

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	124357
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	380870
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Alison Cogher

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	207
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tina Rowe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sinead Smith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Cherry Orchard Lichfield WS14 9AN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01543 263505
<b>Fax number</b>	01543 410105
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	12–13 January 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	380870



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Alison Cogher

Additional inspector

Stephen Howland

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. A number of strategies were used to observe teaching. Inspectors visited 14 lessons and observed eight teachers for periods of between 15 and 50 minutes. Small groups being led by teaching assistants were also observed within lessons and in other areas of the school. Inspectors listened to pupils read and held discussions with them about their learning. Meetings were held with staff and members of the governing body. Informal discussions were also held with pupils, parents and carers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They looked at documents including the school improvement plan, school self-evaluation information, minutes of meetings and whole-school policies. They scrutinised pupils' work and the school's information about their attainment and progress. Inspectors considered the views of staff, pupils and 106 parents and carers as expressed through the returned questionnaires.

## Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. Most pupils are from White British families. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, those learning English as an additional language and those identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is very low. The school meets the government current floor standards for attainment and progress. The headteacher and deputy headteacher took up their posts in September 2011. The school has achieved a number of awards including the Sports Achievement Mark, Eco School (Bronze), Dyslexia Friendly Status (Level 1) and Healthy School status.

There is an on-site pre-school group and a before and after-school club that are not managed by the governing body and which are inspected separately.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school. 'A friendly approachable school determined to do the best for our children' captures the many positive responses made by parents and carers about the school. This reflects the school's focus on ensuring it achieves its aim 'for every pupil to reach their potential and to learn how to learn for life'.
- Pupils make good progress in all year groups and achieve well. Reading in all year groups is particularly strong. Pupils enjoy school and work hard in lessons.
- Almost all teaching is good and some is outstanding. Assessment information is used well to plan lessons that take account of pupils' learning needs so they enjoy their lessons and learn well.
- Marking of pupils' work is thorough and supportive. However, the steps for improvement that are identified are sometimes too big and the time frame it will take pupils to achieve them too long. In addition, pupils are not always given the opportunity to respond to what their teachers have noted.
- Homework is regularly set for all pupils at the school, but there is no whole-school approach so its support for pupils' learning is uneven.
- Relationships throughout the school are very constructive and enable pupils to develop good levels of confidence and self-esteem. They are polite, friendly and courteous and behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Good leadership ensures improvement planning is tightly focused with clear goals to be achieved in a given time. The involvement of parents and carers is increasing and communication about school activities and changes to practice is of good quality. However, they receive limited information to help them to support their children's learning at home.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

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

- Improve the impact of teaching on pupils' learning by:
  - ensuring that marking of pupils' work identifies next step improvement goals that are precise and achievable in a short period of time
  - ensuring that pupils are given time to respond to the marking of their work
  - implementing a whole-school approach to homework that helps pupils to build on their learning in lessons and develop their independent learning skills.
  
- Establish whole-school procedures to inform parents and carers about what their children will be learning in school, and how they can support them at home.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Children start in reception with skills that are broadly at the level expected for their age. Most pupils in all year groups, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress from their individual starting points. School assessment data shows that the rate of pupil progress is increasing. Pupils who are identified as requiring additional help are often taught separately as individuals or in small groups to ensure they make the same good progress as other pupils. This targeted support is carried out by skilled and knowledgeable teaching assistants who work very closely with teachers. The consequence of this effective practice is that there is no significant difference in the achievement of different groups of pupils. Inspectors concur with the views of most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire who considered that their children achieve well at school.

Attainment in reading is a strength of the school. Boys, girls and pupils of different abilities and backgrounds all enjoy their reading and appreciate the wide variety of books they have to choose from. Pupils use a variety of strategies, including their knowledge of the sounds letters make to help them read unfamiliar words. Attainment in reading is above average by the end of Year 2. This is sustained as pupils move through the school. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics are all above average at the end of Year 6.

Pupils make good use of their reading, writing and mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, in a Year 3 history lesson, pupils used their reading skills to investigate what the Romans used to eat. They then wrote their own menu for a Roman banquet. Other pupils explored how small tiles were fitted together to make mosaics and then designed their own patterns and pictures. This investigative approach to learning encourages pupils to ask questions and to work together. This

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enables them to make connections between aspects of their learning and contributes markedly to the progress they make and to their social development.

## **Quality of teaching**

The very large majority of parent and carers who responded to the questionnaire consider that their children are well taught. Inspection findings support this view. Strengths in a number of aspects of teaching are evident in all classes. Teachers and teaching assistants have good subject knowledge. Their enthusiasm captures pupils' interest so they engage fully in lessons. The teaching of key literacy and numeracy skills is good. Questioning is used well to check pupils' understanding and to encourage them to explain their answers or their thinking. Teachers regularly check that a specific learning point has been understood, for example by looking at pupils' responses written on small whiteboards. They are quick to correct pupils' errors or misunderstandings, so a good pace of learning is maintained. Teachers seize opportunities to reinforce key skills and strategies, often drawing in the whole class to help solve a problem. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, one pupil thought her answer to a problem 'looked wrong', the class was challenged to help her. She was reminded by other pupils that she could reverse her addition calculation and complete a subtraction calculation to check her answer. Such effective practice serves not only to help individual pupils but also as a reminder for all that reinforces their understanding well. Pupils are certain that adults help them to learn well and they confidently ask for additional guidance when they feel they need it.

Resources are used well to add excitement to learning in lessons. For example, during a lesson with a geography focus, the use of atlases and real food with country of origin labelling captured the imagination of pupils in Year 2. They were totally engrossed as they investigated where our food comes from and the climates of different countries. Pupils in Year 6 were equally motivated as they explored the skills of debating and presenting an argument with a visiting town councillor. Pupils are given many opportunities to work together and do so in a very mature and respectful way that illustrates the importance the school places on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Pupils' responses in lessons and through their written work are valued and celebrated. Pupils' work is marked following an agreed whole-school strategy so pupils are given clear information about what they have achieved. However, in some instances, the next steps for improvement that are identified are too complex and require too long a time frame to achieve them. In addition, pupils are not always given the opportunity to respond to teachers' comments and suggestions so the impact of marking is lessened. Although homework is set regularly for all pupils, there is no whole-school approach to ensure that homework helps pupils to develop their independence as learners as well as strengthen their skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Consequently, expectations of homework vary for pupils in different year groups.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

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Parents and carers are confident that the school keeps their children safe. Most who responded via the questionnaire also indicated that they consider behaviour in school to be good and noted recent improvements. A small minority expressed concerns about pupils' behaviour in lessons. Inspectors' observations found pupils' behaviour in lessons to be good because they are managed consistently well by all staff. There are effective measures to manage pupils who have particular difficulties so that their behaviour does not have a significant impact on the learning of others. Pupils spoken to confirmed that behaviour has improved and is now typically good because of the implementation of a consistent whole-school approach, with clear expectations that pupils understand and accept.

Pupils respond well to the clear moral code promoted by the school. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and a keen awareness of what constitutes a safe learning environment. Pupils feel safe at school. Those consulted during the inspection were confident that the school deals effectively with their concerns and that any issues, including the rare instances that relate to any form of bullying or discrimination, are dealt with effectively. Pupils' attendance is above average and the vast majority arrive in good time for the start of the school day.

Pupils of all ages and backgrounds get along well together. They are keen to celebrate each other's achievements and actively seek to make a positive contribution to their school. This is clearly evident in the way they conduct themselves in a range of situations and their willingness to take on responsibilities in the classroom, around the school and as elected members of the school council.

### **Leadership and management**

Leaders and managers at all levels, and the well-informed, actively involved governing body, provide a sharply focused and clearly communicated vision for the future development of the school. Staff express a very strong commitment to this vision and are working closely together to maintain the rapid momentum of improvement already established. Morale is high and teamwork firmly embedded in whole-school practice.

Marked improvements have been secured in a number of key areas including the quality of teaching, pupil progress and behaviour and the involvement of parents and carers. These changes demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve further.

Procedures to monitor, evaluate and continually improve the quality of teaching and learning are rigorous. Teachers actively share good practice to secure greater consistency and whole-school improvement. Assessment data is rigorously analysed to ensure pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve the challenging targets they are set. Pupils identified as having made too little progress are provided with additional support to ensure they get back on track. Staff training is focused tightly on ensuring the quality of teaching and learning continues to improve for all pupils and that their safety is assured. Safeguarding

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arrangements meet requirements and are meticulously implemented.

The curriculum is good because pupils have many opportunities to learn and then practise their communication, reading, writing and mathematics skills. Additional opportunities provided through visits, visitors and specialist teaching, such as for music, ensure pupils experience a wide range of enrichment activities that extend their learning further. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and ensures that every pupil receives a motivating and supportive curriculum and good quality teaching.

The school is a cohesive community that looks outwards to learn from other communities and cultures within Britain and globally. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because of the school's effective provision that permeates all school activities. Pupils' spiritual development strongly reflects the school's underpinning values and commitments.

Communication with parents and carers has improved in the recent past. Good information is provided about school events and parents and carers are invited to attend sessions where teachers share information about, for example, how reading is taught. They are also invited to share their ideas and contribute to whole-school developments through the parents' forum. However, the information they receive that explains what children are learning each term varies in quality and contains little guidance about how they can be involved in supporting their children at home.



## 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	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



16 January 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Lichfield, WS14 9AN**

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you, listening to you read and looking at the work you do in lessons. Your school is giving you a good education.

There are many things we liked about your school and these are some of them.

- You work hard and behave well in lessons and around the school.
- You feel safe in school and trust adults to help you if you need it.
- Your attendance at school is good and you enjoy being there.
- You make good progress because teaching in class is good and the individual, or small group help some of you get is also good.
- The headteacher, governors and all the staff are working hard to make sure your school continues to improve.

These are the things we have asked the school to do to make it even better.

- We have asked your teachers to make sure that when they mark your work they tell you clearly what you need to do next to improve, and to be certain that you can achieve what they have asked you to do in a short time.
- We have also asked them to give you time to respond to their marking so, for example, you have time to make corrections when asked to do so.
- We think that your homework could be better organised, so we have asked your teachers to work out how to make it better.
- We want your school to give your parents or carers better information about what you are learning at school so they can help you more.

You can help by always reading the comments teachers write when they mark your work and doing your best to follow their advice.

Yours sincerely

Alison Cogher  
Lead inspector

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