

# St John The Baptist Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104107
<b>Local Authority</b>	Solihull
<b>Inspection number</b>	308514
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Driscoll

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	172
School	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mike Corrigan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Maria Salt
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 June 2003
<b>School address</b>	Arran Way Kingshurst Birmingham B36 0QE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01217 701892
<b>Fax number</b>	01217 797177

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St John the Baptist is a smaller than average primary school serving an urban area. A very high proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background is average, and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. Most of these pupils are supported through 'school action' and the proportion with a statement of special educational need is broadly average. The school has experienced considerable instability in staffing since the previous inspection.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory and improving education for its pupils. Children usually join the Foundation Stage with skills that are below those expected for their age and make good progress, so standards on starting Year 1 are average. From then on, progress is satisfactory, so standards remain average when pupils leave Year 6. The school has recently made some important improvements to the satisfactory curriculum. These have improved progress in reading in Year 6, for example, and resulted in boys making better progress in writing in Years 1 and 2. Progress in information and communication technology (ICT) is slower, but still satisfactory, because pupils do not get enough opportunities to practise their skills in other subjects. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but good in the Foundation Stage, where progress is better. In all years, teachers check how well pupils understand the work they are doing in lessons, but only in the Foundation Stage do teachers consistently subsequently modify the work to ensure that it is not too easy or too hard. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities generally make satisfactory progress in line with their peers. However, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who require help beyond that provided by the school alone make good progress, because they receive carefully targeted support.

The school takes good care of its pupils, so their personal development is good, and it provides them with effective academic support. Pupils are invariably well behaved, both in and out of lessons. They get on well with one another and have very good manners. Pupils like coming to school because they, and their parents, know that the school is a safe place where they will always have someone to turn to if there are problems. Each pupil has individual targets for improvement, which are changed when they have been achieved. If the targets have not been met, then the school is quick to identify those who are falling behind and provide extra support to ensure that their progress improves.

The school has made steady progress since it was last inspected, as a result of satisfactory leadership and management. The headteacher and chair of governors lead the school well, but progress has been slowed by staffing instability. The systems for checking the quality of what the school provides give senior managers a satisfactory picture of its strengths and weaknesses. Checks on teaching identify where improvements are necessary, but are not carried out frequently enough to ensure that weaknesses are actually being rectified. More stable staffing means that the school is now moving forward on many fronts, demonstrating that the school's managers have the skills necessary to take the school forward.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress because of good teaching and a well planned curriculum that provides an effective balance between children's independent activity and well focused teacher-directed tasks. Staff are quick to modify such activities in the light of the accurate assessments made during lessons, so that they are always well matched to the individual's needs. All adults work closely together so that children receive a good level of care, guidance and support. This ensures that pupils develop positive attitudes to learning and transition between Nursery and Reception classes is seamless. Children usually join with knowledge and skills below those expected for their age. They make good progress so their standards are average at the start of Year 1. Progress is best in their language skills, because staff ensure that children receive many opportunities to speak, listen, read and write. Progress

is slower in children's knowledge and understanding of the world, but this is already being improved, using a shared area between Nursery and Reception as a focus for this work. Leadership and management are good, particularly in terms of forging links with parents.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve pupils' progress in ICT by ensuring they have more opportunities to practise their skills in other subjects.
- Improve teaching by ensuring teachers modify tasks when they have assessed pupils' understanding in lessons.
- Improve leadership and management by checking more frequently that areas for improvement identified in teaching are being addressed.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

In most years, children join with skills that are below those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage, and start Year 1 with average standards. From then on, progress is satisfactory and standards on leaving Year 6 remain average. There are, however, some differences in the progress made in different subjects. Pupils make satisfactory progress in mathematics in all years. Progress in reading and writing is satisfactory overall but varies across the school. In Years 1 and 2, progress in writing is good, especially for boys, because pupils are encouraged to write about interesting and exciting activities and topics. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make good progress in their reading because the school's extra provision, such as the guided reading scheme, gives them particularly good support. Progress in ICT is also satisfactory, but pupils lack the opportunity to apply their ICT skills in a sufficiently wide range of subjects. Most pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, but those supported through 'school action plus' or with a statement do well.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils much enjoy coming to school, where they work and play happily together. They are soundly prepared for the next stage of their education by developing satisfactory skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. They care about each other. When one Year 2 pupil dropped his pencil case, for example, another ran back to help and make sure he was not upset. Others go out of their way to ensure that everyone has a friend to play with at breaks. Their sense of community is strong and they undertake school responsibilities, such as school council, 'playground pals' and house captains with diligence and pride. Pupils are polite and treat others, especially adults, with a high degree of respect. They have a well developed sense of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and feel safe because teachers take issues such as bullying seriously. Although still a little below average, attendance is improving as the number of families with a poor record of attendance is reduced.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teachers in the Foundation Stage are adept at checking each child's progress in lessons, and then making the task easier or more difficult as necessary. In other years, teachers do not always modify the work when they have identified pupils who are struggling or those who are finding the work a bit too easy. This slows the rate at which pupils can learn. Variation is also seen in the quality of marking, which is exceptional in Year 3, for example, but does not always point out errors in other years. Throughout the school, teachers provide clear instructions so that pupils know what they are to do, and how to do it. Classes are well managed, so pupils work hard and misbehaviour is very rare. Teaching assistants work particularly well with pupils requiring additional support through 'school action plus' or with a statement. They ask carefully phrased questions that make these pupils think for themselves, rather than becoming too dependant on extra support.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

Pupils have many opportunities to develop their literacy skills through other subjects. This has boosted boys' performance in writing in Years 1 and 2, because it gives them a clear focus for their writing. The school has made similar changes in Year 6 and plans to extend them to other years, so that the progress of all pupils is improved. In contrast, pupils do not receive enough opportunities to practise their ICT skills in other subjects, which slows their progress. Standards in reading have been improved by adapting the curriculum in Years 3 to 6, so pupils are making better progress. Pupils' personal development, especially their understanding of how to live a safe and healthy life, is supported well by the curriculum for personal, social and emotional development, while the good range of extra activities widens pupils' horizons.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The school's good pastoral care ensures that pupils are kept safe. Child protection procedures are followed to the letter and all required health and safety checks are carried out. The analysis of patterns of pupils' attendance identifies where efforts should be targeted, and the resulting actions are proving effective in raising attendance. Academic guidance is also good. The school gives each pupil a target and helps them to achieve it with clear advice on how to improve. Pupils' progress is tracked well in the Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6, so any underachievement is quickly identified and the school's many ways of supporting pupils can be deployed in order to help them catch up. The system is not yet in use in Years 1 and 2, so intervention is not as sharply focused in these years.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 3

The headteacher and chair of governors have a clear vision of where they want the school to be, and how to get there. Improvement is gathering pace because staffing is more stable, and the school now has staff responsible for key areas such as numeracy and literacy. This has not

always been the case, often due to illness, and weaknesses continue in the leadership of a small number of subjects. Many governors are new and do not yet have the same degree of confidence in challenging the school that is demonstrated by the chair of governors. Managers at all levels analyse data well, so get a clear picture of the school's main strengths and weaknesses. Their checks on teaching provide a generally accurate evaluation of its quality, but take place too infrequently to ensure that any weaknesses previous identified are being acted upon.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

17 March 2008

Dear Children

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

We really enjoyed visiting your school, because you were all so polite to us. We were very impressed by how nice you are to each other and how well you work and play together. You know a lot about keeping healthy, and feel safe at school because all the grown ups take good care of you.

We found that you are getting a satisfactory education and learning new things at the rate we would expect you to. You get off to a good start in Nursery and Reception, while those of you in Years 1 and 2 are learning to write more quickly than we expect, and the same goes for your reading in Years 3 to 6. You could still do a bit better in your ICT, so we have asked your teachers to give you more chances to work on the computers. You all know what you are supposed to be doing in lessons, because your teachers are so good at explaining things. Sometimes, some of you find the work a bit too easy or too difficult, so we have asked your teachers to give you something different to do when they spot that you may be stuck or finishing early.

The people who run the school know what they have to do to make it better. They find out which things most need improving, but have not always been able to do as much as they would like because some of the teachers have been ill. They are now doing lots of things to make the school even better, but we have asked them to check more often that what they are doing to improve lessons is working.

With all best wishes for your futures.

Yours sincerely

David Driscoll Lead inspector