

St Joseph's Catholic Combined School, Poole

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113831
Local Authority	Poole
Inspection number	357432
Inspection dates	25–26 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Stephen Lake

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

Type of school	Middle deemed primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–12
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	358
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Gregory
Headteacher	Ally Mullany
Date of previous school inspection	15 January 2008
School address	Sancreed Road Poole BH12 4DZ
Telephone number	01202 741932
Fax number	01202 710593
Email address	stjosephsschool@poole.gov.uk

Age group	4–12
Inspection dates	25–26 November 2010
Inspection number	357432

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 assesses 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 0300 1234 234, or email 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.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

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

T: 0300 1234 234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 26 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 15 teachers. Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, teachers and groups of pupils and spoke with individual parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation including the school development plan, minutes of meetings of the governing body and assessments of pupils' attainment and progress. Inspectors analysed questionnaires returned by pupils, staff and 124 parents and carers.

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

- Is teaching sufficiently challenging to ensure that the achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 and of more-able pupils at all key stages is good?
- What is the impact of the change to shared leadership?
- What effect are the strategies to improve boys' writing having, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage?

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average school of its type, serving, mainly, the two Roman Catholic parishes of Our Lady of Fatima, Parkstone, and St Joseph's, Branksome. Many pupils also come from across the town. The majority of pupils are White British, but the proportion from other cultural and ethnic backgrounds has increased since the last inspection. More pupils than average speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. The largest identifiable groups are those with speech and communication difficulties and those with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Other groups include moderate and specific learning difficulties and physical disabilities. After the last inspection, the school incurred a very high budget deficit and a member of staff was, subsequently, convicted of misappropriating funds. Significant changes of senior staff, including the appointment of the current headteacher, have occurred in the last two years. The school holds the National Healthy School status. A before-school club is run by the school.

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

This is a good school. It has many areas of strength but underpinning these is the outstanding and pivotal contribution made by the senior leaders and governing body. Rigorous and accurate evaluation of the school's performance is used extremely effectively in a very well-targeted school development plan. Engagement with parents and carers is excellent and partnerships make an outstanding contribution to the significant improvements taking place. The outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage has settled into a much-improved learning environment this term as a result of excellent budget management, enabling a major change in the provision. Pupils are mature, confident learners who enjoy school and make an outstanding contribution to it and the local community. They have a fully secure understanding of how to stay safe and how to keep fit and healthy because of the excellent care, guidance and support they receive in a context of meticulous safeguarding.

Pupils achieve well. Children make excellent progress in Reception to enter Year 1 with skills that are above average. By the time pupils leave the school at age 12, attainment is above that normally found at this age and progress is good. Attainment in reading and mathematics is high, but attainment in writing is slightly lower. In Years 5, 6 and 7, many pupils with English as an additional language and with special educational needs and/or disabilities struggle to reach average standards in writing. Progress through the school is a little uneven. Pupils make their best progress in Years 1 and 2 ♦ where it has improved significantly ♦ and in Years 5, 6 and 7. Progress in Years 3 and 4, particularly but not exclusively in mathematics, is less secure. In a few lessons, teachers do not use information on pupils' prior attainment well enough to plan work to challenge all, especially the more able, to achieve of their very best. The good curriculum provides many opportunities that enrich pupils' personal development. Outstanding provision for promoting community cohesion contributes extremely well to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The revised leadership team shares responsibilities well and has a very clear picture of school strengths and areas for improvement. There is substantial evidence to show that significant strengths have been maintained since the last inspection and much improvement has taken place in teaching quality, progress and attainment. This positive track record shows the school has good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in Years 3 and 4 so that progress, particularly in mathematics, matches that in other parts of the school by:

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

- ensuring assessment information is used more effectively to set challenging work for all pupils, especially the more able
- sharing the best practice seen in marking to ensure that, in all books, marking gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work ? improving the pace of these lessons.
- Embed the strategies for improving writing more securely in Years 5, 6 and 7 to ensure that attainment in this skill rises to match that in reading and mathematics for these year groups.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. Attendance has improved and is satisfactory. Learning in most lessons observed was at least good and, sometimes, outstanding. In Year 7, most pupils are on track to achieve ever-more challenging targets this year, which, if attained, will represent outstanding progress in English and mathematics. Progress in science is good.

Children start in Reception with skills below those normally found at that age and make good progress to the time they leave school. Achievement is improving in Years 5, 6 and 7, especially in mathematics, because the work provided challenges them effectively ♦ as it does in Years 1 and 2. In a lesson for a class of Year 1/2 pupils, all, especially the boys, made excellent progress developing their speaking and writing skills through a 'hot seat' challenge, where a pupil acting as Cinderella had to sit in front of the class and answer questions. Every question and every answer had to include at least one 'describing' word. Challenge was steadily increased by the teacher demanding more complex and interesting adjectives, which enabled pupils to develop more complex sentences. Progress is less in Years 3 and 4 because too few lessons challenge pupils in this way, especially in mathematics. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and or disabilities, especially those with speech and language difficulties, receive excellent support from teachers and the capable teaching assistants. This enables them to be fully included in lessons and make the same progress as other pupils. Individuals make outstanding progress in short periods of time and come off the school's register of special educational needs because their attainment rises to that expected. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology are above average and high-quality work was observed in art and music.

Pupils from all ethnic groups show each other mutual respect and work together harmoniously. Pupils feel very safe in school. They reported no bullying and trust the adults to deal with any that might occur. Pupils demonstrate great maturity in the polite and courteous way they speak with visitors. Pupils make an excellent contribution to school life by taking on a wide range of responsibilities. For example, Year 7 pupils support younger ones in the dining hall at lunchtime. Pupils take advantage of the many opportunities for physical activity in the school grounds and after school. They are enthusiastic about the opportunities that they have to keep fit and healthy, as noted by the award of National Healthy School status. The large majority of pupils behave extremely well but a few presents challenging behaviour at times on the school playground. Pupils have an excellent understanding of right and wrong, feel valued and show respect for themselves and for others. They have a good understanding of many cultures in other parts of the world. This was recently recognised in an outstanding

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

contribution made by the school to the local community. Pupils developed their 'peacing one world together' theme which focussed on celebrating cultural diversity by leading a day in a local park for over 2,000 pupils from more than 20 local schools. The intention is that these pupils return to their own schools to spread the good practice. Older pupils have a range of jobs and responsibilities within the school that they apply for each year. Skills gained from the above activities together with pupils' good basic skills mean they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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?

Pupils learn well in this school because of the good and sometimes outstanding teaching. Robust actions by senior staff and recent appointments have strengthened teaching considerably. The large majority of teachers prepare lessons that stimulate pupils to learn. Information and communication technology is used well to support teaching and to ensure that the different learning styles of pupils are accommodated. Most teachers are skilled at knowing just what to ask to pupils to challenge and extend their learning. In a mathematics lesson observed, pupils gained a good understanding of the term 'product' as a result of challenging and well-paced questioning. Assessment information is used effectively in most lessons to plan work that challenges pupils to achieve their full potential, but there is some inconsistency. In a few lessons, especially in Years 3 and 4, more able pupils are not challenged enough and the pace of these lessons is too slow.

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

Many books are marked well and contain helpful comments that guide pupils to improve their work but this is inconsistent, especially in Years 3 and 4.

The well-structured curriculum makes learning interesting and ensures many highly motivating experiences for pupils that contribute well to their outstanding personal development. Visits such as that to Leeson House, locally, or to London enhance the learning experiences and enable key skills to be used across the curriculum. The school recognises that cross-curricular links are not fully embedded to improve pupils' writing further. Strong links with a school in London help deepen pupils' understanding of varied cultures and community cohesion, building effectively on the good knowledge that they gain in this multicultural school.

Pastoral care is exemplary. All pupils, especially the vulnerable, are cared for extremely well. Excellent links with outside agencies ensure high levels of support for pupils with complex physical or medical needs. Great care is taken to ensure that pupils are given high-quality guidance on how to stay safe, especially when using the internet. Close liaison with parents and carers and the local authority has enabled the significant improvement in attendance that has taken place in the last two years. The before-school club provides high-quality support for those pupils who attend. Many also take advantage of the healthy breakfasts available to ensure a good start to the day.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and revised leadership team together with the the governing body have embedded among staff a commendable drive and ambition to improve the school. Morale is high and all leaders have a clear vision of how improvement can take place. The recent changes to the leadership structure are engaging subject leaders and middle managers much more effectively in supporting school improvement. Some are very new in post and are just developing the skills required to support senior staff in monitoring teaching and learning more consistently. The school is careful to tackle any incidents of discrimination and equality of opportunity is assured by the great care taken to monitor the progress of all individuals and groups. Safeguarding requirements are outstanding and monitored rigorously through the partnership between the staff safeguarding team and that of the governing body. Child protection procedures are meticulous and well known by all staff. Excellent links with and beyond the local community promote community cohesion very effectively and the impact of strategies is constantly evaluated by senior staff and governors to ensure best practice.

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

The governing body supports and challenges the school very well, visiting it regularly to monitor its work. Governors are particularly effective at managing a very tight budget and have enabled curriculum and staff development to take place, while also removing the inherited large deficit before the set date.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

This area of the school is exemplary. Changes to the leadership and management have had a significantly positive impact on the provision. A rich and stimulating environment provides for all areas of learning very well and assessment procedures are effective. All staff work together in a seamless and highly effective manner. The excellent links with parents and carers and pre-school playgroups and well-established routines ensure that children make a very good start to school. High- quality care helps children to feel very secure and confident and welfare needs are fully met. For example, when children enter at the start of the day, they place their registration photograph in a box that reflects how they feel. Any that choose the 'Mr Worried' box are spoken to immediately by a member of staff.

Consistently high-quality teaching means that children now make excellent progress. They start Year 1 very well prepared for learning and with skills that are above average. An exciting and creative curriculum gives time for children to explore, practise and develop skills and consolidate their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. This is helping improve boys' writing skills rapidly. The new outdoor area is used very well. There is an excellent balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities. Children's personal development is excellent. They display very positive attitudes and learn to relate extremely well to others. There are excellent links with parents and carers and with

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

external agencies that provide additional support to meet the individual needs of the children extremely well.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers are very pleased with the school. Many chose to make written comments to support their views. Typical of these comments are: 'All the staff I have had contact with are very professional but they also care about our children.' Another states: 'My son has shown a marked improvement in his work and is 100% happier socially.'

There are no areas where a significant number of parents and carers were concerned, although a few expressed concerns about knowing how well their children are doing or the way in which children with particular needs are supported. Inspectors judge that parents and carers are kept well informed and that children's individual needs are met very well.

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 Combined 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 124 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 358 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	76	61	44	35	3	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	74	60	49	40	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	53	43	61	49	7	6	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	39	67	54	8	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	68	55	51	41	4	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	62	50	54	44	8	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	57	46	64	52	2	2	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)	53	43	61	49	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	58	47	57	46	6	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	49	40	63	51	5	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	54	44	61	49	4	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	65	52	59	48	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	79	64	43	35	2	2	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.



27 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Combined School, Poole, BH12 5DZ

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school and for talking to us about the things that you like there, as well as filling in the questionnaire.

Yours is a good school. We agree that it looks after you very well and helps you learn.

- You get an excellent start to your school life in the Reception class.
- Your achievement is good and your attainment is above average because of the good teaching you receive.
- Your school makes learning interesting and fun because of the wide range of activities provided for you. It is no wonder that you enjoy school so much.
- The school looks after you very well, especially those of you who have additional learning needs, which is why your understanding of how to stay safe and keep healthy and fit is outstanding.
- You make an excellent contribution to the running of your school through the school council and other jobs that you do, and you also contribute very well to the local community. Your understanding of how to get on with others is excellent.
- The school is led and managed very well by your headteacher and the other leaders.

To help make your school even better we have asked the staff and the governing body to:

- improve teaching in Years 3 and 4 by making sure work planned really challenges all of you, especially those who learn quickly ♦ you can help by telling your teacher if work is too easy
- help those of you in Years 5, 6 and 7 to improve your writing to match your attainment in reading and mathematics.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Lake
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. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.