

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Chorley

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119671
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379866
Inspection dates	6–7 March 2012
Lead inspector	Kevin Johnson

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Jenner
Headteacher	Kathy Blackledge
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Kevin Johnson
Gillian Burrow

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 17 lessons or parts of lessons taught by eight teachers, talked to pupils and reviewed some of their work. Meetings were held with staff and members of the governing body as well as some parents and carers. Also taken into account were 80 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and those completed by pupils and members of staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation which included that relating to safeguarding, the curriculum, the school's self-evaluation, minutes of governing body meetings, national assessment data and the school's assessments of pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about the school

Almost all pupils are White British in this average-sized primary school. An average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is broadly in line with most primary schools. The school meets the current government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. Among the awards recently achieved by the school are Activemark and the Eco Schools Silver and Green Flag awards. It also has Healthy School status.

There is extended provision on site for St Joseph's pupils, in the form of before- and after-school care during term time. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2010.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Children get off to a good start in Reception. Pupils behave well and know how to keep safe. Despite good improvement in some key areas since the headteacher's appointment, the school is not yet good because pupils' achievement since the previous inspection has been consistently satisfactory rather than good, as a result of some inconsistent teaching quality.
- Children in Reception make good progress from their broadly typical starting points. Progress throughout the school is gathering good pace. Pupils in Year 2 are on track to improve on previous attainment, particularly the proportion reaching the higher National Curriculum level (Level 3). Pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 is currently good in lessons and attainment is average, but there is still ground to make up. This is especially so in English, where there are weaknesses in pupils' spelling and grammar and some indifferent attitudes to reading.
- The impact of teaching since the previous inspection is satisfactory. There has not been time for improved provision to raise achievement sufficiently by the end of Year 6. As a result of recent good improvement, much of the teaching has reached a good level and some is outstanding. Most lessons provide suitable challenge for pupils, but teachers' marking is not consistently good.
- Pupils behave well around the school and sometimes their behaviour in lessons is exemplary. This is an improvement and enables pupils to learn confidently. They say that they feel entirely safe in the playground. Attendance is above average and they arrive in school punctually.
- Leadership and management have strengthened considerably since the previous inspection. Before- and after-school care is led and managed well. A strong shared drive for improvement and a rigorous approach to improving teaching and performance are demonstrated by the urgency with which setbacks in teaching have been managed, and firm action taken on ineffective teaching. Self-evaluation is accurate, and priorities are clear. Improvement is evident and there is good capacity for it to continue.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in English, particularly at Key stage 2, by:
 - developing writing skills by extending the systematic teaching of phonics (the sounds that groups of letters make) into Key Stage 2 in order to improve spelling, and improving pupils' use of grammar
 - encourage pupils, especially boys, to read more independently for pleasure and across the curriculum.
- Continue to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning by ensuring that guidance given to pupils through marking consistently matches the best practice across all subjects.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter Reception with the skills generally expected for their age with some slightly lower in communication and mathematical development. They make good progress in what they do and most are securely within expected levels of attainment when they go into Year 1. Their personal skills are particularly well developed.

In Years 1 to 6 pupils learn well and currently make good progress because of strengthened teaching quality. Evidence shows, however, that this has not always been so. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at both key stages has been broadly average at best for some time and there was some slow progress throughout both key stages. This has been rectified due to the decisive action taken by the headteacher following her appointment. Nevertheless, overall achievement is still satisfactory rather than good, despite better progress in lessons, because of the lost ground still to be regained.

Pupils work hard in lessons because they are keen to learn and often captivated by the activities they do, especially when that involves computers. They are very attentive so they settle to work confidently and enjoy working together to solve problems and clarify their thinking. There is little working time lost because teachers and teaching assistants are vigilant about identifying pupils who may need extra help. Pupils know what is expected of them and regularly assess their own understanding and progress in lessons.

Well-planned support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is beginning to show some impact, notably in reading. Earlier gaps between their own and others' achievement are closing and school assessments show good progress for most of the group since the beginning of the current school year. Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals achieve as well as that group nationally and their progress in school is closely monitored to ensure that there is no slippage.

Pupils in Key Stage 1 benefit well from the lessons they have in letters and sounds. This is helping them to tackle their early reading and writing confidently. By the end of Year 2

reading is generally in line with expectations. Pupils read fluently and readily use their knowledge of letter sounds to work out unfamiliar words. At the end of Year 6 standards in reading are average. Pupils confidently read their preferred choice of novel or non-fiction book. They know some of the popular contemporary authors but are less sure about recognised authors from the past, despite the contribution that some literature may make to their topic work. Pupils' spelling and their use of grammar are underdeveloped.

Most parents and carers consider that the children make good progress in school and express their confidence in the staff. Their view is accurate for progress in many lessons currently, but over time, progress and achievement are satisfactory. Pupils feel that the school helps them to do as well as they can.

Quality of teaching

Teaching since the last inspection has promoted satisfactory progress and achievement and is therefore judged to be satisfactory overall. Although considerably improved, there has not been sufficient consistency over time to consolidate good progress.

Much of the teaching observed during the inspection, however, was good and engaged pupils in learning well. Parents and carers agree that this is now the case. A small number of lessons resulted in outstanding learning and progress for pupils. This was because pupils could see real purpose in what they did. For example, they linked skills and knowledge very effectively to improve learning in mathematics, geography and information and communication technology. All abilities were carefully provided for so that all gained a sense of achievement from what they did. Teachers plan lessons well and build effectively on what pupils have learned before. They use good strategies in lessons, such as questioning pupils, asking for explanations or getting pupils to assess themselves in order to measure the progress they are making. Literacy work is marked well as are some mathematics books, but well-focused guidance through marking is not a consistent feature across all subjects and classes. Occasionally there are missed opportunities to rectify pupils' earlier misunderstandings or to challenge the thinking of the most-able pupils. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution and use their skills well to work productively with groups and individual pupils.

The curriculum is planned well and promotes pupils' enjoyment of learning through themed topic work. There are opportunities for pupils to contribute ideas for their topics and so increase their motivation, as well as to write for different purposes. Teachers' strengths are used to good effect enabling good achievement, for example in sports and physical education. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is provided for continually because teachers are first-class role models in the way they value pupils' achievement and promote high quality relationships.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' positive attitudes to learning contribute to their improving progress. School records show that there have been no serious incidents of racist or other inappropriate behaviour over the past two years. Pupils say that there is no bullying of any kind and that when there is a 'falling-out' it is quickly resolved. They have every confidence in the adults who care for them. Almost all consider behaviour in school to be good, as do most parents and carers. Around the school, pupils are invariably polite and considerate of others. They behave sensibly in the dining hall and adjust their behaviour to show proper reverence and respect

during assemblies. Good behaviour and attitudes are also a hallmark of the before- and after-school provision. Here, pupils are encouraged to be independent and develop their spirituality and social skills further by being cooperative and helpful around others of different ages.

Pupils contribute well to the everyday life of the school by being conscientious members of the school council and eco club or 'guardian angels', who are watchful over younger pupils in the playground. They know about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and how to keep themselves safe outside of school, including when using the internet. Pupils' enjoyment of school is demonstrated by their above average attendance and good punctuality.

Leadership and management

Stability in the staffing of the school followed the appointment of the headteacher in 2010. With the full support of the governing body she has embraced help from the local authority and has overcome a series of setbacks with regard to staffing. Determined leadership, characterised by robust monitoring and evaluation, well-managed professional development and support and relentless pursuit of improvement has paid off. Teaching quality has improved significantly. As a consequence, high expectations are driving the school and improving academic performance.

Governance has also improved due to the good quality information that the governing body receives. It is both supportive and challenging in equally good measure. Its members are involved in analysing performance data and self-evaluation and make a strong contribution to leaders' accurate view of the school's work and its good capacity to improve. The governing body ensures the safety and well-being of pupils and staff efficiently and reviews procedures regularly to ensure that safeguarding is properly maintained. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school generally and particularly appreciate the level of care and safety provided before and after school.

All forms of discrimination are strongly challenged. Relevant information is shared with governors so that the progress of groups of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are monitored to ensure their equality of opportunity. The school ensures that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds have equal opportunities for success.

Leaders provide a rich curriculum. It is planned imaginatively and enhanced by a good range of engaging activities after school. Frequent visits, including residential ones, and visitors to school add greatly to the spiritual and social aspects of pupils' learning and development.

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.



8 March 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Chorley, Chorley, PR6
OJF**

Thank you for the very polite and friendly welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school recently. We really enjoyed our time with you. Well done for the way you manage to keep up your above average attendance and for your behaviour and good manners. Those things are important in helping you to learn.

We found that St Joseph's is a satisfactory school because the standards you reach in English and mathematics are average and you make satisfactory progress from when you start in Reception. Having said that, we also found that your school is improving because the teaching you receive has got better and your headteacher leads and manages the school well. The progress you make in lessons is improving.

It is important that everyone, including you, keep up the hard work and continue to improve. To help that process we have asked teachers to do the following things. First, improve your writing by arranging for phonics (letters and sounds) to be taught in Key Stage 2 (at the right level of course!) as well as in Key Stage 1 in order to improve your spelling, and also to improve your use of grammar. The second thing is to encourage more of you to read books for enjoyment as well as for learning new things. Finally, we have asked teachers to mark all of your work in all books to the same high standard as your literacy.

You can help by reading your teachers' comments and seeing that you follow up the ways they tell you to improve, as well as reading more books!

Yours sincerely

Kevin Johnson
Lead inspector

