

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112350
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	378471
Inspection dates	13–14 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Alastair Younger

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	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Noake
Headteacher	Anne-Marie Roeber
Date of previous school inspection	9 March 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Seven lessons were observed with all three teachers observed. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. Conversations were held with several pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at improvement plans, documentation relating to safeguarding and records of pupils' attainment and progress. Twenty three parental questionnaires were analysed.

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

- Pupils' work in mathematics to check whether previous underachievement had been remedied.
- Whether higher attaining pupils were being suitably challenged.
- Whether changes in the provision for Early Years Foundation Stage children were resulting in improved outcomes.

Information about the school

St Joseph's is a smaller than average-size primary school. Nearly all pupils are White British, but a very small minority speak English as an additional language. A greater than average proportion has special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is considerably higher than average. There are similar numbers of boys and girls. All teachers, including the headteacher, have taken up post since the last inspection. The headteacher has been in post for two years.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good, happy and safe school. Many parents and carers and the local authority comment positively about its transformation for the better over the past two years under the inspired leadership of the headteacher. Morale among staff is soaring and all share an outstanding commitment to securing the best possible outcomes for pupils. The immaculately maintained premises have been substantially redecorated and improved to ensure that pupils work and play in a bright, stimulating environment. Finances and the business aspects of the school are exceptionally well managed.

Overall, pupils make good progress from their historically below expected starting points to reach broadly average attainment by the end of Year 6. With rapidly improved teaching over the last two years, pupils are now making securely good progress and achieving well, although there are occasions when higher attaining pupils could be set more challenging work. Pupils behave well and feel exceptionally safe. They are outstandingly well cared for, guided and supported. This includes being served healthy and wholesome food at lunchtimes.

The good curriculum engages pupils in learning and is increasingly well enriched to open up opportunities that would otherwise not be accessible to them, such as the residential trip to London last year. Throughout the curriculum, a love of books is fostered. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to promote numeracy in lessons other than mathematics and more could be done to promote multicultural awareness, in order to help pupils understand the importance of this in terms of cementing community cohesion.

Over the past two years, concerted actions to overcome previously identified weaknesses have in most cases been effective. Staff share a common vision of where improvements could be made, garnered through accurate self-evaluation. They work tirelessly to bring these about. The full benefit of this effort is yet to be realised but children are getting off to an increasingly good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and are subsequently being increasingly well taught and enjoying a rapidly improving curriculum. As such, the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To further raise attainment in mathematics to ensure that teachers identify and plan every possible opportunity to promote pupils' numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics.
- Raise pupils' understanding of how people from other cultures and religions live their lives and contribute to the community as a whole.
- With immediate effect ensure that potentially higher attaining pupils are moved on to more challenging work as soon as it is recognised that they have mastered what is being taught.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Although overall attainment varies from year to year due to small cohorts, the general trend is that pupils' attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6. In general, attainment in mathematics has been lower than that in reading and writing but current evidence indicates an improvement in pupils' performance in this subject. Higher attaining pupils do not always make the same good progress in lessons as other groups of pupils because their learning is not always moved on at a fast enough pace.

Good progress is clearly evident in lessons. This includes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Pupils work hard and behave well. They know what they need to do to improve and continually strive to avoid careless mistakes and produce their best work. They concentrate well, pay attention to instructions and clearly enjoy their lessons. Pupils are proud of their achievements, for example, the mural depicting wolves, which enhances a communal area.

Pupils are energetic. They enjoy the bracing air at playtimes and participate enthusiastically in physical activity. The school plays a prominent part in the local community, with pupils entertaining older residents and participating in many church and parish activities. Pupils are strongly encouraged to develop aspirations in accordance with their individual talents, be they related to sport or academic furtherment. Their attendance is above average and in combination with good achievement, their prospects for future economic well-being are good. Pupils cultural, especially their multicultural, awareness is a weaker area of their personal development because in a predominantly White British community they have few opportunities to witness how people from other cultures and religions live their lives.

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

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good. It has some outstanding features, such as the quality of planning and the clarity with which learning objectives are set. Very good attention is also paid to the deployment of highly skilled teaching assistants to best effect, often in helping lower attaining pupils. Classroom organisation and management and the creation of bright and stimulating learning environments are also strengths. Although the new school year was only into its second week, pupils' work was already on display and achievement being celebrated. Teachers constantly check that pupils are paying attention and understand what is expected of them. Assessment is generally used well to support learning but very occasionally pupils, especially those of higher ability are not moved on to more challenging work quickly enough when it is evident they have mastered what is being done. While in nearly all lessons teachers show perceptiveness in how each lesson can contribute to the furthering of pupils' literacy skills, they are less skilled in promoting numeracy across the whole curriculum.

The curriculum meets pupils' needs well. There is a good focus on promoting basic skills but not at the expense of providing pupils with aesthetic, physical and practical experiences that they cherish and which enrich their lives. Last year's residential trip to London broadened pupils' horizons enormously. Many had never been away from home before. This trip strongly enhanced pupils' enjoyment of science through visits to the Natural History Museum and the London Aquarium, gave them a rare insight into a multicultural community and reinforced in them the importance of ensuring personal safety. The power of teaching through books is strongly promoted throughout the curriculum and this is clearly evident in pupils' confidence in handling them and using them for reference as well as enjoyment as a matter of routine. Cross-curricular provision is mainly good, but stronger in literacy, and information and communication technology than in numeracy. However, an increasingly effective range of intervention activities, often with a focus on numeracy is helping to close the gap in attainment between literacy and numeracy.

This is an outstandingly caring and supportive school. There is perceptive and early identification of pupils who may be at risk of not thriving and intervention to support them is rapidly and effectively introduced. Pupils are fully aware of who to turn to if they are troubled and are confident that adults are there to help and protect them and lead them towards happiness. Staff have a deeply embedded understanding of the difficulties occasionally faced by pupils and their families. Parents and carers express deep gratitude for the help they are given at these times.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Within two years, the outstanding headteacher has galvanised a relatively young and inexperienced staff into a highly ambitious and effective team. Improvements have been seen across the board. Teaching has been greatly improved through the astute appointment of energetic and dedicated staff with a commitment to teamwork and to raising standards. Good is not enough for the current staff team; they share a commitment to be outstanding.

Governance is satisfactory. Several members of the governing body frequently visit the school and gather information about its performance, using this information to hold the headteacher to account. The governing body as a whole is hugely supportive but not particularly proactive.

The school is good at supporting parents and carers to help their children. Simple advice is often welcomed, such as encouraging their child to pack their own satchel to promote independence or asking them to make sure their child speaks clearly, right to the end of each sentence. The school works well to promote equality of opportunity for all pupils. There are no signs of discrimination. In such a small school, differences in performance relate more usually to individuals than to groups.

Safeguarding procedures are good. Recommended good practice is routinely well followed. Parents and carers express full confidence. Staff are well trained and informed in matters of child protection. Pupils have a very strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe and what constitutes an unsafe situation. The school itself operates as a totally cohesive community and this sense of community extends to pupils' families and into the village as a whole. There is limited evidence of success in promoting community cohesion further afield, especially in communities of a more diverse religious or ethnic nature.

These are the grades for the 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	3

The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2
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Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is growing in strength. Children have access to a vibrant indoor learning environment and a developing outdoor one. Outcomes are good. Reception children had only been attending for a few days prior to the inspection but they showed confidence, had adapted well to routines and emanated a sense of security. Children are well taught within a good range of teacher and child-led activities. They are given a good degree of choice as to how and where they prefer to learn and develop. Assessment of children's progress is good and has been validated by an independent advisor as accurate. It shows that many of last year's Reception children are already well on course to attain higher than average standards as they progress through the school. Leadership and management are in the hands of a relatively inexperienced but refreshingly innovative teacher under the watchful eye of the headteacher. The staff team works very well, with a common sense of purpose and mutual understanding and a commitment to improvement.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are glowing in their praise for the school. Many are keen to identify the headteacher as the catalyst for the improvements in the school over the past two years. Criticism of how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour relates to a single issue. Other minority dissenting views refer mainly to the mixed-age grouping of pupils in Key Stage 2 and to individual concerns rather than whole school issues. In a school of this size this is largely unavoidable and inspectors feel that the situation is well managed to avoid any detrimental impact.

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 inspector received 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 55 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	13	57	9	39	1	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	74	6	26	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	15	65	8	35	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	70	6	26	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	74	6	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	48	11	48	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	39	13	57	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)	11	48	10	43	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	43	12	52	1	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	43	11	48	2	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	52	11	48	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	65	8	35	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	74	5	22	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 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.



15 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Frizington, CA26 3PX

Thank you for making our visit to inspect your school so enjoyable. You did yourselves proud. You convinced us as to how much you enjoy school and how much you feel that it is getting better day by day. Thank you especially to those of you who shared your views with us at playtimes and talked about your work

St. Joseph's is a good school. It is a happy and safe place in which you are being well taught and, as a result, are making good progress. You are being exceptionally well cared for, guided and supported and this is the mainstay of the sense of optimism and happiness you show.

You behave well and work hard. You concentrate in lessons and play just as hard as you work. You have made the little children who have just arrived welcome and are looking after them well. Some of you may remember your own experience of starting school.

We always leave a school with some suggestions as to how it could improve. In this instance we feel that even more could be done to improve your numeracy and more could be done to help you to understand how people in other communities live. We have also asked teachers to be more aware of when you could be doing harder work. This is where you can help, by letting your teachers know.

On a more personal note I would like to wish you all well for the future and let you know what a pleasure it was to spend a very happy two days with you.

Yours sincerely

Alastair Younger
Lead inspector

