

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Exmouth

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113431
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	357349
Inspection dates	21–22 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Brian Evans

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	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Russell Morris
Headteacher	Cathie Doyle
Date of previous school inspection	16 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 19 lessons and parts of lessons taught by nine teachers. Meetings took place with the Chair of the Governing Body and a number of staff, parents and carers, and groups of pupils. The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at documentation, which included the school improvement plan, assessment information, safeguarding documentation, curriculum planning and samples of pupils' work. Inspectors analysed the results of 77 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, and took account of the views expressed in the pupils' questionnaires.

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

- The impact of interventions since September 2011 to raise attainment in literacy and in numeracy.
- The impact of the acting headteacher on raising attainment since April 2011.
- The work of the governing body and its impact on achievement within the school.

Information about the school

St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary is an average-sized primary school. The school recruits pupils from a very wide area of South Devon. The great majority of pupils are from White British heritages. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language but this is slowly increasing. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. There is a breakfast club every morning and there is an independent pre-school not managed by the governing body on the same site. The school has Healthy School Plus status as well as a number of other awards. The acting headteacher took up her post at Easter 2011.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Joseph's is a good school and has improved significantly since the last inspection, when it was deemed satisfactory. In the current Year 6, for example, pupils came into school with skills well below the levels expected for their age. However, nearly all groups of pupils have made good progress, especially in the current year, and in English and mathematics their attainment is now average. Higher-ability pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, boys and girls, are progressing well. Parents and carers state that their children enjoy school, and pupils agree with them.

The acting headteacher leads the school well. Morale is high for staff and pupils. Self-evaluation procedures are good and the school's improvement plan is rigorously reviewed by the governing body. Governance was deemed inadequate at the last inspection. However, the range of expertise on the governing body now has supported the recent rise in the school's achievement. The successful focus on providing outstanding equal opportunities for all pupils is reducing quickly the gaps in pupils' achievement. Pupils are very clear about their role in helping others to stay safe. For example, Reception Year children have 'buddies' in Year 6. They feel extremely safe in school. The success of present interventions and the good progress this year show that the school has good capacity for sustained development.

Good teaching and learning result in pupils' good progress. Where teaching is most effective, assessment information is used well to plan lessons which match the learners' starting points. Feedback to learners tells them how to improve. A particular feature of the marking in pupils' books in all years is that questions asked by the teacher are expected to be answered in writing by the pupils. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of how well they are doing. However, the pace of learning is not challenging enough in most lessons to be outstanding. The successful assessment procedures used in English and mathematics are not well established across other subjects. Pupils' good progress in learning basic academic skills is aided by the well-established partnerships with external agencies and good relationships with parents and carers.

As a result of the school's and parents' and carers' rigorous efforts, attendance is above average. The school gives a clear and consistent message to parents, carers and pupils about the importance of attending school and the link with achievement. Pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding but their understanding of, and the possibilities for interaction with, the diversity of communities and cultures in the United Kingdom is not so well developed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning further by:

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- ensuring teachers consistently challenge pupils and increase the pace of learning
- applying the successful assessment techniques in writing and mathematics to other areas of the curriculum.
- Extend the opportunities for pupils to understand the diversity of communities and cultures and to interact with other groups within the United Kingdom.

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

Pupils make good progress in their learning, so that their attainment is average by the time that they leave the school. Overall, they achieve well and enjoy school. Attainment on entry can vary very considerably from year to year but, as a result of good teaching, attainment across the school has steadily risen in English and mathematics over the past year. Convincing overall data for Year 6 in both English and mathematics show that pupils are on track to reach average attainment. Excellent paired work in a Year 6 numeracy lesson allowed pupils to learn well from each other. Good use of peer assessment in Year 5 and Year 2 classes shows that these pupils are reaching above-average attainment. However, in a Key Stage 2 numeracy lesson, the pace was slow because the teacher had not used assessment information well enough to help develop pupils' problem-solving and investigative skills quickly enough. Displays around the school show that pupils are helped to develop their writing skills across the curriculum. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and most teachers set tasks that match their learning needs.

Pupils are polite and well mannered in welcoming visitors to the school. They are very keen to learn and so concentrate well and work hard in the classroom. Behaviour in the playground is supportive and relationships are good between all age groups. Low-level disruption emerges when the pace of learning is slow. Assemblies raise pupils' self-esteem and have helped build their confidence in speaking publicly at these sessions. For example, Year 6 presented four-minute 'playlets' about books they have read to pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5. Pupils eat healthily and regularly take part in initiatives such as 'fruity Friday' when pupils are encouraged to eat fruit. An active and imaginative school council has initiated many projects with parents and carers, such as the 'outdoor classroom' which has just been built. Pupils respond thoughtfully to opportunities for reflection. Resources in the playground and field are very good. There are high levels of participation in extra-curricular activities. Pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, although cultural development is less well developed in some respects.

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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	3
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	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	2
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?

Teaching is consistently good across year groups and there is some outstanding teaching. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in teaching and learning. They are well briefed by the teachers and work effectively with small groups of higher-ability pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A Year 2 lesson began with a very effective question-and-answer session by the teacher on mood and atmosphere in a poem. As a result, many pupils made outstanding progress in their writing. Specialist spaces are used well; for example, the information and communication technology (ICT) learning area was used effectively by all classes working on numeracy and literacy software.

The curriculum is focused on active learning and motivates pupils well. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson, pupils were able to create an electrical circuit to light a battery-powered bulb. Transition arrangements from pre-school settings and on to secondary school are effective. The school offers a very wide range of sporting and musical extra-curricular activities. Year 6 pupils go on a valuable residential visit to Dartmoor.

Teachers and support staff provide good care, guidance and support and liaise well with parents and carers. Care, support and guidance are very good. The school provides good support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Targeted support for individuals and groups through specific programmes develops pupils' self-esteem and confidence.

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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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Staff work very closely with the acting headteacher. The management of teaching and learning is emphasised in the school improvement plan and the impact of good leadership by the acting headteacher is evident in pupils' rising attainment. Effective work by all senior leaders and managers can be seen in the development of a school ethos that is friendly, welcoming and mutually supportive. Statutory duties are reviewed regularly and meet requirements, including the good procedures relating to safeguarding. The protection of children is embedded in all aspects of school life. Policies and their impact are reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that they reflect best practice and are followed consistently by all staff. Outstanding, concerted action to promote equal opportunities and the effective tackling of any discrimination lead to harmony across all groups and have improved the performance of all groups of pupils, especially those who need additional support.

Professional support and staff training days, especially in mathematics, are regularly used to raise awareness of teaching and curriculum issues and to improve practice. Parents' and carers' responses show that they are well informed and engaged in their children's learning.

The governing body has been especially effective in working with the acting headteacher. For example, one meeting each term is spent in the school watching teachers and pupils in action. The promotion and impact of community cohesion have some excellent features; a good example is the school's involvement in the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD). Pupils also study and understand that communities and cultures in other parts of the world can be different. An understanding of the diversity of lifestyles within the United Kingdom is not as well developed.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	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	1
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Transition between the pre-school and the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children make good progress. An inclusive ethos and an 'open-door' policy engage parents and carers well in their children's learning. Behaviour is good and parents and carers say children are safe. Attendance is good and supports the good ethos and relationships in the setting.

The assessment of children is clear and accurate. Groupings of children are modified through the year. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with appropriate visual support from classroom assistants and teachers. Staff have a good knowledge of the children which supports their learning effectively. Partnerships with outside agencies are good. Learning profiles are well annotated and contain notes and photographs for all areas of learning.

The children are confident, independent learners and behave well both when working with adults and when working independently. In the Reception class, there was very supportive teaching from the teacher and teaching assistant in helping the children in their literacy and numeracy. Children are encouraged in their writing. Adults support them to use their phonics (the links between letters and sounds) and keyword knowledge when writing on a topic.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader's very high aspirations for the children drive the planning for the development of the setting. Consistency in assessment and teaching is monitored well.

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

Parents and carers are generally pleased with the school. One noted that 'it is now a very happy place for the children'. A parent with a child with English as an additional language is very happy with the support her child is given. In their responses, almost all parents and carers state that their children enjoy school and feel very safe. The quality of pastoral care, the curriculum, and opportunities for extra-curricular activities were highly praised. There are clear procedures for parents and carers to contact the school should they have a reason.

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 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 77 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 202 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	58	28	36	3	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	50	65	26	34	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	32	42	41	53	4	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	40	39	51	3	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	38	49	37	48	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	38	42	55	4	5	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	40	44	57	0	0	1	1
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)	28	36	40	52	4	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	40	41	53	3	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	26	45	58	6	8	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	36	40	52	8	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	35	45	40	52	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	60	29	38	1	1	1	1

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



24 June 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Exmouth
EX8 1TA**

We are writing to let you know how much we enjoyed our visit to your school. We judge St Joseph's to be a good and improving school. We agree with you that the school does many things well for you, which helps you to be happy and successful learners. Your responses showed us that you are very proud of the school.

These are the main findings of the inspection.

- You are making much better progress in writing and numeracy than at the time of the last inspection.
- Your personal development is outstanding. You feel very safe at school, contribute well to the local community and have a good understanding of adopting healthy lifestyles.
- The good levels of care, guidance and support provided by the school allow you to flourish as learners and develop good levels of independence.
- The partnerships are good between the school, your parents and carers, outside agencies and yourselves.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding, and you have helped the teachers and teaching assistants in making it so.
- Displays around the school are well illustrated by you.
- The school has immense resources for active learning we were impressed by Year 2's battery electricity work.

We have asked the school to build on the good start this year. We have asked teachers to set a brisk pace within lessons, to challenge you more and assess work across all years in other aspects of the curriculum, just as in mathematics and English. We have also asked the school to help you to learn about some areas of the United Kingdom which are different to your own. All of you can help, too, by continuing to work hard with your teachers and all adults, and by maintaining your enthusiastic approach to learning.

Yours sincerely

Brian Evans

Lead inspector

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