



St John Fisher Catholic First and Middle School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102232
LEA Harrow LEA
Inspection number 276681
Inspection dates 1 December 2005 to 2 December 2005
Reporting inspector James Crompton AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Melrose Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Pinner
Age range of pupils	4 to 12		Middlesex HA5 5RA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02088682961
Number on roll	384	Fax number	02088665882
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Bogdan Kowalewicz
Date of previous inspection	5 June 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Anne Lyons

Age group 4 to 12	Inspection dates 1 December 2005 - 2 December 2005	Inspection number 276681
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St John Fisher Catholic First and Middle School, with 384 pupils on roll, is larger than average. The majority of the pupils are drawn from the local Catholic community. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals and the number of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below average. About 10% of the pupils have a first language other than English. Children enter the school in September of the year in which they will be 5. Their attainment when starting in reception is broadly average, although their social skills are generally well developed.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school's view that it provides an outstanding level of education is fully justified. It provides excellent value for money. The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good and this provides a very secure base for future work. Consistently effective teaching means pupils achieve extremely well through the school and reach high standards by the time they leave. As a result of high quality provision for personal development, first class care and support, and the rich curriculum, pupils enjoy school. Their attitudes and behaviour are exemplary. They thrive in the purposeful atmosphere and the caring Catholic ethos which underpins all aspects of the school's values and day-to-day life. Parents are very happy for their children to be at this school. As one remarked, 'We feel that St John Fisher is a wonderful school'. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and is supported extremely well by key staff and governors. Their combined efforts have meant that excellent progress has been made since the last inspection and that the school is exceedingly well placed to improve further. Minor weaknesses in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) are already being addressed.

What the school should do to improve further

In order to improve pupils' standards and progress, the headteacher and governors should:* Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop, practise and consolidate their information, communication and technology (ICT) skills in other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils achieve extremely well and reach high standards. The performance of Year 6 pupils in the national tests over recent years has been well above average in English, mathematics and science, and in 2005 overall results were in the top 7% nationally. Pupils of all abilities do very well because of the consistently good teaching and their hard work. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve as well as their classmates because of the excellent support they receive. Work is set to match pupils' needs and less confident pupils frequently have the guidance of a teaching assistant. Specialist equipment helps pupils with mobility problems to take as full a part as possible in day-to-day lessons. Children make good progress in all areas of learning in the reception class, which provides a secure foundation for subsequent learning. They build well on this good start, reaching above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of year 2. In addition to excellent progress in these key subjects, standards across the school in art and design are good and most pupils reach high standards in music. Pupils have very good general computer skills and overall standards in ICT are satisfactory but their expertise in using more advanced techniques in control technology and the use of computer sensors is limited.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' outstanding personal development is reflected in their positive attitudes and excellent behaviour. A calm and purposeful atmosphere pervades the school and there are many opportunities for pupils to reflect on human achievement through assemblies, art and music. Cultural development is supported extremely well through these activities. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of different cultures is promoted successfully, for example, through links with a school in Beijing. Members of staff have visited the city and pupils are exchanging emails. Provision for social and moral development is highly effective. Pupils develop very good interpersonal skills and self-discipline in an atmosphere of trust and respect. Older pupils provide good role models and willingly act as 'buddies' for younger ones during lunch breaks, an indication of their mature attitudes. Pupils enjoy being at school; they are very keen to be involved in activities both within lessons and in extra activities such as visits and concerts. Attendance levels are high and reflect pupils' enthusiasm for school. Pupils express their views through the school council which provides a good conduit for pupils across the school to express their views and make suggestions. Pupils make a strong contribution to the life of the parish and the local community. They have a good understanding of a healthy life-style and how to keep themselves and others safe. Their very strong literacy and numeracy skills together with their positive attitudes to learning and broad experiences equip pupils well for future life. Parents are highly positive about provision for personal development. As one wrote, 'It has been a pleasure to watch him grow academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are consistently good and there is some outstanding practice. Learning is very well organised in the Foundation Stage, with a good balance between specific activities led by an adult and opportunities for children to choose what to do from a range of options. Across the school, teachers successfully motivate pupils to try hard. In many lessons their infectious enthusiasm exemplifies the school's aim to develop a 'learning culture' where both adults and pupils enjoy the experience. Such approaches generate a thirst for learning so that, in the majority of lessons, pupils achieve very well. Teachers are particularly skilled at building on pupils' existing knowledge. This was evident during excellent lessons in Years 3, 5 and 6 where inspirational teaching ensured that pupils of all abilities were involved through carefully targeted questioning and by suitably challenging work at different levels. Some lessons, although satisfactory, are taken at a more pedestrian pace. However, the reason pupils do so well overall is the combined impact of the teaching and learning, pupils' extremely positive attitudes and the stimulating curriculum. Teachers check that pupils understand what to do and provide very good feedback during lessons and through their careful marking of work. Support staff make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and

personal development. Across the school, inspectors saw children engaged in their learning, collaborating well with their friends in groups, and enjoying the acquisition of new skills and knowledge. Homework and 'Link Books' provide a good channel for sharing information between home and school, allowing parents to be partners in their children's education.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides a lively curriculum that supports high standards. From reception to Year 6, pupils really enjoy many and varied activities. For example, as well as good provision for the usual range of subjects, older pupils all learn French. Very good links between different subjects help to make pupils' work more meaningful and bring ideas to life. Particularly strong are the excellent opportunities to write in different styles in history. However, sometimes chances are missed to use ICT to support work in other subjects, for example, by using computer sensors when measuring changes in temperature in science experiments. Outstanding provision in the arts has led to a Gold Artsmark award. Music, in particular, is excellent, with all pupils able to take part in exciting activities and performances. A huge number of pupils are learning to play different instruments, and many of these perform as a group to a very high standard, in either the string orchestra or the band. Challenging dramatic productions are undertaken regularly, and rehearsals during the inspection for *Romeo and Juliet* revealed pupils' good understanding of the play. Such involvement in the performing arts helps pupils to develop good interpersonal skills and a willingness to cooperate and contribute to the life of the school community. A large number of visitors, including authors, artists, musicians and dancers from different cultures and backgrounds, provide pupils with high quality experiences. These often lead, in turn, to high quality work from the pupils. The extensive extra curricular clubs include a wide variety of sports, art, music, ICT and dance. These lead to enjoyment and enthusiasm from pupils, as well as higher standards.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of the care, guidance and support is outstanding. Good procedures for safeguarding learners are extended beyond the school day with breakfast and after-school clubs. Pupils know that everyone is valued and the school's vision of 'growing and learning together with Christ' is evident in its daily life. The progress of all pupils is tracked carefully so that extra support can be given or more challenging work set. The school has a well-deserved reputation for supporting pupils with wide ranging needs and this is exemplified by the way pupils with physical disabilities are included in all aspects of school life. Break and lunchtimes are well supervised and most support staff are qualified to administer first aid so pupils can be treated by someone they know. A counsellor from the local family service visits regularly and provides support for pupils with social or emotional difficulties. Parents appreciate the high level of care.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership to a very effective team. Senior managers fulfil their roles well, and subject leaders are effective in co-ordinating and improving provision. Governors have a very clear understanding of the school's performance and support the staff well in always striving to ensure the best possible outcomes for every child. The outstanding leadership and management have led to high quality provision. This in turn results in high standards and excellent personal development. Self-evaluation is a model of good practice. In planning developments, good account is taken of parents' and pupils' views, as well as those of staff and governors. Careful analysis of the progress of individuals and groups is used very well to identify both whole school issues, and whether individual pupils are falling behind. Effective action is taken to improve matters in each case. Staff monitor one another's lessons regularly to maintain and improve quality. Effective feedback on how teachers might improve their practice has supported the consistently good teaching. Improvement since the last inspection has been excellent, leading to higher standards, much better teaching and a better curriculum. A constant search for improvement underpins the school's many strengths, and means it is well placed to improve in the future.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	NA
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

You may remember that we visited your school early in December to inspect the quality of education which you receive. We spoke to a number of you and observed you in lessons and around the school.

We would like to thank you for the way you made us feel welcome and shared your thoughts and values with us. A full report is available for you to read, but this letter gives you some highlights to talk about, perhaps through your school council. During our two days in the school, we were especially impressed by: * The way everyone at the school helps you to enjoy learning and to reach high standards * Your delightful attitudes towards all aspects of school life* Your lovely singing and the fact that so many of you learn an instrument and play in the orchestra or band * The wide range of extra activities, visits and visitors which support your learning* The way the headteacher, the staff and governors run the school to allow all pupils to do as well as they can.

We saw that you work hard in the brand new ICT suite but we think that you could use ICT more often to help you learn in other subjects.