

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111386
Local Authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	356900
Inspection dates	21–22 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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	290
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Stephen Dwyer
Headteacher	Miss Janina Chwastek
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2008
School address	Woodford Lane Winsford Cheshire CW7 2JS
Telephone number	01606 288044
Fax number	01606 863552
Email address	head@stjosephs.cheshire.sch.uk

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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors who observed 22 lessons taught by 11 different teachers. The inspection team examined the school's policies, assessment information, pupils' work, teachers' plans and school improvement planning. They held discussions with the headteacher, staff, members of the governing body and pupils. The inspectors analysed 38 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and others by pupils and staff.

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

- Whether children's progress in communication, language and literacy in the Early Years Foundation Stage is fast enough.
- The breadth and balance of the curriculum and how well it meets the pupils' needs and promotes enjoyment.
- Whether the school's strategies to raise attendance are effective.
- How well all leaders and managers evaluate performance and bring about improvement.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average primary school. The large majority of the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. An average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. A breakfast- and after-school club is run by the school and the governing body and this was part of the inspection. The school has a number of awards including Healthy Schools and Activemark.

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 Catholic Primary is a good school. Effective leadership and strong teamwork among the staff have brought about considerable improvements since the last inspection. Pupils are achieving well because of good teaching and systematic assessment procedures. They enjoy the much improved curriculum which is imaginative and well planned. Good care, guidance and support and the very positive school ethos contribute well to pupils' good personal development. The school effectively engages with parents, carers and other agencies.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start. They make good progress in all areas of learning, including communication, language and literacy. Good progress continues in Key Stages 1 and 2. The school has successfully implemented a range of strategies to accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment. By the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment is above average.

Teaching has improved and teachers are using a wider range of effective methods than at the time of the last inspection. There are examples of outstanding teaching and leaders plan to share this practice more widely. Teachers' explanations, instructions and questioning promote learning well. Assessment is used successfully to plan teaching and to match tasks to pupils' abilities. Pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve because teachers set individual learning targets for writing and mathematics. Occasionally, introductions to lessons are too long and pupils are not actively involved in their learning. Opportunities are sometimes missed to use a wider range of information and communication technology (ICT) resources to enhance pupils' learning. The curriculum has exciting topics with good links between subject areas. It is enriched with a good range of clubs and visits.

Pupils make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They are friendly, polite and show considerable consideration for others. Pupils are enthusiastic learners who relate well to adults and to their peers. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils feel safe and well cared for at school because of the good attention given to safeguarding. They show a good understanding of leading a healthy lifestyle. Pupils make a valuable contribution to the school and to the wider community. The school works hard to improve attendance but it is still the low side of average. A few families are not supporting the school sufficiently in the efforts to raise attendance.

The headteacher's determination and focused leadership are at the heart of the school's success and improvements. She has successfully built a strong staff team where there is a clear commitment to continuous improvement and raising pupils' achievement. The senior leadership team and subject leaders are effectively involved in monitoring and developing their areas of responsibility. Through accurate and systematic evaluation, the school knows what it does well and identifies key areas for improvement. Clear planning and

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positive action have improved many areas of provision and this has had a positive impact on pupils' achievement and on their personal outcomes. Since the last inspection pupils' progress, their personal development and teaching have improved from satisfactory to good. The curriculum has developed from inadequate to good. The school demonstrates a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Work more closely with the few families whose children's attendance is low in order to raise their attendance and the school's overall attendance to above average.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and learning by extending the sharing of the best practice and ensuring that:
 - learning time is maximised and pupils are fully active in their learning in all lessons
 - the use of ICT is extended to support pupils' learning.

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

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills lower than those expected for their age, particularly in language. They make good progress in all areas of learning, and attainment on entry to Year 1 is broadly average.

Across the school pupils show enthusiasm for learning and enjoy the wide range of activities provided. As they told the inspectors, 'We take part in lots of clubs and learn new things' and 'Trips help us with our topics'.

Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2, including the more able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. By Year 6 it is evident from school assessments, the lessons seen and pupils' work that attainment is above average in reading, writing and mathematics and that pupils' achievement is good.

Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening because of the well planned opportunities for them to discuss their learning in pairs and small groups. A structured approach to the teaching of reading contributes to pupils' good progress in this area. Pupils write for a range of purposes. They apply their writing and independent study skills well in other subjects and to topics such as 'investigating inventors', 'black gold', 'animals and habitats' and 'what makes the earth angry?'. Pupils take care and pride in their work and, as a result, it is well organised and neatly presented. Pupils make good progress in mathematics because of good teaching and tasks are well tailored to pupils' needs. They benefit from solving 'real life' problems.

In science pupils enjoy the practical and investigative approaches. In a Year 6 lesson pupils planned and designed an investigation to find out where woodlice preferred to live. They showed a very good understanding of controlling variables and how to make tests fair.

Pupils make good progress in their personal development and demonstrate qualities such as cooperation, kindness, respect, responsibility and self-control well. They feel well cared for at school and know that there are always grown-ups they can turn to for help if needed. They make good contributions to the school and to the wider community. Those

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on the school council represent their fellow pupils. Older pupils take on a range of responsibilities to support the younger ones. The choir and other musicians perform in the local community. Pupils raise funds for a wide range of appeals and charities to help those who are less fortunate than themselves. With good personal, literacy and numeracy skills pupils are well prepared for their next school and for the future.

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	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?

Teaching promotes enjoyment and effective learning for pupils. Pupils told inspectors, 'Lessons are really good'. There were examples of outstanding lessons in Year 6 and in a Year 5/6 class in science and mathematics respectively. In these lessons the teacher's enthusiasm and strong subject knowledge, high expectations and challenging practical approaches led to exceptional gains in pupils' learning. Lessons have a clear purpose and so pupils know what they are expected to learn. Questioning is used effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and to check their understanding. Pupils' interest is sustained because activities are tailored closely to their abilities and needs. Teaching assistants are usually effectively deployed and make good contributions to pupils' learning, particularly for those who need additional help. In just a few lessons the pace of learning slowed with overlong introductions as pupils were eager to tackle the main task. The marking of pupils' work is helpful and constructive and guides pupils' future learning well.

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The development of the curriculum has been a real success story. It is now broad, balanced and exciting. It promotes good academic progress for pupils and contributes well to their personal development. Provision for art is good and there are high quality displays of pupils' work across the school. Health education and the wide range of physical activities provided contribute well to pupils' healthy lifestyles. Pupils in Year 5 have good opportunities to play the clarinet, glockenspiel, trumpet or trombone in the class band and perform publicly. Visiting music specialists make a valuable contribution to this provision. A parent wrote, 'Pupils enjoy the after-school activities'. These are wide-ranging and include art, cheerleading, cricket, football, newspaper and street dance. Visits further enhance the curriculum and pupils' learning. Residential trips to Cumbria and North Wales provided exciting new outdoor experiences such as climbing, canoeing and problem-solving activities.

The very positive ethos and the good care, guidance and support are central to the school's effectiveness. The environment is well organised, safe and secure. Relationships between adults and pupils are very positive. A parent commented, 'This is a caring, friendly and welcoming school'. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with the good support they need. In partnership with other agencies the school is successful in supporting pupils and their families who require additional help. The monitoring and promotion of attendance are leading to steady improvements but there is more to do until attendance is above average. About 20 pupils each day take advantage of the well-run breakfast- and after-school club.

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?

The headteacher and the staff are well focused on promoting good quality provision and positive outcomes for pupils. The leadership and management of key areas such as the Early Years Foundation Stage, the curriculum, English and mathematics are all effective. Leaders and managers are successfully engaged in monitoring performance and bringing about improvements where needed. Teaching is effectively monitored and developed and this has resulted in greater consistency across the school. Senior leaders recognise the need to share the best practice more widely across the school.

Most members of the governing body show a clear understanding of the school's strengths and improvement priorities but some are not sufficiently involved in the school's development. Governors have correctly identified the need to promote the school's success and improvements to the wider community. All statutory requirements are met. Safeguarding is given good emphasis. There are effective policies and procedures to

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protect and safeguard pupils. The monitoring and evaluation of these procedures are rigorous and thorough. All staff are well trained in the area of safeguarding. Safe practices are promoted well through the school's teaching and curriculum.

All groups of pupils have full access to the range of good quality provision and this results in good progress in pupils' learning and development. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and discrimination is very effectively tackled.

The school works hard to build productive partnerships with parents and carers. For example, workshops providing information about letter sounds and numeracy are helping parents and carers to support their children's learning. During the inspection a good number of parents and carers attended a class assembly and a nursery activity.

Community cohesion is promoted effectively. The curriculum successfully promotes pupils' understanding of different cultures and faiths. There are clear plans to further extend pupils' understanding of the diversity within the United Kingdom.

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good leadership and planning are promoting good provision and positive outcomes for children. Children settle quickly because of effective induction arrangements and the school's positive partnership with parents and carers. Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development because of the good emphasis adults give to their care and welfare.

Staff in the Nursery and Reception classes plan exciting activities around themes such as 'dinosaurs', 'pirates' and 'forest creatures'. Children are well taught and make good gains in their learning. There are elements of outstanding practice. Children thoroughly enjoy the wide range of indoor and outdoor activities. Adults assess children's performance well

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and keep effective records of their individual development and progress. There is a good blend of adult-led activities and those chosen by the children. Children have good opportunities to explore, be creative and work independently. Just occasionally, activities lack specific purpose and learning can slow down. The setting rightly places much emphasis on developing children's language skills because a number of children enter with low skills. Children make good progress in speaking and listening because adults successfully incorporate language into all activities. Children enjoy stories and make good gains in acquiring and practising early writing skills. Role play areas are inspiring and reflect the current theme. For example, the 'dinosaur cave' in the Nursery, with model dinosaurs and large model eggs, promoted creativity and language well. In Reception the 'woodland area' was equally successful in enhancing children's enjoyment of learning. The spacious and well-resourced outdoor learning areas encourage children to be active and purposeful learners.

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

The proportion of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire was lower than is normally found for a primary school inspection. However, most who responded are happy with their children's experience at the school. They are pleased with the sense of enjoyment, safety and the additional activities. The inspection findings support these positive views. A few parents and carers expressed concerns about pupil progress and how well the school takes account of suggestions and concerns. Teaching and the curriculum have improved since the last inspection and most pupils are making good progress. The school strives to meet the needs of parents and carers and to take account of their suggestions and concerns. However, the school is not complacent and senior leaders are keen to further extend the partnership with parents and carers.

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 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 38 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 290 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	63	10	26	3	8	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	47	19	50	0	0	1	3
My school informs me about my child's progress	13	34	21	55	3	8	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	32	19	50	5	13	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	13	34	22	58	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	37	20	53	3	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	26	27	71	0	0	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)	9	24	24	63	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	6	16	27	71	4	11	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	24	24	63	2	5	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	16	25	66	5	13	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	34	19	50	4	11	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	37	20	53	3	8	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	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.



23 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Winsford, CW7 2JS

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school, giving us your views and showing us your work. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit. St Joseph's is a good school. It has made good progress since the last inspection. These are the school's main strengths.

- You thoroughly enjoy school and the activities offered.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes have a good start and make good progress.
- You are making good progress because of the good teaching.
- Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- An interesting range of learning activities is provided, including clubs and visits.
- You get on well with each other and your behaviour is good.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and fit.
- You feel safe at school because teachers and other adults take good care of you and the school has good safety procedures.
- You make valuable contributions to school life and to the wider community.
- The headteacher, with good support from others, leads the school well.

We have given your school a few points for improvement.

- A few pupils have poor attendance and are missing out on the good learning opportunities provided. We have asked the school to work more closely with families to help improve attendance where it is low.
- We have asked teachers to ensure that full use is made of learning time in all lessons and that you are fully involved in your learning. We have also asked teachers to provide more opportunities for you to use a range of ICT equipment to support your learning.

All of you can help by continuing to work hard. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts

Lead inspector

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