

St Joseph's RC Primary School, Todmorden

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107560
Local Authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	356180
Inspection dates	11–12 April 2011
Reporting inspector	Terry McDermott

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	113
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Fiona Monaghan
Headteacher	Mrs Maria Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	27 November 2007
School address	Wellington Road Todmorden Lancashire OL14 5HP
Telephone number	01706 812948
Fax number	01706 811870
Email address	headatstjosephstod@yahoo.co.uk

Inspection number 356180

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 123 4234, 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 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons, observing five teachers. They held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, looked at its methods for tracking pupils' progress, and at a range of school documents, including its policies, minutes of governing body meetings, monitoring records, an extensive sample of pupils' work, and reports from the School Improvement Partner. Twenty-five responses from parents and carers to the Ofsted questionnaire were received and considered, along with questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.

- Inspectors checked whether the school's self-evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning is valid.
- The reasons behind the apparent lack of improvement in the academic outcomes reached by pupils since the last inspection.
- The reasons for the school considering the pupils' personal development to be good.

Information about the school

St Joseph's is much smaller than the average-size primary school. Pupils are currently taught in mixed-age classes, in pairs of year groups, throughout the school. The number on roll is rising. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is below average. The proportion of pupils who are believed not to speak English at home is average. Almost all are from a European background. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, as is the proportion which has a statement of special educational need.

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. It has good features in its Early Years Foundation Stage, which gets children off to a good start and lays solid foundations for future learning. There are also strong features in its curriculum and the care guidance and support it provides for all pupils, which lead directly to their good personal development.

Pupils' academic achievement is satisfactory overall. Children join the school with standards below those normally expected for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. When they join Year 1 standards are broadly average. By the end of Year 6, attainment in English and mathematics remains broadly average. Inspection evidence shows that some pupils are now learning well and making good progress, though the legacy of slower progress caused by weak teaching in the past still affects the long-term achievement of older pupils. However, the learning of a majority is only satisfactory because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across school. This is the same as at the time of the last inspection.

Pupils and their families are well-known to staff. Links between school and home are strong. Support for pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable is good, and this allows them to take a full part in what the school has to offer. Pupils have good attitudes to learning in lessons, built successfully on strong Catholic foundations of respect and tolerance. Their personal development is good. Teaching is at its best when encouraging pupils to work independently. It is less effective when teachers give the same extended explanations to mixed-age classes. Pupils listen politely, but then engage in learning with enthusiasm when given the opportunity to find things out for themselves. Good assessment arrangements give an accurate picture of what pupils know and can do, but this information is not always used to best effect when planning work in lessons. This slows pupils' progress. The interesting and wide-ranging classroom curriculum is being reorganised to present more opportunities for pupils to practice their previously learned skills across a range of subjects.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Self-evaluation is accurate when it measures the school's effectiveness in terms of pupils' achievement. Other evaluations are less reliable because they do not always objectively measure the amount of pupils' learning in lessons. Nonetheless, leaders and governors do have an accurate picture of the school's weaknesses, and are fully committed to tackling them. The school has satisfactory capacity to secure further improvements.

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.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of the quality of teaching throughout the school by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to find things out for themselves
 - marking pupils' work regularly and informatively in different subjects so that pupils know with certainty what they have to do next to improve
 - using information about what pupils already know and can do to set work in lessons which accurately meets the different learning needs of each pupil
 - sharing examples of best practice widely across the whole school
 - ensuring that the skills of support staff are always used to best possible effect throughout lessons.
- Check more closely on the quality of learning taking place in lessons and other activities by:
 - making greater use of monitoring and evaluation opportunities to measure how much pupils are actually gaining from different activities
 - involving more adults in the rigorous evaluation of the effectiveness of both pastoral and academic outcomes for pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Learning seen in lessons during the inspection was satisfactory overall, though it is often better than this for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils like being in lessons and they are keen to learn. They willingly do as they are asked by teachers, and try hard with their work. When given opportunities to carry out investigations, or to work in a group to solve a testing problem, they apply themselves well. They are generally well-behaved, and work sensibly when not directly supervised. When the work set is either too easy or too hard, some pupils become restless or distracted, which limits their learning. Pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to make satisfactory overall progress by reaching average standards in English and mathematics. All groups of pupils make at least satisfactory progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The significant minority of pupils from European backgrounds who speak English as an additional language make the same satisfactory progress as that of their classmates because of the good support they receive from bilingual support assistants.

Pupils say they enjoy coming to school because 'we have lots of friends'. They say there is very little bullying, though they are well aware of what to do should it occur. They have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lives and know broadly how exercise helps their bodies to work more efficiently. They know where dangers can lurk in the outside world and how to avoid them. They are proud of their school and are keen to take up positions of responsibility as school councillors. They give generously to charities such as Cafod and St Joseph's Penny. They have a good understanding of the difficulties faced by other children in different parts of the world. The growing links with schools in Poland, through the Razem project, and Hungary, and with schools of different character in the local area, have had a marked impact on pupils' perceptions of the world. This contributes significantly to the good community spirit within the school and to the effectiveness of the school's work in promoting an understanding of, and respect for, diversity. When they

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

leave the school at the end of Year 6, pupils are polite, reliable and well-balanced young citizens with average levels of attainment. They are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education and their lives.

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	2
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?

Good relationships between adults and pupils are a common feature of all lessons. Classes are well managed. The best lessons move forward smartly, with all pupils being expected and trusted to work hard and think for themselves. This was seen to good effect in a mixed Year 1 and Year 2 numeracy lesson. Pupils gained a good understanding of the concept of division by using penne pasta pieces to share different amounts between 2. No pasta was spilt or misused. Some other lessons did not give pupils the same opportunities. Some pupils said that work they were set in lessons was 'quite easy'.

The marking of pupils' work is of inconsistent quality. Some is marked regularly and gives clear guidance for improvement. Other work is merely acknowledged cursorily.

Skilful teaching assistants are deployed well when pupils are working and engaged in learning, but their skills are often underused at the beginning of lessons. Teachers and other adults have limited opportunities to share good practice and to learn from each other.

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 curriculum is good. It is enhanced by a clear Roman Catholic ethos of reflection and consideration for others. The strong focus on subjects such as music, including violin tuition for all Year 3 and Year 4 pupils, the Anglo-Polish choir, and geography, enables pupils to experience at first hand the cultural and artistic dimensions of learning. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their practical classroom experiences, as well as the good range of outings, visitors and after-school clubs.

The good care, guidance and support provided for pupils give them a strong sense of security. They solidly underpin their enjoyment of school and build their self confidence. Arrangements for the transitions pupils make when they join school, within school, and when they move on, are good. The school quickly recruits assistance from outside professional and other agencies should the need arise, and is persistent in following through difficult issues. The school's methods of recording pupils' pastoral progress are very complicated. This makes tracking difficult and the retrieval of information laborious.

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?

Staff and other adults in the school have a common desire to do their very best for the pupils in their care. Leaders at all levels have until recently not maintained a sharp enough focus on pupils' learning when they monitor the effectiveness of lessons and other activities. Improvement plans cover a wide range of areas, but lack a crisp and incisive identification of the most pressing priorities where success can be measured.

Governance is satisfactory. Members of the governing body give generously of their time and want the school to do well. They are now beginning properly to hold the school to account for its performance. The school takes its responsibilities for child protection and safeguarding very seriously because the promotion of pupils' individual interests is central to all of its work. Safeguarding requirements are met well. The unanimous views expressed by pupils, by parents and carers, and by staff, demonstrate this. There is no discernible bias or discrimination here because pupils openly recognise and celebrate diversity. All adults ensure that pupils have good equality of opportunity to be a part of everything the school has to offer.

The school's provision for community cohesion is good. Its internal and local dimensions are strong. Through its links with other schools and communities outside its immediate local area and in Europe, the school is extending pupils' appreciation and understanding of other communities both nationally and globally. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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 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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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 usually join Nursery class with skills lower than the normal expectation for their age. Good links with parents and carers contribute well to the smooth start children make, and to the steadily rising number on roll. Children settle quickly into a happy and bright learning environment. They identify rapidly with the calm, patient and caring examples set by the adults. They soon learn to play and work together in harmony, behaving sensibly, and sharing their toys and their thoughts well. There is a good balance between adult-led activities and those which children choose for themselves, both indoors and outside. These are linked together and contribute well to children's good progress in all areas of learning. They experience a range of real situations to extend their understanding of the world, not least through a camera set in a bird-box which provides exciting live pictures of wild creatures nesting and rearing their young. Children talk and write about this with a clear sense of wonder. Their role play of the Palm Sunday story, done with reflection and reverence, set a strong foundation for the good personal development that is continued in later years throughout the school. Children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress because teaching is good. By the time they start Year 1, their attainment is broadly average.

Leadership and management are good. Adults make effective use of information they hold on what children know and can do to plan the next steps of their learning, though this is not always recorded clearly enough to improve the progress children are making. Welfare requirements are met.

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

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
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

A smaller proportion of parents and carers than is usual responded to the Ofsted questionnaire. They were unanimous in their view that their child is safe in school. The very large majority were strongly in support of the school. A very small minority of parents and carers felt that their child was not making enough progress in school. Inspectors found that overall progress in the school is satisfactory. A very small minority of parents and carers did not feel that the school met their children's needs well enough. The large majority of parents and carers who expressed their views held more positive opinions. Inspectors' views are expressed in the report.

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, Todmorden 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 25 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 113 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	60	9	36	0	0	1	4
The school keeps my child safe	14	56	11	44	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	8	32	14	56	2	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	8	32	14	56	2	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	9	36	14	56	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	56	9	36	2	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	60	9	36	1	4	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)	6	24	17	68	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	32	14	56	2	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	32	16	64	1	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	5	20	17	68	1	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	5	20	17	68	1	4	1	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	11	44	12	48	1	4	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.



13 April 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's RC Primary School, Todmorden, OL14 5HP

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. It was a pleasure to talk with such polite, friendly and honest young people.

We found that St Joseph's is a satisfactory school because it helps you to make satisfactory progress. We also found that some parts of the school are good. The Early Years Foundation Stage (that's the Nursery and Reception classes) gets children off to a good start in school. Adults in the school take good care of you and give all of you the little bits of extra support you might need from time to time. The curriculum (that's the things you get to learn about and do) is also good, and helps you develop into responsible and sensible young people.

However, there are some things which the school could do better, so I have asked the adults in the school to do the following:

- make sure that the work set for each one of you in lessons is neither too hard nor too easy
- make sure that when marking your work they always give clear guidance to help you get better, no matter what the subject might be
- provide you with more opportunities to work things out for yourself, and spend less time explaining what you are going to be doing
- check more closely that you are actually increasing your understanding or learning new things in lessons and in other activities
- make sure that all adults take every opportunity to help you to learn.

You can help in these by letting your teachers know, politely of course, if you are finding the work they set for you too hard or too easy. May I give you all my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Terry McDermott

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 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.