

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106943
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	377498
Inspection dates	17–18 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Andrew Clark

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	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Position Vacant
Headteacher	Emma Lear
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 13 lessons and parts of lessons led by eight teachers. They held meetings with representatives of the governing body, the staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation and essential policies including those for safeguarding, the school improvement plan, information about pupils' progress and attainment data. They analysed 51 completed questionnaires from parents and carers, as well as questionnaires completed by staff.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether teachers have high expectations for pupils of all abilities.
- Whether pupils are sufficiently involved in assessing and improving their own learning.
- The extent to which pupils use their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in other subjects.
- Whether all school leaders contribute well to school improvement.

Information about the school

St Joseph's is an average-size primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The majority of pupils are from White British families. The school has achieved several awards including the Activemark and Healthy School status.

The headteacher has been appointed to the school since the previous 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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. The clarity of vision of the headteacher, with enthusiastic and able support from staff and the governing body, ensures that pupils of all abilities are eager to learn and achieve well. The rich curriculum and the good care, guidance and support contribute significantly to pupils' exemplary behaviour and outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The role of middle and senior leaders has recently been reviewed and new procedures for monitoring and evaluating, while good overall, are not yet fully established. However, self-evaluation is supported by effective systems to gather and act upon the views of pupils, parents and carers and involve them well in decision-making and school improvement. The school has developed well since it was previously inspected and has a good capacity for further improvement.

The school is successful in helping pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to make good progress overall and reach challenging targets. Pupils' attainment is above average in English and mathematics by time they leave school in Year 6. Pupils' have a good understanding of how to stay safe from harm. They are extremely friendly and considerate towards each other and have an excellent understanding of right and wrong. They are very mature, reflective and aware of the needs of others. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to live a healthy lifestyle and take full advantage of challenging physical activities, such as multi-sports. They make a good contribution to the school and local community and some pupils are, for example, actively involved in organising many fund-raising events.

The quality of teaching is good. It is sometimes outstanding. Relationships are excellent and teachers make lessons exciting through the stimulating use of information and communication technology (ICT), games and puzzles. Lessons are brisk and challenging. Very occasionally, the work during lessons is not matched closely enough to consistently meet all pupils' learning needs. In these lessons, pupils do not always make the best progress they could. Teachers make good use of marking to identify areas for improvement. However, strategies to involve pupils fully in assessing and improving their own work and, therefore, extending their understanding of what is expected of them, are not consistently employed. The lively and imaginative curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills through many different subjects. A wide range of

extra-curricular activities promote pupils' personal development and well-being. Teachers know their pupils well and track their progress very carefully. Sharply-focused support ensures pupils at risk of falling behind also make good progress. Parents and carers are proud of the school. The comment, 'St Joseph's is a lovely school. My children are so happy and so lucky to have such a friendly and dedicated team of teachers and teaching assistants,' reflects their views.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Hasten pupils' progress and increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring that pupils' learning needs are accurately met throughout the lesson
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to assess, manage and improve their own work.
- Ensure all leaders and managers contribute to school improvement through sharply focused monitoring and evaluation.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils achieve well and take pride in their work and present it carefully and neatly. They enjoy learning and read fluently and accurately. Writing is also strong and pupils of all abilities write with imagination and care for a wide range of purposes. They enjoy working independently or with others and make good use of different sources of reference such as ICT and dictionaries. They combine their skills in writing, mathematics and ICT effectively to produce exciting multi-media projects, such as 'Hogwart's Hat Shop' and work based on first-hand links with African children. Pupils apply their good calculation skills in science and design technology activities. Pupils are increasingly developing the skills to be self-critical and analytical about their own work and progress, but this is less well established than other skills. Overall, however, pupils' learning capabilities are well developed and contribute to their good progress and future well-being.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are generally typical for their age. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics through Key Stages 1 and 2. More-able pupils make good progress and rise to the challenge of very clear targets. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress developing both their basic skills and very positive attitudes to learning. This is reflected in positive trends in the results of national tests and a range of assessments. Very occasionally, relative weaknesses in the quality of teaching mean pupils do not make the very best progress they can. The well-planned curriculum ensures that both boys and girls achieve well in a wide range of subjects and there are many examples of good quality work in art, design and technology, history and science throughout school.

Pupils work and play in harmony. Older pupils take good care of younger ones. Behaviour is excellent in the classrooms and outside. Pupils show kindness and

consideration towards each other and are attentive to adults and other children. Pupils have an excellent capacity to consider others' viewpoints and a realistic and deep understanding of many social, moral and religious issues. They express this extremely well in written work, discussions and role play. Pupils say they feel safe in school and have a good knowledge of safe and unsafe situations. They understand what constitutes a healthy meal and older pupils are well versed in how to avoid the dangers of alcohol and drugs. They improve their physical capabilities through the sporting clubs and activities. Pupils are competitive and successful. Pupils have a good knowledge and involvement of the school and its immediate community and benefit from the school's strong partnership with parents and carers. They take on responsibilities, such as being school councillors and playground 'buddies', well. Pupils appreciate being actively involved in creating school rules.

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	1
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	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers and teaching assistants work very closely together to ensure pupils of all abilities make good progress. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to outstanding and is good overall. Detailed lesson planning and preparation of resources ensure lessons run smoothly. Teachers and support staff are usually prompt in offering guidance to correct any misunderstanding. Teachers challenge pupils to think deeply and solve problems and carry out investigations by carefully targeting their questions. In most lessons, expectations are high for all abilities and pupils strive hard to meet them. This is particularly evident in the many displays of high-quality and imaginative written and other work throughout school. Very occasionally, teachers do not intervene soon enough to ensure pupils of all abilities are extending their learning and working at the higher end of their capability. In the best lessons, and through effective marking and feedback, teachers encourage pupils to review their own progress and sharply identify the steps to improve their own work. However, this is not a consistent feature throughout school.

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

A wide range of well-planned topics, such as those on local history or science projects about the body, make learning practical and meaningful to all groups of pupils. There are strong links between subjects giving pupils good opportunities to apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in enjoyable and challenging ways. As a result, ICT skills have improved well since the previous inspection. First-hand links with children in Africa and projects, such as Black History week, extend pupils' awareness of those in other circumstances. The school is developing pupils' learning on environmental and sustainable issues. A good range of extra-curricular activities, sometimes in partnership with other schools or sporting organisations, enrich pupils' personal and physical development. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well-planned, as are opportunities for those with a gift or a talent. Pupils have good opportunities to learn another language and participate in musical events. There are very good links with local churches and other schools which contribute to many aspects of pupils' well-being.

The school has good systems to support pupils who are vulnerable due to their circumstances. Enthusiastic and well-trained staff maintain records of pupils' personal development and academic progress, ensuring that their needs are well met. This work is successful in breaking down significant barriers to learning. A good partnership with specialist support agencies is established and early and proactive intervention is assured. The success of the good procedures to ensure pupils' welfare can be seen in their outstanding behaviour and very positive attitudes. Parents and carers receive a good range of information on their children's progress as well as frequent and useful guidance on ways to support their children's future learning. A regular and comprehensive newsletter ensures parents and carers are well informed about all the school has to offer.

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 school's motto of 'caring and sharing' is fully reflected in its positive and all encompassing ethos. The headteacher has established a clear sense of direction for the future following a period of change and temporary leadership. The thoroughness and enthusiasm of all staff to share good practice is becoming increasingly well-embedded in all aspects of its work. Monitoring of teaching and well-planned professional development is leading to increasingly sharply-focused improvements with only a few weaker aspects of provision to be resolved. However, recent changes to staff roles and responsibilities mean that this is not fully established. The school is supported by an efficient and increasingly effective governing body. There have been several changes to membership and leadership of the governing body and these personnel are still settling into their roles. As a result, the effectiveness of the governing body is good overall.

The school has a realistic understanding of its immediate context and is involved in several local projects and initiatives. It has well-established links with some communities in other parts of the world and is working in partnership with other local schools to strengthen this further. As a result, the promotion of community cohesion is good overall. The commitment of parents and carers to the life of the school is good. They have every confidence in the management of the school and as a result, give time, energy and resources to its development. They make a good contribution to pupils' learning through their involvement in a wide range of school activities and the use of homework.

The school promotes equality of opportunity well. Although, very occasionally progress varies in lessons, there is no overall difference in progress of the different groups of pupils. Both pupils and staff, take any necessary steps to avoid any discrimination. Appropriate policies and well-managed record keeping contribute to good procedures for safeguarding. The school provides effective financial management and ensures that it gives good value for money.

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	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	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

Children start school with skills which are generally typical for their age. Children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. This is a direct result of the good leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage manager, who is receiving good support from the headteacher, and who is becoming increasingly well established in her role. There are good induction systems to support children and to help them settle quickly. The school has established many opportunities for strong links with pre-school providers that children attend prior to starting nursery. Good links with parents and carers contribute to the smooth start children make. Effective systems are in place to monitor progress and to share information with parents and carers through attractive learning journals. Children feel safe and are supported by robust welfare arrangements. The quality of teaching and use of assessment are good. A good balance between adult-led activities and those that children choose for themselves contributes well to all areas of learning. Activities are often exciting and meaningful. For example, children have challenging problem-solving activities for counting and

early computation. Early letter recognition and mark-making skills are taught well. Very occasionally, adult-led activities are not as exciting and challenging as they could be. Children and staff make good use of a wide range of attractive resources and good use of ICT to develop basic skills and to learn more about the world around them. As a result of these experiences, children enjoy themselves and are well prepared for their next stage of education. This is reflected in parents' and carers' views: 'The children receive such firm foundations in the Early Years Foundation Stage which set them up to be confident learners as they move through their education'.

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

About a quarter of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire, which is a broadly typical level of response. Parents and carers are supportive of the school. They particularly commented on the warm, caring ethos and the stimulating learning opportunities. They feel that staff are helpful and approachable. They feel their children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning. A small proportion of parents and carers felt that the school did not always take account of their suggestions and a similar proportion felt the school is not always well led. Inspectors looked at these aspects carefully and discussed them with the school. The inspection findings are 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 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 51 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 219 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	59	18	35	3	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	59	19	37	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	16	31	27	53	6	12	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	37	26	51	4	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	47	24	47	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	37	30	59	1	2	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	51	22	43	2	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)	23	45	23	45	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	41	26	51	3	6	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	39	24	47	3	6	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	25	23	45	8	16	3	6
The school is led and managed effectively	16	31	20	39	4	8	5	10
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	43	25	49	3	6	1	2

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.



19 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Sheffield S25 2QD

Thank you for such a warm and friendly welcome when we inspected your school this week. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you at work and play.

- You go to a good school. You make good progress through school and reach above average standards.
- The headteacher, staff and the governing body work hard to make your school the best it can be.
- The school takes good care of you so you feel safe and your behaviour is excellent.
- You think about things deeply and your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- You enjoy your lessons and teachers give you fun things to learn about.
- You keep fit at school and learn to eat healthily.
- Occasionally, you are not involved in checking and improving your own work.
- In a very few lessons, work is not quite hard enough for some of you.

To help your school become even better, we have asked your headteacher, the governing body and all the staff to improve these last two points and to make sure everything is the best it can be. You can help by working with teachers to try to judge how well you are doing and how to improve.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Clark
Lead Inspector

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