

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Castleford

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108261
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	377723
Inspection dates	9–10 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Jim Alexander

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	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Beverley Sice
Acting Headteacher	Annie McNally
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons taught by nine teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including policies for safeguarding, the school's assessment records and school development plans. The 9 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were also analysed.

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

- Why attainment appears higher at Key Stage 1 than Key Stage 2.
- Whether the quality of teaching is consistently good across the school.
- The impact of leadership, at all levels, on raising attainment and accelerating progress for all pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2.

Information about the school

This is a slightly smaller than average-sized primary school. The large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds and those from minority ethnic heritage represent a very small part of the school population. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly similar to the national average. The school has gained a number of awards including Healthy School status, Activemark, Artsmark, Basic Skills Quality Mark and the International Schools' Award. At the time of the inspection the school was being lead by an acting headteacher. A number of new teachers have joined the school since the time of the last inspection.

A privately run after-school club operates on the school premises. This provision is subject to a separate inspection and a report about its quality can be found on the Ofsted website.

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. There is a welcoming environment and pupils obviously enjoy coming to school, which is reflected in their above-average attendance. They are well-behaved and know adults that they can approach if they have a concern. Pupils are confident that their views are taken seriously. This helps them to feel exceptionally safe. Pupils also have an excellent understanding of how to stay fit and healthy.

Attainment, by the time pupils leave Year 6, is broadly in line with the national average. This represents good progress from pupils' individual starting points. However, attainment and progress varies across the school and is higher in English than mathematics and stronger in some year groups than in others. In general, progress is faster and attainment higher across Key Stage 1. Pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress due to well-designed activities that are carefully matched to their individual needs.

The majority of lessons are good, providing opportunities for pupils to achieve well. During these lessons, activities are pitched at the right level, providing challenge and excitement for all pupils. Relationships between teachers and pupils are positive and lessons are lively. Consequently, pupils' enjoyment of learning is good and they encourage each other to do well. This good practice, however, is not seen consistently across the whole school. The school has developed a themed approach to the curriculum in Key Stage 1 and is currently in the process of embedding this approach across Key Stage 2.

The school has evaluated its provision for community cohesion and recognises that while there is much strength within the school and local community, more needs to be done to broaden pupils' appreciation of the multicultural society in which we live, both nationally and globally.

Senior leaders have robust systems to track the progress pupils make. They have used this information to establish well-thought-through plans for improvement. Members of the governing body care greatly for the pupils; they have challenged and steered the school with a steady hand during a period of change. Self-evaluation is accurate. Across the school there is a shared determination to ensure the school goes from strength to strength. These are among the many examples which demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment by the end of Year 6, by:
 - accelerating progress for all pupils in Key Stage 2, particularly in Year 6
 - increasing the proportion of more-able pupils gaining higher levels across the school, particularly in mathematics
 - evaluating the impact of recent actions taken to improve mathematics to ensure their success.

- Improve the consistency of teaching to good or better, by:
 - providing learning activities that are suitably demanding for all abilities in every class
 - improving the quality of marking and guidance offered to pupils, so that they know how to improve their work
 - providing opportunities for pupils to practise skills in which they are known to be weak
 - increasing the pace of lessons so that pupils spend less time listening to teachers talk and more time actively engaged in structured learning activities.

- Ensure the school makes a stronger contribution to community cohesion, beyond the school and local area, by establishing strong links with others of different religious and cultural backgrounds, both nationally and globally.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy learning and their achievement is good. They are particularly keen to rise to the challenge when lessons are precisely pitched for their individual abilities and interests. This was seen, for example, in a Year 5 lesson, where pupils were helped to make good progress in a mathematics activity. Excellent relationships and creative use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and a mobile phone key pad ensured pupils engaged fully in exploring number patterns.

The vast majority of children enter the school with skills that are generally below what is typical for their age. However, this does vary from year to year and recently has been lower, particularly in terms of children's language development. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 is broadly average. However, it is higher in English than in mathematics and a greater number of pupils gain higher levels in English than they do in mathematics. Overall, pupils make good progress from their individual starting points during their time at school. Pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress throughout the school.

Pupils are helped to grow in confidence as they move through school. One pupil, representing the views of others, said 'we are very proud to be part of this school'. Consequently, by the time they leave Year 6, they are caring and independent young people. Many take an active part in school life and enjoy the numerous extra-curricular clubs. Pupils have a great deal of knowledge and understanding about factors relating to their health, safety and emotional well-being. Pupils' personal

development is strong and they are well-prepared for the next stages of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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 overall. There is, however, some variation in the quality across the school. In the best lessons, teachers make very good use of the time available. They plan activities that interest and engage pupils of all abilities, developing their knowledge and enabling them to apply the skills they have learnt in a relevant way. As a result, these lessons move on at a fast pace and much is achieved. However, in a minority of lessons the level of challenge is less clearly focused and, as a result, the pace of learning slows for some pupils. The more-able pupils, for example, can find the work too easy. On occasions, teachers also talk for extended periods of time and pupils become passive in their learning. The quality of marking is generally high and in the majority of classes pupils' good work is not only recognised but constructive suggestions are made on how it can be improved. This good practice, however, is not consistent in all classes and some marking lacks clear guidance on how work can be improved. Throughout the school, support teachers are well-deployed and ensure that those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.

The curriculum provides well for all pupils. Developments, such as teaching topics across a range of subjects are further enhancing this aspect of provision and pupils are finding this approach interesting and fun. In classes where this style has been implemented, the impact has been significant, helping to accelerate the progress made by pupils in their writing skills. Across Key Stage 2, this approach is in a relatively early stage of development and not embedded fully. The curriculum is also enhanced by some outstanding opportunities for pupils to play musical instruments.

Good care, guidance and support contribute effectively to pupils' good personal development and sense of well-being. Good induction procedures and well-thought-through transition arrangements help pupils not only as they move through school,

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

but also as they transfer to secondary school. Pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable are supported well and helped to become confident young people. Those pupils with special educational needs receive the support and guidance they require through links with outside agencies and a range of strategies and timely interventions.

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?

School improvement is driven by effective distributed leadership, facilitated by the acting headteacher. The school benefits from a highly-committed staff team. There is a strong determination for the school to improve further. The school is inclusive, providing equality of opportunity for pupils to experience success, whatever their background or ability. It makes concerted efforts to ensure there is no discrimination and that all groups achieve equally well. The governing body ensures that statutory requirements are met, including those relating to safeguarding. Governors care greatly about the success of the school and, therefore, support and challenge leaders well. Safeguarding practices have been reviewed in detail by the acting headteacher and governing body and are good. Designated senior leaders for child protection and governors have up-to-date training, and robust arrangements ensure the safety of all who work in the school. The school's accurate self-evaluation has enabled it to recognise where its strengths and weaknesses lie, which in turn enables it to work well to improve further. This has been recently illustrated, for example, by its targeting of strategies to raise attainment and accelerate progress in mathematics. Leaders have not yet evaluated the impact of these actions. While the school plans effective links within the local area, the planning for links with communities of other faiths and ethnic heritages, both nationally and globally, are at an earlier stage of development. The school has established strong links with parents and carers, and productive partnerships with other schools and support agencies, to foster pupils' development. The school deploys its resources well and provides 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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and are well prepared for Year 1. They are helped to settle quickly, and confidently use the indoor and outdoor spaces available. Children talk happily to visitors and explain clearly what they are doing. Relationships between staff and children underpin their good behaviour. The well-organised learning environment provides a range of activities, meeting the children's needs well. The outdoor area has been developed since the time of the last inspection and although space is limited, staff ensure that relevant learning opportunities are available. The assessment of children's progress is good. Adults make the most of opportunities to move children's exploration and learning on to a higher level of understanding. Parents and carers appreciate the good communication and efforts made by staff to keep them informed of their children's progress. The leader with responsibility for the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that the provision is managed well.

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

Inspectors received an above-average number of responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire. An overwhelming majority expressed very positive views about the school and say their children enjoy school and are kept safe. All parents and carers say the school helps them to support their child's learning. All say that their children are helped to have a healthy lifestyle. A small minority of parents and carers do not feel their children make enough progress or that they enjoy school. Inspectors found that pupils made good progress during their time at school, although better in some year groups than others.

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 Castleford 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 99 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	72	73	22	22	3	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	77	78	21	21	0	0	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	51	52	47	47	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	60	61	35	35	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	70	71	28	28	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	55	56	44	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	56	57	42	42	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)	55	56	40	40	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	58	59	39	39	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	55	56	36	36	4	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	47	47	50	51	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	55	56	42	42	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	72	73	25	25	1	1	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 is 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.**



11 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Castleford WF10 4JB

Thank you for the warm welcome we received when we inspected your school recently. St Joseph's Catholic Primary is a good school. You are well cared for and feel exceptionally safe. You also have an excellent understanding of how to keep fit and healthy and are provided with a wide variety of opportunities to enjoy.

We were impressed with your behaviour and enjoyment in lessons, particularly those that you found challenging and fun. The teaching is good and you make good progress in your lessons, although better in some classes than others. I have asked the school to ensure that all teaching is as good as the very best.

Your attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly in line with the national average, although higher in English than in mathematics. I have asked the school to improve this by, for example, helping pupils to reach even higher levels of attainment in mathematics and providing increased challenge for those who are capable of more.

It is good that so many of you help in the day-to-day running of school. This has really developed a lovely community feel within school. I have now asked the school to help you learn more about other religions and the rich cultural heritage we have both in our country and in the wider world.

Your attendance is above average; well done! You are obviously enjoying what this good school has to offer. Thank you for completing the pupil questionnaires and taking time to talk to us. Your contribution to the inspection was extremely helpful.

Yours sincerely

Jim Alexander
Lead Inspector

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