

St Joseph's RC Primary School, Halliwell, Bolton

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 105223 |
| Local Authority | Bolton |
| Inspection number | 355729 |
| Inspection dates | 19–20 October 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Angela Milner HMI |

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

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|--|--|
| 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 | 200 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Fr Pat Tansey |
| Headteacher | Mr Paul Lock |
| Date of previous school inspection | 25 September 2006 |
| School address | Shepherd Cross Street Halliwell, Bolton Lancashire BL1 3EJ |
| Telephone number | 01204 333055 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. Fourteen lessons and seven teachers were observed. A joint observation of a lesson was conducted with the headteacher. Meetings were held with staff, pupils, representatives of the governing body and the local authority. Inspectors looked at the school's work, pupils' books and a range of documentation including: improvement planning, monitoring information and the school's assessment and tracking systems. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their work in lessons and around the school were also observed. Seventy five questionnaires from parents and carers were scrutinised as were 110 questionnaires from pupils and 16 from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The attainment, learning and progress of current pupils, especially boys in writing and pupils at Key Stage 1.
- The impact of initiatives to improve the quality of learning and progress.
- The use made of assessment information to enhance learning.
- The effectiveness of initiatives to improve attendance.
- The school's capacity at all levels for sustained improvement.

Information about the school

St Joseph's is a smaller than average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average but few pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is well above the national average. The school has achieved the Activemark. At its previous inspection, in October 2009, the school was given a notice to improve. The headteacher has been in post since 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: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

St Joseph's is a satisfactory and improving school which promotes pupils' personal development well. Great importance is placed on caring for children and ensuring they enjoy learning in a safe environment. Pupils are well behaved in class and around the school. They understand and respond well to the school's high expectations for their behaviour and show respect towards others. Attendance is average, having improved after concerted action by the school since the last inspection.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 with broadly average attainment. Progress is satisfactory and increasingly good where the teaching is good. Pupils' attainment and progress in writing is improving because of recent initiatives to narrow the gap between boys' and girls' achievement. Attainment at the end of Year 2 dipped in 2010 with underachievement in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly for boys. Local authority-led interventions are being used to deal with these issues and inspection evidence shows that pupils in Key Stage 1 are currently making satisfactory and sometimes good progress in their learning. Although children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress from their starting points, too few children reach age-related expectations by the time they enter Year 1. Opportunities are missed to engage children's enthusiasm by creating an attractive and motivating learning environment in the classroom and outside area, and in promoting their learning and development through play and effective interaction with adults.

The school is fully aware of the need to continue to raise attainment and to accelerate the progress pupils make. Good teamwork in school and effective support from the local authority has ensured initiatives, designed to improve learning and the amount of progress pupils make, have become embedded quickly. Pupils now make more rapid progress in their learning because the quality of teaching and teachers' use of assessment information has improved significantly since the last inspection. Leaders are striving to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. They are aware that teachers and teaching assistants need to continue to share best practice and consistently provide activities which meet the precise needs of pupils, enabling them to reach their potential. Marking is regular and encouraging but does not always give clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work. Pupils' attainment is held back by the legacy of previous underachievement and gaps in pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT).

The effective and purposeful leadership of the recently appointed headteacher sets a clear direction for school improvement. Improvements since the last inspection and the school's

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accurate self-evaluation of its effectiveness show the school's capacity for improvement is satisfactory and the school is suitably placed to continue to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - sharing best practice in teaching and learning to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good or better
 - ensuring that teachers consistently make effective use of assessment information to provide activities which meet the precise learning needs of pupils
 - ensuring pupils know how to improve their own work.
- Improve the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - creating an attractive and motivating learning environment in the classroom and outside area
 - ensuring opportunities for learning through play are planned in detail so that adults can effectively interact with children and help them to make more rapid progress in their learning and development.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils enter the school with a range of skills and abilities that are well below age-related expectations. They make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Progress in Key Stage 1 and 2 is satisfactory and increasingly good where pupils receive good quality teaching. Pupils' progress is monitored carefully so the school can identify when pupils are in danger of slipping behind in their learning. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those pupils who speak English as an additional language, is regularly discussed by teachers and teaching assistants. The effectiveness of intervention strategies is carefully measured to ensure pupils receive effective next-step support in their learning, including from outside specialists when necessary. This ensures these pupils also make satisfactory progress. Pupils are keen to learn. Good relationships between adults and pupils ensure the majority of pupils work productively in lessons. They are usually engaged in interesting tasks and have the opportunity to talk about their learning and work collaboratively with others.

Pupils' attainment in writing in 2010 remained below that in reading and mathematics and this remains a focus for school improvement. The gap between boys' and girls' achievement in writing has narrowed because boys are now well motivated to write. For example, in an excellent lesson in Year 5, all pupils were totally engaged in writing descriptions for characters from Roald Dahl's stories. Pupils have regular and sustained opportunities to learn and to practise their writing skills in English lessons and to use them purposefully across a range of other subjects. The school makes good use of annotated

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displays of exemplary writing to remind pupils about what constitutes good writing. Pupils aspire to receive the recently introduced headteacher's award for their improved writing.

Pupils report that they enjoy school and feel safe and secure. Behaviour is good and has improved as a result of the recently introduced and very clear systems of rewards and consequences. This reflects the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils eat healthily when at school and show their awareness of the importance of exercise through their good participation levels in the popular gymnastics club, a variety of sporting activities and daily aerobics sessions. Pupils make a good contribution to their own school and play an active role in the local community providing concerts and raising money for a number of charities. The school makes strenuous efforts to improve attendance and punctuality, including effective use of a parent champion. As a result, attendance has improved to average from inadequate at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' good personal development, combined with satisfactory academic outcomes and attendance, means that they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 3 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹ | 3 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 3 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 2 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹ | 3 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

¹ 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 teaching remains satisfactory overall, there are clear signs that it has improved since the last inspection and has had a significant, positive impact on pupils' learning and progress. The proportion of good teaching is increasing. Teachers and teaching assistants

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are working well in partnership as co-teachers. They use a wide range of teaching strategies to engage pupils in their learning. Pupils are clear about the adults' expectations of what they should be learning in each lesson and how it fits with work they have done before. Pupils are given success criteria by which to judge their work and are very clear about the targets they are working towards. Marking is regular and encouraging. There are examples of good practice, but marking does not consistently give clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work. Teachers are beginning to involve pupils more in assessing their own and other pupils' work.

Teachers' planning builds on previous teaching and learning, is detailed and informed by accurate assessment information. This means that work is generally matched to the pupils' levels of ability with appropriate levels of challenge for higher-ability pupils and additional support for lower-ability pupils. Less is done to ensure work is well matched to the needs of middle-ability pupils and to the individual needs of children, particularly in the Reception class. In the best lessons, the adults make effective use of questions and answers, as well as their observations, to ensure pupils' learning is checked regularly and the work is continually adapted to meet their needs. For example, the teacher and teaching assistant were able to spot Year 2 pupils' misconceptions in mathematics and to make effective use of focused teaching in 'cut-away' groups to remove potential barriers to learning. When questioning and when the information from the monitoring of pupils' work is not used well enough to amend activities as lessons proceed, the pace of learning slows and progress remains satisfactory rather than good. Pupils' learning also lessens when pupils are expected to sit and listen for too long.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and provides a broad range of experiences. It is enhanced by a range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities. This includes visits out of school which have a positive effect on pupils' learning and well-being. Pupils are keen to demonstrate their skills in modern languages during registration time. A strong focus on improving writing across the curriculum means that pupils now have good opportunities to write at length in a range of subjects and this is helping staff to develop a more skills-based approach to the curriculum.

The good levels of care, support and guidance provided for pupils are strengths of the school. Following the last inspection, academic support has improved considerably. This is because teachers and leaders now have accurate assessment information that tells them how well pupils are progressing in their learning. As a result, underachievement is systematically identified and appropriate action is taken to resolve it.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 3 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 3 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 3 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 2 |

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How effective are leadership and management?

The newly appointed headteacher is keen to build on the school's improvements and has enthused staff, governors and pupils with his vision and clarity. Expectations have been raised. There is a shared determination to move the school forward. Much has been achieved in laying the foundations for further rapid improvement, based on a realistic evaluation of how well the school is doing and prioritising improvements to ensure weaknesses are tackled. The environment has been enhanced to create a positive and purposeful climate for learning in most of the school. There are good systems in place to check the progress of pupils, to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and to hold staff to account. A strong team ethos based on improvement is evident.

Regular monitoring of teaching, staff development and local authority support have been particularly effective in improving the quality of teaching and assessment since the last inspection but there is still some variation across the school. Nevertheless, the school is now in a stronger position to use information from the close tracking of

pupils' progress to inform school improvement planning.

Staff have worked hard to enhance the school's engagement with parents and carers who feel better informed. They are particularly appreciative of the recent introduction of weekly newsletters and daily texting systems to celebrate pupils' achievement. The school promotes community cohesion well. The school is a cohesive community. There are good partnerships with the local church, a number of external agencies in the local community and with a school in Spain. The school promotes equality satisfactorily, ensuring all pupils are included and reach satisfactory outcomes.

The effectiveness of the governing body is satisfactory. Governors are increasingly well informed, supportive and involved in the life of the school. Recent training from the local authority has enabled them to have a better understanding of their role in holding the school to account and in self-evaluation procedures. Statutory responsibilities are met and safeguarding arrangements are secure. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 3 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 3 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 3 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children enter the Reception class with a range of skills and abilities which are well below those expected for their age. There are particular weaknesses in language and communication and children's personal and social development. The progress children make in their learning and development is satisfactory. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language also make satisfactory progress because their needs are identified and appropriate support is provided. However, too few children make the progress needed to reach age-related expectations by the time they enter Year 1.

At the time of the inspection, children were new to the school. Appropriate links are made with a range of pre-school settings and parents and carers to ease the process of induction to school. Children are happy and cared for well. There are good relationships between the children and the adults who care for them. Welfare requirements are met and promoted. Children feel safe and gain confidence quickly, sharing and playing well together. They meet weekly with their 'key worker' to identify what they would like to do the following week. This ensures activities are based on children's interests.

The outdoor environment has been improved since the last inspection. However, opportunities have been missed to engage children's enthusiasm by creating an attractive and motivating learning environment with continuous provision of some activities in the classroom and outside. Planning for learning through play lacks structure and the detail required to ensure adults can effectively interact with children, extend their skills and help them make more rapid progress in their learning and development.

Work is planned on a weekly basis to ensure it covers all of the required areas of learning. There is an emphasis on the development of reading, writing and numeracy skills in

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whole-class carpet sessions at snack time. A regular programme is in place to teach children how to link letters and sounds. Effective assessments are made of the children's development and learning. Improvements to the assessment system mean that adults can build up a picture of each child's achievements through their 'learning journey' folders and identify those children who need more focused help with their learning. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers are highly supportive of the school and are happy with the quality of education and care the school provides for their children. Written comments indicate that parents and carers welcome recent changes introduced by the new leadership team. As one parent put it, 'We have noticed a marked improvement in the leadership of the school, communication with parents and children's behaviour'. In the main, inspection evidence supports parents and carers positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Joseph's RC Primary School, Halliwell, Bolton 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 75 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 200 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 47 | 63 | 27 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 45 | 60 | 27 | 36 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 35 | 47 | 34 | 45 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 37 | 49 | 35 | 47 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 39 | 52 | 34 | 45 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 35 | 47 | 35 | 47 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 31 | 41 | 41 | 55 | 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) | 26 | 35 | 38 | 51 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 32 | 43 | 41 | 55 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 34 | 45 | 32 | 43 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 27 | 36 | 38 | 51 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 33 | 44 | 36 | 48 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 40 | 53 | 34 | 45 | 0 | 0 | 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 | 58 | 36 | 4 | 2 |
| Primary schools | 8 | 43 | 40 | 9 |
| Secondary schools | 10 | 35 | 42 | 13 |
| Sixth forms | 13 | 39 | 45 | 3 |
| Special schools | 33 | 42 | 20 | 4 |
| Pupil referral units | 18 | 40 | 29 | 12 |
| All schools | 11 | 42 | 38 | 9 |

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support. |
| 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.



21 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's RC Primary School, Halliwell, Bolton, BL1 3EJ

Congratulations! Your school no longer requires significant improvement: it provides you with a satisfactory education. The school takes good care of you and you get the help and support you need to help you to learn. This is because teaching is better than when inspectors came to the school in October 2009. Well done to your headteacher, teachers and teaching assistants too! You are all now making better progress in writing and you are reaching the standards that pupils in other schools do in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. This is because teachers and teaching assistants have made learning more interesting and have involved you more in your own learning. The school has worked hard to keep track of how well you are doing and to improve the attendance of some of you. .

To help your school become even better I have asked governors and staff to continue to ensure you do as well as you can and to make more progress in your learning. I agreed with the school that this should be done by:

- ensuring that teachers share what they do well with each other
- asking teachers to use the information they collect, on how well you are doing, to plan activities that will help you learn even more
- asking the teachers and teaching assistants to tell you exactly how to improve your work.

I have also asked the school to make improvements to the classroom and outdoor area used by Reception children so they can learn more when they are playing, and for the adults working with Reception children to help them to learn as much as they can before they move into Year 1.

You should be very proud of the part you have played in helping to improve your school. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Angela Milner

Her Majesty's Inspector

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