

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115201
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	338533
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 July 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	George Logan

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

---

<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>	190
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Liz Suddick
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Ginzler-Maher
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 December 2006
<b>School address</b>	Trinity Square South Woodham Ferrers, Essex CM3 5JX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01245 321828
<b>Fax number</b>	01245 321795
<b>Email address</b>	admin@st-josephspri.org.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 July 2010
<b>Inspection number</b>	338533

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2010

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 10 lessons taught by eight different members of staff. Inspectors held meetings with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, records of their progress, lesson planning, playtime activities and the school's self-evaluation documents, including records of teaching and the main improvement plan. Responses to questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and 80 parents and carers were also considered.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how consistently pupils make progress, particularly those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, those in Years 3 to 6 and those who are potential high attainers
- how consistent and effective teaching is and how well staff use assessment to plan work with sufficient challenge for pupils
- whether attendance has improved this year to be at least satisfactory
- how accurately school leaders, including middle managers and governors, evaluate the work of the school.

## Information about the school

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School serves the town of South Woodham Ferrers and the outlying area. As a denominational school, pupils come from a wide area beyond the immediate town. Although the school is still slightly smaller than the average primary school, it has grown rapidly in recent years. There has been a significant level of admission in years other than Reception so that overall mobility of pupils, mostly into the school, has been relatively high. The school population is predominantly White British, with a small number of pupils coming from other ethnic backgrounds and from a range of other faiths. Very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The school is unique in that it shares the building, occupying one of the two wings, with a Church of England school, and both share the outdoor playground and facilities. Trinity Church, a multi-denominational place of worship, sits at the heart of the school campus. The partner secondary school is adjacent. The governors of St Joseph's also manage a mornings-only Pre-school for 21 children, which was included in the current inspection.

**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: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School provides a good education for its pupils. It is a school with a distinctive, inclusive ethos, which aspires to excellence in all that it does. Although it has not yet fully achieved its goals, the determination of the governing body and the senior leadership team not to settle for second best has enabled the school to make significant improvement since its last inspection. Pupils' progress in the past was little better than satisfactory, leading to broadly average standards. Progress has improved significantly so that standards in English, mathematics and science, as shown in the national tests for Year 6 pupils, are now high. This indicates that the impact of teaching over time is good. Other than in Year 2, however, where teachers' expectations are very high, the rigour and quality of pupils' recorded work does not yet fully reflect the underlying strength of their basic skills. There are insufficient planned opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in writing across the curriculum because subjects such as history and geography are underdeveloped. Over-frequent recourse to worksheets at times restricts pupils' opportunities to organise and record their work independently. Although the school has a well-developed system of academic and personal targets for each pupil, teachers' marking does not always provide pupils with clear guidance as to the next steps in learning.

Partnerships with parents and carers are outstanding and they are highly supportive of the school. Parents and carers appreciate its commitment to pupils' well-being and personal development. Pupils greatly enjoy school. While the great majority feel safe in school, a number of younger pupils find the busy playground a little daunting. Attendance has risen this year and is now good. Pupils are outstandingly well-behaved and have very positive attitudes to learning. However, the teaching style in some classes favours compliance and does not build as creatively as it could on pupils' potential for active learning. Most pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and actively participate in sport.

While children make good progress overall in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the underlying style remains rather formal. The partnership between the Pre-school and the Reception class is not sufficiently well developed to ensure good consistency of planning and practice across the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Outstanding extra-curricular and enrichment provision contributes very well to pupils' good personal development. The provision for gifted and talented pupils is a current focus for the local cluster of schools. On the basis of what has already been done, and the wide range of enrichment available, this is providing pupils with increasing opportunities to extend areas where they show particular skill or capability. This is a key benefit, one among many others, to emerge from the school's outstanding partnerships with other schools, agencies and providers. The three schools work very closely together. St Joseph's pupils, apart from their considerable involvement in support of charities, have close links

**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

with the local council, are much involved in the musical life of the town and in environmental projects, and have very active links with a local unit for retired people.

The governing body has a very good understanding of its role, constantly evaluates its own effectiveness and routinely holds school leaders to account. Though a little over-positive in places, the school's self-evaluation is generally accurate. The school has good capacity for improvement because leadership is well-established and has a convincing record of past success and a clear determination to sustain improvement.

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

- Strengthen further the partnership between the Pre-school and Reception class so that there is greater consistency of planning and good practice across the Early Years Foundation Stage provision.
- Give pupils greater opportunity to develop independence and be actively engaged in lessons, and provide pupils with clearer advice about how to improve their work.
- Ensure that pupils' well-developed skills in writing and mathematics are fully reflected in the quality of work they produce in other subjects of the curriculum.

## **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**1**

Pupils make good progress and standards at the end of Year 6 are high, particularly in English. There has been a good improvement in mathematics in 2010 as a result of actions the school has taken. Current Year 6 pupils have made consistently good progress since they entered Year 3. Performance in Year 2 has been on a steadily rising trend and standards are also high. Able pupils are making increasingly good progress as the specific provision to meet their needs has increased. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are appropriately planned for and supported by teaching assistants.

Pupils' written work does not always show the same consistency or quality as test results would suggest. There is variation in the quality of work in different subjects, with, for example, limited evidence of writing across the curriculum. Nonetheless, there is largely good, and occasionally outstanding, learning in lessons. For example, in a successful Year 4 drama lesson pupils analysed advertising campaigns astutely and then devised their own scenes. They worked at a good pace and rose well to the challenge to work co-operatively, to evaluate information, to be creative and to present their scenes. Learning was less good in another lesson, where pupils dutifully completed worksheets but did not have the same opportunity to develop their ideas and share their thinking.

Behaviour is outstanding and exclusions are rare. Pupils intuitively treat each other, and adults, with great courtesy. The school council is influential in school life and beyond and gives pupils good access to the democratic process. In an unusual collaborative arrangement, it works alongside the school council of the partner primary school. The school supports a wide range of charities and community organisations. Older pupils take responsibility for those who are younger as buddies and play leaders. Pupils' excellent social skills and strong basic skills ensure that they are well prepared for later life. Their spiritual, moral and cultural development is also good.

**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

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Although there is some variability across the school, teaching is mostly good. Most lessons offer a good level of challenge for all groups. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. However, teachers do not always give pupils enough opportunities to be actively engaged and this limits the development of their skills as independent learners and detracts from their enjoyment. Pupils come alive when the teaching is inspiring and builds upon their natural enthusiasm and sense of fun. Some overuse of worksheets limits pupils' opportunities to develop skills in independent recording. Support staff are well used and teachers question pupils closely to help them gain a clear idea of how well they have understood key ideas. Mostly, the tracking of pupils' progress and the analysis and evaluation of data is thorough. While individual pupil targets support good progress, they are seldom explicitly referred to when teachers mark pupils' work.

The curriculum effectively supports the development of pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy and in information and communication technology. It successfully meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and enables them to make good progress. Provision for pupils who are gifted or talented is good through the activities promoted by the local group of schools. Provision for the creative arts is strong. Some elements of the curriculum, such as history and geography, lack the prominence given to English and mathematics. The school has not given sufficient attention to identifying opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in other subjects, thus

**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

managing curriculum time efficiently. Effective links with a partner school enhance provision in physical education. Good personal, social, health and citizenship education promotes pupils' personal development well.

Staff care for pupils very well. The school, aware of the concerns of some younger children about the playground which gets very busy at times with two schools sharing the same space, has designated various zones and quiet areas. It has also recently increased lunchtime staffing levels. Transition arrangements are good. The school works closely with support agencies, particularly for pupils with particular needs. There is much good practice in supporting the health, social, behavioural and transition needs of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Systems to promote good attendance are rigorous.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Parents recognise that the school has made considerable progress in the last three years. School leaders have been relentlessly focused on ensuring that pupils make better progress in English and mathematics, leading to higher standards. Effective monitoring has supported improvements in teaching and, consequently, in pupils' progress. The ambition and drive of the senior leadership team, including the recently-trained core subject leaders, together with more rigorous systems for tracking pupils' progress, have been highly influential. However, there is more to be done to ensure that there is a higher proportion of good or better teaching and higher expectations of the depth and quality of pupils' work across the curriculum.

Governors understand the school's strengths well and are closely involved in shaping its future. They are proud of its unique status in the community. They have good monitoring systems, challenge school leaders effectively and make well-informed recommendations. Governors ensure that legal requirements are met, including some exemplary practice in relation to safeguarding pupils. Roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding are clearly defined. Governors give a high priority to ensuring pupils' safety and well-being. All pupils have access to the same opportunities and no groups are significantly underperforming. Pupils with special educational needs, and those from a Traveller background, are included as fully as possible. The school has built an outstanding partnership with parents, a key strength being the daily 'home-school' record books. The school is a cohesive community and there are robust links with the local schools and church community. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn about other faiths and the immediate area in lessons and there are well-established links with a partner school in

**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

Walthamstow, together with overseas links in Mauritius and France. As a result, community cohesion is good.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Pre-school, and subsequently Reception, with varied levels of skills and knowledge but which are at least average for their age. Although Reception staff do not do home visits, generally good induction arrangements ensure that children feel safe, are well cared for and establish good relationships with adults and other children. They play together confidently and safely and behave well. Both Pre-school and Reception promote children's social development well. However, provision in other areas is at times over-formal. A tendency for adults in Pre-school to do too many things for the children inhibits opportunities for them to develop independence. In Reception, some overuse of templates and worksheets limits opportunities for children to become inquisitive independent learners. Overall, however, progress is good, leading to standards that are above average by the end of Reception. The pace of learning is more rapid in Reception than in the Pre-school. Staff promote physical development well and children make good use of the attractive, well-resourced outside learning environments. Children have good opportunities to make choices in the outdoor area, although interventions by adults are not always timely enough so that learning is moved on rapidly. Outcomes suggest that, in general, the school is particularly successful in promoting learning in mathematics. That said, children are articulate and present their ideas thoughtfully. The school ensures that regular assessments take place. All areas of learning are planned for and these are evident in teachers' detailed weekly planning. School leaders have a view of what needs to be done in the Early Years Foundation Stage in order to improve provision. The immediate challenge, however, is to continue to build collaboration between the Pre-school and Reception, to ensure that existing good practice is shared and developed.



**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

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

The great majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are delighted with the school and what it offers their children. As one said, 'My child has gone through the school enjoying every day at St Joseph's. A wonderful environment to be educated in.' Most appreciate the level of care their children receive, the progress they make and the support provided by the staff in this close community. Only a very few concerns were raised, mostly related to the circumstances or experiences of individual pupils, while a few parents were concerned about the impact of recent staff absence on their child's learning. The inspection evidence indicates that the school has dealt in the best way it could with recent staff temporary absence due to health problems.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 80 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 190 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	76	17	21	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	61	76	18	23	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	48	60	30	38	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	50	63	25	31	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	53	66	26	33	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	55	69	22	28	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	54	68	25	31	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	49	61	29	36	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	60	31	39	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	50	63	26	33	2	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	53	33	41	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	49	61	28	35	3	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	69	24	30	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## 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	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.

**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 July 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, South Woodham Ferrers CM3 5JX**

Thank you for making us welcome and sharing your views about the school during our recent visit. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing your work in lessons. We found that yours is a good school.

Our main findings are these:

- you work hard and behave outstandingly well
- you are making good progress across the school and standards are high by the end of Year 6
- you undertake lots of jobs and make an outstanding contribution to the school and local community
- teaching and learning are mostly good and sometimes outstanding, and you feel that teachers make lessons enjoyable and support you well
- you attend school as often as you can, mostly feel safe and have a good awareness of the importance of eating healthily and staying fit, with a high proportion of you taking part in sport and physical activities at school
- you have a chance to attend an outstanding variety of clubs and out-of-school activities
- those of you who find learning difficult get good support
- school leaders work hard to ensure that you are well looked after.

We are asking the school to make these changes so that you can do even better:

- make sure that there is a strong partnership between the Pre-School and Reception class so that they help each other with planning and work together to do things as effectively as possible
- give you more opportunities to be independent and actively involved in your lessons, and give you clearer advice about how to improve your work.
- ensure that you make better use of your really good skills in writing and mathematics to produce high quality work in other subjects.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

George Logan

Lead inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**