

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	124354
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	380867
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2012
Lead inspector	Sarah Bentley

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	220
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Michael O'Sullivan
Headteacher	Karen Bennett
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2007
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Sarah Bentley

Additional inspector

Richard Boswell

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors sampled six and a half hours of teaching in 13 lessons. They also observed intervention activities supporting disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Pupils' work was looked at in a range of books, pupils were heard reading, and discussions were held with pupils about many aspects of school life including what they needed to do to improve their work. Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the teaching staff, and members of the governing body. The inspection took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. A wide range of documents was examined including the school's improvement planning and data showing the progress made by pupils. The scrutiny of safeguarding procedures included a careful evaluation of pupils' behaviour. The inspector analysed questionnaires returned by 138 parents and carers, 102 pupils and 18 members of staff.

Information about the school

St Joseph's Catholic Primary school is around the average in size. The school has a part time Nursery class. The large majority of pupils are White British. There are few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and very few pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is around the average. The school meets the current floor standard, whereby the government sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school has been awarded Activemark Gold, Dyslexia Friendly status, the Intermediate Level International Schools Award and Healthy Schools status. Childcare, which is not managed by the governing body, is provided on site. A separate inspection report 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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Although attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is above average, the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory rather than good because there is too much variation in the quality of learning and in the rates at which pupils progress. Pupils do not always know their improvement targets and teachers' marking of work is not consistently skilful in all subjects.
- Achievement is satisfactory and in some areas it is improving, but not all pupils are making the good and sustained progress which they are capable of. Accelerated progress in Years 5 and 6 accounts for the above-average attainment. However, in most year groups progress is satisfactory. Most, but not all aspects of the curriculum are fully tailored to meet pupils' learning needs.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils behave well in lessons. Attendance is above average and punctuality is good. The large majority of parents and carers are pleased with the quality of pupils' behaviour and feel their children are well cared for and kept safe. The school is very inclusive and supports those pupils with difficulties well. School leaders focus consistently on this area of the school's work and as a result, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning and to the school.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Where it is good, there is a purposeful learning atmosphere and the teachers' good subject knowledge and planning ensure that all pupils confidently progress. Close examination of pupils' work and lesson planning shows that teachers are not always using pupils' assessment information well enough.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and senior leaders have a clear vision for the school's future development which is supported by governors, staff, parents and carers. The school's leadership team has rightly identified those things which need to improve. Performance

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management procedures are securely in place. However, monitoring procedures do not ensure that inconsistencies in teaching and the curriculum are checked within sharply defined timescales.

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?

- Ensure pupils' progress is consistently good throughout the school by:
 - ensuring staff use assessment information rigorously to plan learning that meets the full range of pupils' needs
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to do especially the more able
 - ensuring the marking policy is implemented consistently across the school in all subjects and that the feedback given to pupils gives them clear guidance about how well they have done and how they can improve their work.

- Strengthen monitoring and evaluation procedures by:
 - ensuring lesson observations, book trawls, scrutiny of planning and work analysis focus rigorously on pupils' learning outcomes, and the feedback given clearly evaluates the impact on pupils' progress
 - checking regularly that all pupils know their targets
 - involving all leaders fully in monitoring activities including checking that basic skills of literacy and numeracy are effectively taught in all subject areas.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Almost all parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaires think their children make good progress and almost all felt the school helps develop skills in communication, reading, writing, and mathematics. Inspection evidence shows that progress is satisfactory and improving, for all groups of pupils such as girls and boys. One reason for this is that some opportunities are missed to plan to meet the full range of pupils' learning needs and to help them to move on in their learning through setting regular targets that they know and understand.

Children thoroughly enjoy attending the Nursery. From starting points that are usually around those expected, children make satisfactory progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. Performance in writing and reading usually exceeds this level and can be attributed to the emphasis the school places on early language development and the consistent teaching of phonics (the sounds the letters make).

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Pupils' early letter formation is encouraged in Nursery and here they develop positive attitudes to early mark making. Reception pupils develop their early reading and writing skills, for example writing about the Elves and the Shoemaker and reading their own sentences back to their teacher. Lower-ability readers read regularly to staff and demonstrated very enthusiastic attitudes towards reading. They are confident to apply their phonic skills; the books they read help them develop their fluency and confidence.

Across Key Stage 1 pupils overall make satisfactory rather than good progress because teaching does not always take into account pupils' learning needs and what they need to support their next steps. By the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics with pupils achieving around the same levels as their peers in other schools. Progress in Years 3 and 4 is also satisfactory. It accelerates in Years 5 and 6 because teachers have consistently higher expectations of what their pupils can do and the curriculum is tailored, taking account of pupils' prior attainment levels. These inconsistencies in teaching mean that progress throughout the school overall is satisfactory, even though by the end of Year 6 the proportion of pupils at or exceeding national expectations is above average in reading, writing and mathematics.

Lesson observations and pupils' books show that planning is not always tailored well enough to consistently challenge pupils, especially the more able. Some books showed that often pupils are working at the same level in their topic work. In Year 6, an increasing proportion of pupils make accelerated progress because the teaching focuses on giving good feedback to pupils about what to do and how to improve their work. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. Progress is faster when pupils engage in interventions specifically designed to move their learning on, such as language support programmes. Teaching assistants at the school make a very positive contribution to helping pupils to improve their confidence, by explaining what they need to do carefully and encouraging them to work independently.

Quality of teaching

The Nursery and Reception classrooms provide stimulating places for young children to learn. Here they are encouraged to 'learn together'. This teaching approach helps them to develop a positive start to school. The outdoor environment offers a safe, practical working area for children to experience a range of interesting activities. The school has plans in place to develop this further with an imminent new build. Reception children enjoyed finding bugs and using magnifying glasses to examine them carefully. The teaching of phonics is tailored and matched to children's learning needs. This helps them to make good progress in the development of important basic skills.

Teaching across Key Stages 1 and 2 varies in quality. Teachers relate well to their pupils, but their expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. When questioned, some pupils told inspectors that they found some work too easy.

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In the good lessons, pupils are challenged well and the range of learning needs within the class is well planned for. However in some lessons pupils struggled to work independently and to record their ideas because the work provided was too difficult for them to access independently. Marking is mostly carried out conscientiously, but feedback does not always help pupils to know what to do to improve and where development points are identified, pupils do not consistently respond. Older pupils said they found having targets helpful in identifying what they needed to do to improve their writing. However, the school's approach to target setting is not yet successful in moving all pupils on, and pupils were sometimes unclear about what their targets say.

Teachers and their assistants are good at finding opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example through providing chances to reflect and work together. This was seen in a good mathematics lesson where the pupils were keen to apply their knowledge of times tables in a bingo game. They were encouraged by the teacher and her assistant to feed back and explain their answers and this resulted in their learning moving on and increased their confidence. Different subjects are brought together in topic-based work. This provides pupils with interesting things to learn about, but opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum are sometimes missed because the work planned does not always cater for all the differing levels and abilities of the pupils in the class. Pupils' work is celebrated well in a wide range of displays around the school. The vast majority of parents and carers think the teaching is good.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils have positive attitudes towards learning and told inspectors they enjoyed school. Attendance is above average and punctuality is good. Pupils' social development is also good. They enjoy working together when they are learning to find things out. Parents and carers agree their children are kept very safe. Pupils said they feel safe in school and were able to give inspectors real examples of how the school keeps them safe. For example, they explained about the potential risks when they go to new places on school trips and the importance of taking 'extra care'. The school has a very clear behaviour policy and a reward system which is monitored by governors over time and is effective in practice. Pupils are well behaved and this was seen in all the lessons observed. At times though, when lessons were not pitched effectively enough to match pupils' prior learning needs or when they were expected to listen for too long, pupils can become fidgety. However, when actively engaged in their work, they contributed eagerly and good concentration was very evident.

Assemblies are used effectively to reinforce the school's behaviour policy and the thoughtful and caring ethos of the school. The headteacher ensures close monitoring of behaviour and provides feedback to teachers on the impact of this area of the school's work. As a result, instances of unacceptable behaviour and exclusions are rare. The school focuses well in the curriculum on anti-bullying and as a result, pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including cyber and homophobic bullying, and strategies of what to do and how to prevent it.

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Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory, and have ensured that this is a school where all pupils are clearly valued and included. The curriculum overall is satisfactory and meets all requirements. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy the whole school writing project, the 'Great Paper Caper', because it brings everyone together to share their learning. The curriculum satisfactorily supports and promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The very large majority of parents and carers say they would recommend this school to others.

The headteacher and her senior leaders work well with all the staff and the governing body, and over time have developed and established a clear improvement agenda for the school. For example in Key Stage 2, the school's approach to reading has been successful in re-engaging some boys who were reluctant readers. Inspection activities showed that the levels of engagement and achievement are improving as a result. There is an improving trend in attainment at Year 6. This clearly demonstrates the capacity to improve further still as a wider range of leaders are now involved in leading aspects of the curriculum

Leaders monitor teaching regularly but do not always check sufficiently that basic skills are effectively applied in all subjects. Although records of monitoring are often descriptive rather than being evaluative, the headteacher and her senior leaders have accurately identified strengths and areas for improvement in the provision.

The governing body is extremely supportive and knows the school's strengths and weaknesses well. As a result, members of the governing body are able to challenge aspects of the school's performance and are conscientiously monitoring whether pupils are making good progress. Safeguarding procedures meet all current government requirements. Equality of opportunity is satisfactorily promoted and discrimination is challenged and as a direct result the school is a harmonious place in which to learn.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



12 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Cannock, WS12 1DE

I would like to thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we visited your school recently. Thank you also for the questionnaire you completed. I am writing to let you know what we found out about your school when we visited and we worked alongside your headteacher.

These are the best things about your school.

- You go to a satisfactory school that is improving and you reach above-average attainment.
- You enjoy coming to school and feel happy there.
- You behave well.
- You told me that the adults in school take good care of you; they always help and keep you very safe.
- Your attendance and punctuality are good. Well done.

In the latter part of Key Stage 2 you make faster progress than in other years. Throughout most years your progress is satisfactory. Your headteacher agrees there are some things that need improving to help you to make sure you all make good progress. So I have asked your teachers to always plan lessons based on what you already know, understand and can do, and provide work that is not too easy for you. I have also asked your teachers to tell you what you can do to make your work even better and improve the targets they give you. You can help too, by following your teachers' advice and marking commentary. Everyone in school takes good care of you and makes sure that you are safe and happy. I was especially pleased by how well you get on with each other. Your school is improving and the headteacher knows what needs improving, and how to do it. I think that the school would improve at a faster pace if your headteacher and her leadership team checked in your books and in your lessons more regularly to make sure that this is happening so that you all make good progress.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Bentley
Lead inspector

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