

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116901
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	379324
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Michael Farrell

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	128
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Acting Chair	Patrick Kilgarriff
Headteacher	Ann-Marie Wallbank
Date of previous school inspection	06 May 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed seven lessons taught by five teachers and held meetings with pupils, staff, parents and carers and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents including the school's development planning, data on pupils' progress and documents relating to safeguarding, and scrutinised 38 parental questionnaires.

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

- Progress in mathematics was examined to assess the contribution of teaching and the curriculum.
- Inspectors looked at how effectively the school has managed recent staffing changes.
- The effectiveness of the school's systems for monitoring pupils' progress and subsequent interventions to raise standards were considered.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized school whose pupils come from a wide and diverse area around Malvern. In the two and a half years since the previous inspection, the school has experienced considerable changes. Staff turnover has been high owing to promotion or retirement and there have been long-term illnesses. Of the five full-time equivalent teaching staff, three are new appointments during this period. There is an acting assistant headteacher. There is an acting Chair of the Governing Body. Pupil turnover is higher than average: in the present Year 6, some 60% of pupils were in the school's Reception class. The school is organised into five mixed-age classes. Recent awards include a Green Flag award for ecology. The St. Joseph's Swans and Cygnets pre-school group shares the premises but is managed privately and inspected 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

This is a satisfactory school. It is rapidly improving and has many good aspects. The ethos is generous and welcoming, and one parent captures this stating, 'I feel proud to have chosen a school that provides a happy and supportive environment'. Many aspects of pupils' personal development are good, for example in the way they follow healthy lifestyles and their contribution to the school and wider community. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are courteous and care for each other because the school makes this a priority and behaviour is well managed. Good care, guidance and support include carefully considered and effective arrangements for pupils as they enter school and prepare to move on to secondary school. Partnerships, links with parents and carers, and the way the school encourages community cohesion are all good. Pupils feel safe and parents and carers are confident of their children's safety because safeguarding procedures are wide ranging and effective. In the well-led Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils make good progress and achieve well because of enthusiastic teaching and imaginative activities that children greatly enjoy.

In the school as a whole, pupils and groups of pupils, including boys and girls and pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, make satisfactory and improving progress and achieve satisfactorily. Teaching and assessment for learning are satisfactory and getting better. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together and relationships between staff and pupils are warm and positive. Pupils work hard in lessons. Not all pupils are fully challenged in every lesson, for example because the pace is not always brisk enough. Because there are too many targets for learning, pupils do not always remember them. Pupils progress better in English than in mathematics. The school's effective monitoring systems have enabled staff to identify and begin to tackle weaknesses in how pupils interpret the language of mathematical problems. The satisfactory and improving curriculum is especially effective in encouraging personal development and well being. Cross-curricular links supporting basic skills are satisfactory. However, the school is keen to extend existing opportunities for pupils to practise their numeracy skills in everyday situations across different subjects.

The deeply committed and experienced headteacher has provided much needed stability through a period of considerable change. The school has managed staffing changes with care and new teachers speak highly of the way they are mentored and supported. Essential systems are well established. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate and has a strong focus on driving improvement. For example, a careful analysis of

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mathematics progress has identified weaker areas and strategies have been implemented to tackle them leading to early indications of improvement. Ambition is securely embedded and improving as new staff gain skills and confidence. This leads to the school having a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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?

- Improve pupils' progress to consistently good or better by ensuring every lesson offers challenge for all pupils.
- Reduce the number of targets for learning at any one time and make sure pupils know them.
- Ensure all subjects contribute to raising standards in mathematics including through planning real-life problems for pupils to solve.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Attainment by the end of Year 6 varies from year to year, influenced by the small cohorts of pupils and the wide range of attainment in different groups, but is broadly average. Progress is satisfactory and improving and pupils achieve satisfactorily and enjoy their schooling. In a successful mathematics lesson for younger pupils on the use of money, the teacher made the lesson's learning objectives clear and worked closely with the teaching assistant. Relationships were warm and pupils tried hard and behaved well. Pupils loved the teacher talking to a puppet 'from outer space' who did not understand the use of money and needed the children's help. In a literacy lesson to improve descriptive sentences, pupils made good progress because the lively imaginative opening captured their attention, expectations were high and the teaching assistant was very effectively deployed.

Different groups, including boys and girls, pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and pupils of different ages make similar satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress and there are examples of individual pupils progressing well. This is because of the timely way in which they are identified, and the optimum use of support from outside the school.

Pupils say in meetings and in the questionnaires they returned that they feel safe at different times and in different places and parents and carers agree. In lessons, at

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playtimes and around school, behaviour is courteous and considerate. Family groupings at various times, including lunch, strongly encourage pupils to care for each other. Pupils can articulate the importance of diet, exercise, and being able to talk to a trusted adult if they have any worries, and act accordingly. They are proud of their school and their role in it including the school council. In the local community they contribute well, for example through various concerts. They are increasingly aware of the wider national and international community according to their age. Pupils' above-average attendance and satisfactory progress in basic skills contribute to satisfactory economic development. Spiritual and moral development is especially strong. Pupils show a developing knowledge of other cultures and their religious beliefs because the school places great value on this. Even the youngest can suggest ways of telling the difference between right and wrong.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	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	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and encourage a warm and positive ethos in lessons. Relationships between staff and pupils are trusting and the skilled teaching assistants are well deployed. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and make constructive comments. The mixed-age classes support development well because a great deal of care goes into deciding the groupings of pupils. Lessons do not always challenge all pupils sufficiently well, for example because the pace is not always brisk enough. While pupils all have targets for improvement, and some can remember them, for others there are too many for them to make a significant impact on their learning.

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

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The broad and balanced curriculum is adjusted to respond to pupils’ changing needs and individual interests so that activities lead to satisfactory and improving progress. Cross-curricular planning is satisfactory. This is not as well developed in numeracy as it is in literacy. Information and communication technology is used effectively in different contexts. The school offers a wide range of after-school clubs including netball, eco-club, tag rugby, art club, table tennis and games. Partnerships contribute very strongly to enriching the curriculum. For example, visitors to the school from various services, such as the police, enhance personal, social and health education. Ecology studies draw on a wide range of organisations whose members visit the school to share their expertise.

The school can point to striking examples where the support of individual pupils and their families whose circumstances make them vulnerable has improved pupils’ academic progress and well-being. Parents and carers and pupils in their questionnaire returns and in meetings conveyed how they strongly value the care and support provided. One states of their child that the school has ‘totally transformed her potential for the future’. Arrangements when pupils start at school and move from class to class are handled with great care so pupils grow in confidence. Attendance and punctuality are effectively encouraged, for example through celebrating high attendance and by the school’s high expectations of both parents and carers and pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has maintained a much-needed sense of direction and ambition. Staff are ambitious to improve and form a highly committed and cohesive team. Teaching and learning are regularly and constructively monitored and this is leading to improvements as newer staff grow in confidence. The governing body offers satisfactory support and challenge and the wide range of skills of members are focused on school improvement. The recruitment of a new permanent Chair of the Governing Body is imminent. In questionnaires and in meetings, parents and carers express their strong support and appreciation of all the school offers. One typically states, ‘The staff and headteacher are very approachable and always find time for parents’.

Strong partnerships enable the school to achieve what it could not do as well on its

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own. This has a particularly strong impact on the personal development and well-being of pupils, including those pupils and their families whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Bullying or any form of discrimination is rare and dealt with effectively following clear policies. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily, and analyses carefully the performance of different groups of pupils to ensure none are falling behind. Safeguarding procedures and policies are secure and reviewed regularly. There are examples of good risk assessments and enhancing pupils' awareness of risk, such as in considering the safety aspects of developing the on-site pond and walking safely on local roads. Good quality up-to-date training covers all staff and safeguarding is supported by strong collaboration with other agencies. The school knows the different backgrounds of its pupils well and plans and evaluates effectively in a range of areas, including religious education and personal, social, health and citizenship education, to ensure strong community cohesion. National and international dimensions are well developed too because the school is outward looking and values different beliefs and cultures.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

A parent says of their child in this phase, 'The teaching is obviously supportive and encouraging and he comes home with a smile on his face every day'. Children make good progress and achieve well, especially in their attitudes, the language they use for communication and thinking and numeracy. Teaching is enthusiastic and well-organised to engage children's imagination and they enjoy their learning. In a session about the sounds letters make, children made good progress in learning letter sounds because the lesson moved at a brisk pace and letter 'fans' helped children indicate what they knew. Children also enjoyed taking part in counting songs to support their good progress in number. Insightful observations are carefully

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collated so a clear picture of progress is built up over time. Pupils feel safe and grow in confidence in the welcoming environment. A wide range of activities is planned to promote both child-initiated and adult-led activities and the provision is rightly focusing on developing child-initiated activities further. The outside play area is well used. Leaders and managers effectively ensure a focus on improvement through carefully interpreting data and being constructively self-critical of the provision. Links with parents and carers are strong and open.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parental questionnaires indicate high levels of positive views on all aspects. A face-to-face meeting with parents and carers presented a similar picture with one participant saying typically, 'The friendliness of the school is wonderful'. Not every parent or carer agrees with everything the school does and the rare negative comments were discussed in a general way with the school and taken into account.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 38 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 128 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	71	11	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	63	13	34	0	0	1	3
The school informs me about my child’s progress	19	50	18	47	0	0	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	45	20	53	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	55	16	42	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	17	45	20	53	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	58	15	39	1	3	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)	19	50	15	39	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	17	45	18	47	0	0	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	47	16	42	0	0	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	47	17	45	0	0	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	20	53	17	45	0	0	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	23	61	14	37	1	3	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).

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.



28 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Malvern, WR14 1PF

It was good to meet you when my colleague and I inspected your school recently. Thank you for making us so welcome. Thank you too to those of you who spoke to me about what the school offers.

St Joseph's is a satisfactory school and is improving. It has many good aspects too. You behave well and the school cares for you and guides you well. Links with your parents or carers and other partners are good. You feel safe because the school takes great care about this. You develop well personally: for example you have a good understanding of staying healthy. You make satisfactory progress because of the teaching and the curriculum which are satisfactory and getting better. You have seen quite a few changes of staff but the headteacher and all the staff have kept the school's sense of direction. There are some things the school can do to improve so I have asked the staff to:

- make sure all lessons challenge you fully
- give you fewer targets for learning at any one time so you remember them better
- plan all subjects to help you progress better in mathematics.

You can help with this by continuing to try hard in lessons including mathematics, and by working on remembering your targets.

Thank you again for your lovely welcome.

Good wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Farrell
Lead inspector

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