

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Withnell

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119680
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379868
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Melvyn Hemmings

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	59
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Southworth
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kath Coyle
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	05 March 2009
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors who observed nine lessons or parts of lessons taught by four teachers. The inspectors held discussions with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation, particularly relating to safeguarding, records of meetings of the governing body, assessment information and curriculum planning. Work in pupils' books and displays around the school were examined. Questionnaires from staff, pupils and from 29 parents and carers were scrutinised.

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

- How successfully the school is working to accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment in English and mathematics.
- Whether there is sufficient challenge for more-able pupils through the school.
- The extent to which the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work has improved since the last inspection.
- The effectiveness of leadership and management in the light of the executive headteacher's responsibilities in her other school.

## Information about the school

St Joseph's is much smaller than the average primary school. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, as is that of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The school holds a number of awards, including the Activemark, and has Healthy School status. St Joseph's is in a loose collaboration with another school. The executive headteacher shares her time between both schools, spending two days per week in St Joseph's. The on-site before and after-school clubs are privately managed. They will be inspected and reported upon separately.

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

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

### Main findings

St Joseph's provides a satisfactory standard of education. It is improving and has a variety of strengths, including care, guidance and support, the Early Years Foundation Stage and safeguarding. Over the last 12 months, the astute leadership of the headteacher, linked with close collaboration with consultants from the local authority, has led to steady improvement in pupils' attainment in English and mathematics and acceleration in their progress. Out of necessity, the drive for improvement has been led by the headteacher and consultants from the local authority. This has limited the involvement of other leaders in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. The governing body is supportive of the school but not adept at holding it to account for its performance. Self-evaluation is accurate and enables the school to prioritise and work upon areas for development. The trend of steady improvement over the last 12 months in key areas, such as teaching, and leadership and management, shows that the capacity to take the school forward is satisfactory.

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage because activities are matched well to their individual needs. National comparative data indicate that standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average in English and mathematics. The school's own data show clearly that pupils make satisfactory progress overall and increasing numbers are making good progress. Reading is a weaker aspect of their performance in English. Pupils are not proficient in comprehending and making deductions from increasingly complex texts. In mathematics, pupils do not have well-developed mental recall skills and lack expertise in solving real-life number problems. Improved provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities means these pupils are identified at an early stage. A wide range of approaches are employed, such as one-to-one tuition, to supplement their work in class. As a result, they make good progress.

Improvements to teaching have led to an increasing proportion of lessons that are good. Nevertheless, there are times when the work given to pupils does not match their ability and this slows their progress. This is particularly the case for more-able pupils. Pupils enjoy coming to school, as is seen in their good behaviour and above average attendance. The curriculum is enlivened by a variety of experiences, such as well-attended extra-curricular activities and educational visits. Parents and carers are particularly pleased with the care taken of their children while in school.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in reading and mathematics to above the national average by:
  - improving pupils' higher order reading skills, such as their ability to understand and make deductions from an increasingly complex range of reading materials
  - improving pupils' quick mental recall skills and their ability to solve real-life number problems in mathematics
  - ensuring teachers always challenge pupils effectively, particularly those pupils who are more able.
  
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - fully involving all leaders in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and in taking action to promote improvement
  - improving the skills of the governing body in holding the school to account for its performance.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

<b>3</b>
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Pupils achieve satisfactorily from their skill level on entering school, which is generally typical for their age. They are enthusiastic and have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils collaborate well together in pairs and small groups and are willing to persevere when faced with difficulties. They enjoy taking part in class and group discussions and, in so doing, express their thoughts clearly. This was evident in an English lesson for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 in which they rigorously explored how to create a poem to be performed later for an audience. When teaching is less inspiring, pupils start to lose interest and their progress slows. Since the last inspection, pupils' writing skills have improved and they construct sentences accurately with correct grammar, punctuation and spelling. They enjoy reading but their ability to understand and make deductions from a variety of texts lacks sufficient development. In mathematics, pupils' quick mental recall skills are limited and they are not adept at solving number problems. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of additional support. Although more-able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in lessons, there is no significant difference in their overall progress.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe. They say they know they can talk to a member of staff if they have any worries and concerns. Pupils are adopting healthy lifestyles well, knowing the importance of a balanced diet and the need to take regular exercise. They make a positive contribution to school life by taking on responsibilities, such as a school councillor, prefect or house captain. Pupils also enhance the local community, as seen in their work with a local sculptor to create artwork for the village park. Pupils behave well and this contributes positively to the progress they make. They have a good understanding of the traditions and beliefs of

cultures different to their own. Pupils' broadly average attainment and above average attendance mean they are prepared in a satisfactory way for their future lives.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan their lessons carefully to build on previous work. This enables pupils to use what they already know and understand to support their current learning. Planning usually ensures pupils of different ability are given challenging work, but not always and this slows progress at times, especially for more-able pupils. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop advanced reading skills, including comprehension and deduction. Teachers manage classrooms well, so that pupils are engaged in their work and little time is lost. Pupils are informed clearly about their progress and how to improve through marking and by talking to adults. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and explain new ideas clearly and confidently. Relationships are good with one pupil commenting, 'Teachers are friendly and always have a smile on their face.' Teaching assistants are well deployed to support all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Extra-curricular activities, which are well attended and include sports and music clubs, enrich the curriculum. The opportunity to take part in educational visits, such as to the Roman Museum in Chester, extends pupils' experiences. There are established links with local high schools that enhance pupils' learning in sport, science and mathematics. The school is starting to link subjects more closely to make learning more purposeful. However, as yet, there are limited opportunities for pupils to take part in practical problem-solving activities both in numeracy lessons and across the curriculum. The curriculum places strong emphasis on encouraging pupils to make informed choices to adopt healthy lifestyles. This has been recognised by the school gaining the Activemark and achieving Healthy School status.

The school is a welcoming, safe and caring setting in which to learn. All staff are firmly committed to the safety and well-being of pupils. They are clear about the

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

steps to take if they have any concerns about the well-being of a pupil. Well-organised arrangements for the care of all pupils contribute to their good personal development and well-being and support their learning. Clearly targeted support for pupils who are potentially vulnerable due to their circumstances plays an important role in fostering their learning and development. Established links with outside agencies ensure extra support for individual pupils is available when required. Pupils who have medical needs are supported effectively to ensure their well-being. These effective links and procedures also have a positive impact on above average attendance.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has worked effectively to enthuse staff and, as a result, there is a shared vision for school improvement and morale is high. When the headteacher is working at the other school, the senior teacher and other staff collaborate well to ensure the smooth day-to-day running of St Joseph's. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school have improved and enable the setting of challenging targets for improvement but there is limited involvement of leaders, apart from the headteacher, in these procedures. The governing body provides satisfactory support and discharges its statutory responsibility conscientiously. It lacks expertise in holding the school to account for its performance. All safeguarding requirements are met, with the school having comprehensive policies and procedures to ensure the safety and welfare of pupils and staff. Training for safeguarding is regular and of good quality, particularly in child protection.

The school promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination well. No form of discrimination is tolerated. Improvement to monitoring procedures means the school has detailed information about the performance of individual pupils and their contribution to school life. This is checked regularly and the gap between different groups is closing. Over the last 12 months, close partnership with the local authority has led to improvement in key areas such as leadership and management, the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make. Other partnerships, such as with local high schools, effectively develop learning opportunities that the school could not provide on its own.

Leaders promote community cohesion well within the school and local community. The school is working to develop this aspect of its work by strengthening engagement with a range of groups beyond the immediate community. Good engagement with parents and carers ensures they are effectively involved in their children's learning and the work of the school.

*These are the grades for the leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress because of consistently good teaching. Adults are aware of the needs of children of this age and provide them with a variety of activities that maintain their engagement. Children’s behaviour is good and contributes positively to their progress and the friendly atmosphere. They enjoy working together in pairs and small groups but can also work independently and make decisions for themselves. Children play happily together, willingly sharing resources and taking turns fairly. Good emphasis is placed on children learning how to link letters and sounds. This was evident in a stimulating lesson in which they were effectively developing their understanding of the sound that ‘er’ makes.

The curriculum is enhanced by an interesting range of enrichment activities, such as seasonal walks around the school environment. Children are cared for well in this calm and happy environment and support is good for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Good leadership ensures that children’s progress is checked effectively and that individual needs are met. The outdoor area is spacious but its use is limited in inclement weather, thus diminishing its effectiveness in promoting children’s learning and development. Parents and carers say that staff are approachable and keep them well informed of their children’s progress and how they can support learning at home.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

Most parents and carers who returned questionnaires were positive about the school’s work and the efforts of all staff. Two comments were typical, ‘We couldn’t be happier with our choice of school and have recommended it to friends and family whose children are looking to start school,’ and, ‘The atmosphere at St Joseph’s is



very special, an almost extended family feel about it.' The inspection team saw many examples in school that reflect parents' and carers' positive views.

## 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, Withnell 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 29 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 59 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	59	10	34	2	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	26	90	2	7	1	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	66	10	34	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	66	8	28	2	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	76	7	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	72	7	24	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	86	4	14	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)	21	72	6	21	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	62	9	31	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	59	9	31	2	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	62	9	31	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	69	7	24	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	76	5	17	2	7	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 are 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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



4 November 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Withnell, Chorley, PR6 8SD**

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave the team when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the many interesting things you do.

The inspectors judge that yours is a satisfactory school which is improving and that:

- you make satisfactory progress and attain broadly average standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6
- the school is a friendly place and relationships between people are good
- you behave well, work collaboratively with others and have a good understanding of how to stay safe
- the school helps you to be healthy, as you indicated in your questionnaires
- you enjoy school as shown by your above average attendance
- staff and governors are working hard to help you do better.

We have asked your school to do the following:

- improve your reading, quick mental recall skills and your ability to solve real-life number problems
- make sure that teachers always give you work that makes you think hard
- fully involve all leaders and governors in helping the school improve.

All of you are a credit to your school and can help it improve further by continuing to try your best in your activities.

Yours sincerely

Melvyn Hemmings  
Lead inspector

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