

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Brighouse

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107559
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	377602
Inspection dates	7–8 February 2012
Lead inspector	Brenda Clarke

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	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Goulding
Headteacher	Mary Hodges
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Brenda Clarke
Kirsteen Rigby

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. The inspectors observed 10 teachers teaching 14 lessons or part lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made visits to three classes to hear pupils read. Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, members of the governing body and school staff, including senior and middle managers. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school development plan, tracking of pupils' progress over time, safeguarding procedures and policies and minutes of the governing body. The inspectors analysed 99 parental and carers' questionnaires as well as others completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

The school is average in size compared to schools of similar type. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well-below average. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of disabled pupils, pupils with special educational needs or a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school meets the current floor standard. The school has achieved the Primary Quality mark, Healthy Schools status and Fair Trade status.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It has some outstanding features. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive and acknowledge the outstanding behaviour and excellent care and support their children receive. Pupils' achievement is good; pupils learn and progress well. By the time pupils leave Year 6, attainment is above average in reading and mathematics and has risen steadily over the last three years. Progress in writing is satisfactory, but not always fast enough, especially for the more able. Pupils' handwriting is not always neat. Although improvement is not yet as fast as in other subjects, attainment shows a clearly rising trend. The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a good start for children. Children's social and emotional development is outstanding, enabling them to develop excellent attitudes to learning. Provision for learning outdoors is not quite as strong as indoors.
- Teaching is good throughout the school. The school provides effective individual support in lessons for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, enabling them to make good progress. Most teachers plan relevant and interesting lessons with a clear purpose. One pupil mirrors the views of most when saying, 'Teachers challenge you. They keep it simple and explain things well.'
- Behaviour is outstanding and pupils are very proud of their school. They show very high levels of engagement and good manners, so that lessons run very smoothly. There is an absence of bullying and pupils say they feel very safe. The pupils understand very clearly what constitutes an unsafe situation and show care and consideration for others. These aspects support pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The headteacher has high expectations and is ambitious for pupils and staff. Monitoring and evaluation of provision is rigorous and effective action taken to address weaknesses. For example, teachers now use information about pupils' progress effectively to sustain above-average performance overall. Professional development opportunities improve teaching and the good curriculum effectively. The governing body gives good support and fulfils its statutory duties effectively.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing further by:
 - broadening opportunities for pupils to write for a variety of purposes across subjects
 - ensuring teachers challenge more-able pupils consistently
 - developing a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting.
- Develop provision for outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage further by:
 - ensuring that all staff know the key skills and language to be developed when working with children outdoors
 - ensuring that equipment and resources are prepared well and to hand before outdoor sessions begin and are used effectively and consistently to reinforce current learning
 - creating flexible systems so that children have choice in their learning regularly between the classroom and outdoors.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

The inspection findings endorse the views of almost all parents and carers, who feel that their children achieve well. Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills levels that are below what is expected for their age, especially in their social and emotional development. They make outstanding progress in this area and good progress overall because of consistently good teaching. Most reach the goals expected by the time they start in Year 1 and an increasing number exceeds this level. Children enjoy learning in lessons that extend their skills through practical activities. For example, they sing action songs with gusto and successfully learn and blend the sounds that letters make.

Across Key Stage 1, the vast majority of pupils make good progress. Attainment in Year 2 in reading and mathematics is broadly average over time and rising to being slightly above average currently. Good teaching ensures that these levels of achievement are built upon in Key Stage 2, so that, by the end of Year 6, attainment is above average in mathematics and well-above average in reading. A contributory factor to this acceleration is teachers' better use of assessment data, ensuring that activities match pupils' differing abilities in reading and mathematics more closely. This is less secure in writing so that pupils' attainment, while broadly average, is not as high. Nevertheless, the gap between the subjects is closing steadily as teachers now give more attention to teaching the skills of punctuation and encouraging a more adventurous choice of vocabulary to add interest to writing. However, more-able pupils are not challenged consistently when writing and so they make satisfactory, rather than good, progress.

In lessons, learning is good. Pupils extend their speaking and listening skills and speak confidently and explain their answers clearly. Performance in lessons is good and pupils take their learning seriously, persevere with their tasks and usually complete a good volume of work. Handwriting is a weaker skill for many and presentation of work is often untidy. Pupils' mature social skills enable them to work effectively in pairs and to share ideas, tasks and resources. For example, in Year 6, working on a poetry script, one boy acted as scribe, while

the other found a more-suitable word alternative. Assessment information is used effectively to identify and provide activities matching the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. As a result, they achieve very well and most attain higher standards than seen nationally for similar pupils.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers, overwhelmingly, consider that their children are supported well and taught effectively. Inspectors found that teaching is predominantly good throughout the school. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching is good and has outstanding features. Teachers plan exciting activities that grab children's attention. For example, Nursery children learn about the properties of air when experimenting with bubble painting and blowing up balloons. Effective planning within the Nursery ensures that all staff promote good speaking and listening and the development of new skills, although opportunities are not always readily available for children to develop early writing skills when working independently. All children have a long timetabled session of outdoor play each day. Preparation for this aspect is not always rigorous enough and sometimes fails to reinforce children's learning. More could be done to give increased flexibility at this time enabling children to continue with their indoor learning should they prefer. In the Reception class, lively sessions using exciting resources accelerate children's learning of letters and the sounds they make. This gives an excellent grounding for future reading activities.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, teaching is good. In the best lessons, pupils have good opportunities to share their ideas and collaborate with others. The objective of the lesson and the criteria for success are explained clearly so that pupils appreciate the purpose of their learning. When teaching is less successful, there is sometimes an over-reliance on text books and worksheets that reduces the scope of pupils' learning. It limits opportunities for active, exciting participation and discussion and results in satisfactory, rather than good, progress being made in the lesson. Teachers do not always promote writing throughout the curriculum. Teachers analyse data of pupils' current attainment and generally use this well to plan work and additional support to meet pupils' individual needs. However, in some literacy lessons that were observed, more-able pupils tended to be given more of the same work as others in the class, rather than more-challenging activities to accelerate their progress. Regular marking of books includes good guidance on next steps in learning. Pupils have targets to guide their learning. However, in writing, teachers do not ensure pupils refer to the targets when working and their expectations of handwriting are not always high enough. The teaching of reading is a strength. It is based on a well-planned curriculum, with clear, structured guidance on the teaching of letters and sounds.

Teachers' behaviour management skills and the excellent relationships between adults and pupils ensure a very good ethos for learning. Staff are extremely good role models as they show respect for pupils' answers and efforts. These factors contribute significantly to pupils' outstanding personal, social, moral and cultural development. Well-briefed, knowledgeable teaching assistants give valued support to groups and individuals.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Most parents and carers who returned inspection questionnaires agree that behaviour is good. Inspection findings show this aspect is a considerable strength in the school, with behaviour being exemplary. Pupils are clear that this is always the case in their school and they are very polite and courteous towards visitors and each other. Pupils say

overwhelmingly that they feel safe in school and that staff listen to their concerns. The good curriculum offers valuable opportunities to assess risk and deal with potential dangers. Pupils make an exceptional contribution to the safe learning environment, working harmoniously in classrooms and playing safely outdoors. Most parents and carers indicate confidence in the school's systems to deal with incidents should they arise. Pupils are acutely aware of different forms of bullying because the school has devised a helpful leaflet that offers excellent guidance. They report an absence of any type of bullying. The Catholic care worker employed by the school is very effective in helping pupils to deal with conflict and personal problems. Pupils support each other readily and remember their Year 6 buddies who befriended them in the Reception class. Strong links with the church enhance pupils' understanding of the importance of faith to a believer and give excellent opportunities for spiritual development by encouraging pupils to reflect deeply about others. Attendance is well above the national average and pupils arrive punctually each day.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and deputy headteacher work as an ambitious, highly motivated team, communicating high expectations and giving a strong steer to the school. They have developed a collegiate approach to implementing new initiatives so that staff work as a cohesive team to develop consistent approaches. There are good strategies in place to monitor provision and take effective action when a weaker aspect is identified. For example, the training of all staff in new assessment procedures has given them greater awareness of pupils' progress. Rigorous tracking ensures those pupils requiring extra support receive it. Staff are more accountable for progress than previously and this is a key reason for the rising standards of attainment. The school has identified writing as a priority. Although the impact on attainment is not yet secure, strategies now in place are starting to improve pupils' progress, especially for the more able. Leaders and the governing body promote equality of opportunities effectively.

The curriculum is good. The school has introduced a new curriculum relatively recently and new topics, often selected by pupils, excite them, adding much relevance to learning. Leaders identify very well pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs and provide effective interventions to meet their individual needs and accelerate progress. Provision is enriched by a wide range of clubs much appreciated by pupils and visits to interesting places. Effective partnerships enhance provision through events such as science days at the secondary school. Pupils are prepared effectively for their next phase of education.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding overall so that pupils develop into mature and reflective young people. Pupils are very respectful of others and their differing life stances. The school is actively pursuing even more ways to enhance pupils' understanding of cultural diversity by extending local and international links.

The newly formed governing body offers good support and is beginning to hold the school to account. Its statutory duties and procedures for safeguarding pupils are met. Regular sharing of information between senior staff and the governing body establishes a strongly knowledgeable and effective partnership. The trend in improvement since the previous inspection is good. It is linked to the school's accurate self-evaluation and well-chosen priorities for continuous improvement. These actions highlight good capacity for sustained improvement.

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).

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.
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.



9 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Brighouse, HD6 2NT

Thank you for your warm and friendly welcome and for answering all our questions when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed talking with you and listening to your views. You spoke very confidently in lessons and in the interesting meetings we had with you. This letter tells you what we found out.

You go to a good school and enjoy learning. You told us that you feel very safe and that adults take good care of you. Teaching is good so that you achieve well and enjoy your lessons. Your behaviour is excellent. You know how to stay safe and show care for others. Your headteacher leads your school well and it continues to improve. Your attendance is very high. Keep this up!

We have asked your headteacher, other staff and the governing body to do two important things to make your school even better for you.

- To make sure that you make as much progress in writing as you do in reading and mathematics.
- To check that those of you in the Nursery classes sometimes have opportunities to choose whether you learn inside the classroom or outdoors.

We send you our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Brenda Clarke
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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