

St Joseph's RC Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108724
Local Authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	356419
Inspection dates	28–29 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Gordon Potter

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	194
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Ailine Gibson
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Seagrove
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2008
School address	St Joseph's Way Hedworth, Jarrow Tyne and Wear NE32 4PJ
Telephone number	0191 5364311
Fax number	0191 5371641
Email address	office@st-josephs-pri.s-tyneside.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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Manchester
M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 24 lessons, saw eight different teachers and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers, and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school policies and documentation relating to safeguarding (care and protection of pupils), examples of pupils' work, assessment data and monitoring records. They also scrutinised the 85 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, as well as 94 questionnaires from pupils and 11 questionnaires from school staff.

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

- Whether teaching is good across school and if lessons have appropriate pace and challenge so that all groups of pupils, especially boys and lower attaining pupils, can make good progress to attain standards which are above average overall.
- Whether the curriculum provides sufficient opportunities for pupils to explore so that they can enjoy their learning and make good progress.
- Whether actions taken by the senior leadership team are sustainable and sufficient to ensure that capacity for sustained improvement is at least satisfactory.

Information about the school

This school is a smaller than average for a primary school. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is average. The school achieved Healthy School status in 2010. The headteacher has been in post since September 2008 and the deputy headteacher 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

This is a satisfactory school. All staff offer sensitive care and support so that pupils feel safe, behave well and have a strong sense of how to help others. Pupils clearly understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and contribute strongly to the school, through the school and Eco councils. They have a good understanding of different faiths and cultures and of Great Britain as a diverse, multicultural society because the school actively celebrates its Catholic ethos and pupils' spiritual awareness. Accordingly, parents and carers are supportive of the leadership of the school and how it supports pupils' social and moral development. There are well-developed partnerships with outside agencies to support pupils with a range of complex needs, to develop enterprise skills and to encourage attendance. However, attendance is average because too many parents and carers take holidays during term-time.

The headteacher has striven to improve the school's effectiveness, to raise attainment and increase pupils' progress. Supported well by the new senior leadership team, self-review has improved and the school is gaining a clearer picture about the school's strengths and a vision of how to improve. Strategies have been initiated to develop the curriculum, improve the quality of teaching and the use of information about pupils' progress. These changes are starting to benefit the school and to ensure that pupils now make the expected progress, after a decline in previous years. However, capacity to improve remains satisfactory as many key roles and responsibilities are still developing and initiatives have not yet had time to impact on pupils' attainment, which remains broadly average at the end of Year 6.

The curriculum has a strong emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills in English and mathematics. It helps them to see the links between subjects and offers opportunities to write at length. In the better lessons, teachers make clear what pupils will learn, involve them in interesting activities, which are based on pupils' own interests, use effective questioning and check pupils' understanding as the lesson progresses. However, teaching and progress are satisfactory overall because, in many lessons, teachers offer too much help, opportunities are missed for pupils to learn together in investigative and practical activities, the pace of learning drops and pupils' progress slows. Improved tracking systems provide teachers with much useful information about pupils and their progress. They use this to provide pupils with targets for improvement and older pupils are clear about the level of their work. However, these targets are not as yet sufficiently focused or acted upon regularly enough to have a real impact on the progress pupils make. Information about pupils' skills and abilities is not well used to plan work that is closely matched to the needs of individual pupils. This is also evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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Up to 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the summer 2012, further increase the rate at which children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils throughout the school make progress to raise their attainment to higher levels, by:
 - increasing the proportion of good teaching, ensuring that all lessons have appropriate pace and challenge and that pupils have sufficient opportunities to work together, solve problems and apply their skills in practical and investigative activities
 - using information about pupils' progress more effectively so that work is matched accurately to the needs of individual pupils
 - ensuring that pupils' targets in Key Stages 1 and 2 are sufficiently challenging, reviewed regularly and used more effectively to increase the progress pupils make.
- Raise attendance by continuing to work closely with families to help them ensure their children come to school regularly.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their work is satisfactory. Pupils are polite, have good attitudes, form positive relationships and are eager to do well in their work. In lessons, they especially enjoy challenging and lively activities, such as researching and writing about spiders or the Spanish Armada or talking and writing about their visit to the Seven Stories book gallery. Occasionally, too much emphasis on repetitive, mundane exercises limits the pupils' enjoyment and progress.

The skills and abilities with which children enter school are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Pupils, including boys and lower-attaining pupils, make satisfactory progress to attain standards which are broadly average at the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress as a result of the sensitive support they receive.

Pupils care for one another well. They have respect for each other and for the adults in the school. They are confident that they know exactly what to do in the event of a concern. Pupils are well aware of the importance of a healthy diet and of taking plenty of exercise. This is reflected in the high take-up of healthy school meals and their involvement in break-time play, physical education, extra-curricular activities and sports teams.

Pupils make a strong contribution to the school community through the Eco council, which is planting trees in the school grounds, and the school council which has contributed to developments in the playground. They willingly take on roles, such as Young Sports Leaders and as playground friends, helping everyone to behave well and feel safe. Older pupils look after younger children and help with their reading. They support a range of charities and participate in activities with other local schools and the church. Average attendance and improving basic skills, allied to pupils' good skills in team work,

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participation in enterprise activities and confident use of information and communication technology (ICT), mean that pupils are well equipped for their future economic well-being.

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	2
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?

Teachers strive to make learning fun. They make it clear to pupils what they will learn and how they will know if they have succeeded. Questions are used effectively to ascertain what pupils already know, check that they have made progress and offer pupils sufficient opportunities to develop their ideas. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to learn by talking to their friends or through practical activities, including research and using ICT. There are positive relationships and teachers and teaching assistants interact with pupils to support them in their learning. Despite these many good features, teaching is satisfactory overall because in many lessons, the pace of learning drops and teachers offer too much information, limiting opportunities for pupils to get on with tasks or to explore together. Work is not always well matched to pupils' individual abilities because information about pupils' skills and abilities is not yet used well enough to ensure that activities are sufficiently challenging for all pupils.

The curriculum makes a positive contribution to the improvements now being seen that ensure pupils make the expected progress. A strong focus on the development of basic skills in English and mathematics is raising pupils' attainment. There are effective procedures for pupils to learn and apply their skills in ICT and strong practices to promote

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reading. Learning is more purposeful because pupils recognise the links between subjects, for example, writing reports about science experiments, historical events or visits they have made. Well-planned enrichment activities, including visits to job fairs and places of worship, promote pupils' understanding of the world of work and other faiths and cultures. The many popular extra-curricular clubs help pupils to develop their skills in sporting and environmental activities, including gymnastics, recycling and the development of the woodland.

All staff have detailed knowledge about individual pupils so that they are well cared for and increase their self-esteem, respect and sense of responsibility. Effective links with outside agencies support pupils and their families. The school has robust procedures to monitor attendance, which is improving, and no pupils are persistently absent. However, some pupils miss too much school because their parents or carers take holidays during term-time. Well-established and effective practices involve parents and carers when their children enter school, move from class to class and transfer to secondary school.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, well supported by the governing body and the senior leadership team, has a clear view of what needs to be done to improve the school. As a result, the school has detailed plans for development, which include robust time-scales, rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluation and identified responsibilities. All staff value the opportunities to participate in this planning process, contribute to school improvement and to advance their professional development. However, the effectiveness of leadership and management as a whole is satisfactory as some senior leaders are new to their roles and initiatives have not become sufficiently embedded to have an impact on pupils' attainment. This can be seen especially in the monitoring of teaching and learning, which is developing, but not yet effective enough to eradicate the identified weaknesses.

The governing body is effective. It follows established procedures to evaluate subject areas and this has enabled members to be influential in bringing about change and challenging the headteacher.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are good, as all aspects meet government requirements and procedures are rigorously in place to monitor and review their effectiveness and to ensure pupils' safety. The school has effective links with outside agencies to support the pupils' wide ranging needs, including partnerships to develop pupils' learning, understanding of the wider world and economic awareness. There is a commitment to promoting equal opportunities and to ensuring that discrimination against

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any group is avoided at all times, although this is satisfactory because, as yet, pupils' progress is not rapid enough.

The school is proud of its inclusive nature and makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Pupils have a clear understanding of Great Britain as a diverse, multicultural society and of life in other countries. The sense of community in the school is strong and there are good links with the local community. The school has good relationships with parents and carers, who are provided with frequent information about their children and how to support their children's learning at home.

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	2
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	2
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

Children make satisfactory progress from their starting points and enter Year 1 with abilities typically in line with the national average. Children particularly enjoy engaging in role-play activities, for example, as the teacher or in their kitchen. Construction activities, such as building structures with blocks or creating a pool for water play, are also very popular. Recent developments in provision and resources are helping children overcome a legacy of missed opportunities for outdoor play.

Work is increasingly based on detailed observations of children's learning. However, there is too much teacher direction and activities are not always clearly matched to what children need to learn next. Children enjoy lively and effective interventions by their teacher, especially the highly challenging teaching of linking sounds and letters to groups of children. Staff ensure that requirements regarding children's safety are rigorously met. They encourage children to share, to take turns and to behave well so that they develop into confident and caring individuals. Children show independence and a good understanding of how to stay healthy, when they register themselves and enjoy healthy snacks and drinks.

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The Reception class teacher has a developing understanding of how children learn and uses continuing professional development to further her expertise and confidence. The shared leadership role with the deputy headteacher has not as yet fully developed. Positive partnerships with parents and carers enable children to settle quickly into the Reception class and clear arrangements exist for transition into Year 1. There are plans to share children's learning experiences more closely with parents and carers.

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

The parents and carers responding to the questionnaire strongly support the school and its leaders and how they meet their child's needs, ensuring their child is healthy and safe. The inspection findings reflect these positive views. Almost all parents and carers believe that teaching is good and that pupils make good progress. While the inspection acknowledges that the school strives hard to achieve these things, inspectors believe that opportunities are missed to give pupils sufficient hands-on learning opportunities or to make work challenging enough and this slows pupils' progress.

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 Voluntary Aided 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 85 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 194 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	54	37	44	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	55	65	30	35	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	37	44	42	49	6	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	42	43	51	5	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	42	49	41	48	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	38	41	48	10	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	40	49	58	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)	31	36	46	54	4	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	46	44	52	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	35	42	49	5	6	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	38	38	45	8	9	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	35	41	46	54	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	42	49	40	47	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



30 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's RC Voluntary Aided Primary School, Jarrow, NE32 4PJ

On behalf of the inspection team, thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school.

You go to a satisfactory school and your teachers know how to make it better. The team was impressed by your behaviour, politeness and the care you show for one another in the playground and around school. Your teachers take good care of you, try to make your work interesting and help you to work hard. You told us that you look forward to coming to school because you like your teachers, the visits you make and the after-school clubs. Your teachers have agreed with me that there are some things which can make your school even better.

- To help you reach higher standards at the end of Year 6, by offering more pace and challenge in your lessons and providing more opportunities for you to investigate, solve problems and apply your skills in exciting activities.
- Make sure that your targets are challenging and checked more regularly so that you can make more progress.
- Make sure that all the information that teachers have about how well you are doing is used to plan work that is at the right level of challenge for all of you.
- Work with your parents and carers so that more of you attend school more regularly.

You can help by continuing to do your best and attending regularly. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon Potter
Lead inspector

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