friends in Bangladesh and the Ivory Coast.

We have asked your teachers to make sure your good written work is not spoilt by spelling mistakes and untidy handwriting. We think also some of your parents and carers could improve your attendance by not keeping you off school in term time. You can help a lot in improving both of these by always doing your best written work and making sure your parents and carers send you to school regularly.

Yours sincerely

Carol Worthington

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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