

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Harwich

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	115132
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	395537
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Derek Watts

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>	112
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Richard Colley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Marie Kelly (Acting Headteacher)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 April 2011
<b>School address</b>	The Drive Dovercourt Harwich CO12 3SU
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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<b>Inspection number</b>	395537



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Derek Watts

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons or part lessons, taught by five different teachers. He held discussions with the headteacher, the staff, members of the governing body, parents and carers and pupils. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were heard to read. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. He observed the school's work, and looked at the school's policies, assessment information, pupils' work, teachers' plans and school improvement planning. The inspector analysed 36 questionnaires completed by parents and carers as well as 70 from pupils and six from staff.

## Information about the school

St Joseph's Catholic is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The vast majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. A below-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The school meets current floor standards, the minimum standards expected by the government for pupils' attainment and progress. The acting headteacher has been in post since September 2011. She was previously the deputy headteacher.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- St Joseph's Catholic Primary is a good school. Pupils are achieving well because of good teaching and a positive ethos. The school is not outstanding because pupils' progress in writing is not as good as in other skills; weaknesses in teaching prevent it from being outstanding and some parents and carers lack guidance on how to support their children's learning.
- Pupils make good progress through the school and by Year 6 their attainment is above average in reading and mathematics, but average in writing. Progress in writing is satisfactory. Pupils read with confidence and solve mathematical problems well. Handwriting and presentation of work are not always good. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write extended pieces, especially in subjects other than English.
- Pupils are well taught. Teachers convey clear expectations of learning. Explanations, instructions and questioning engage pupils and promote good learning. Tasks are usually well matched to pupils' different abilities so that all are challenged and their interest is sustained. Occasionally, pupils' learning is satisfactory rather than good because it does not move on at a brisk pace and tasks are not sufficiently challenging, especially for the more able. Strategies for prompting good writing are not always used well.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is good. They are courteous, friendly and show consideration for others. Good procedures ensure that all pupils are safe and secure at school.
- The acting headteacher and staff are successfully promoting good achievement and behaviour. A positive climate for learning has been created. The monitoring and development of teaching are effective and school performance is managed well. Parents and carers are right to be pleased with the quality of care and education provided.

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

- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing and raise their attainment in this skill by the end of Year 6 to above average by July 2013 by:
  - improving pupils' handwriting and presentation of work
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to write extended pieces
  - extending opportunities for pupils to apply and develop writing skills in subjects other than English.
- Improve elements of teaching, especially the teaching of writing, by ensuring that in all classes by December 2012:
  - learning always moves at a brisk pace
  - tasks are always challenging and closely matched to pupils' different abilities, particularly those of the more-able
  - strategies, such as demonstration and visual stimuli, are always used well to promote writing skills.
- Take positive steps to help parents and carers support their children's learning by:
  - seeking the views of parents and carers and responding to their needs and concerns
  - informing parents and carers what their children will be learning.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 make good progress overall. These findings are shared by the vast majority of parents and carers who completed the questionnaire. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because their needs are carefully assessed and they receive well-targeted and specific guidance and support in class and in small groups. Just occasionally, the more able are not sufficiently challenged in lessons. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above average in reading and mathematics. It is average in writing and fewer pupils attain the higher Level 5 than in reading and mathematics.

Children's attainment on entry to Reception varies year to year, from below expected to that expected at that age. Most year groups enter with knowledge and skills broadly expected for their age. They make good progress because of good teaching and interesting learning activities. Children talk confidently about their learning. They show a good understanding of the seasons and the months of the year. Some are making rapid progress in writing. For example, they wrote interesting sentences after their recent visit to Marsh Farm: 'We liekd the dongkee. He was in the staibl' – and 'Thees lams in dors wer old a nuf to leev ther mummy.'

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Girls and boys in Key Stages 1 and 2 make good progress in speaking and listening because of the regular opportunities for discussion. Good progress is made in reading because of the school's regular and discrete programme for the teaching of reading. One Year 1 pupil remarked, 'I really like reading.' Attainment in reading is average in the current Year 2. Pupils write for a range of purposes. By the end of Year 6, grammar, punctuation and spelling are usually accurate. Pupils in Year 6 wrote clear accounts of the life of Queen Victoria. Some use word processing and illustrations to enhance their writing. Pupils' handwriting and presentation are not always good enough. They do not always have sufficient opportunities to apply and develop their writing skills in a range of subjects or to write at length.

Most pupils make good progress in mathematics and apply their numeracy skills well to solve problems because of effective teaching. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 made good progress in creating interlocking two-dimensional shapes using rubber bands on a pin board. They were able to describe clearly the properties of different shapes. In Years 3 and 4, pupils accurately measured and recorded the capacity of different vessels. By Year 6, pupils can gather and accurately record data, which they present clearly in pie charts.

### **Quality of teaching**

Teaching promotes enjoyment and good learning for pupils. Almost all parents and carers who completed the questionnaire confirmed inspection findings that their children were well taught. The pupils told the inspector, 'Teachers make learning fun'. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is a good balance of adult-led activities and those chosen by children. Children have good opportunities to explore, be creative and learn independently.

Lessons have a clear purpose and pupils know what they are expected to learn. Teachers successfully create a positive climate for learning and foster strong relationships. Pupils are encouraged to be cooperative, considerate and supportive of others. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning in pairs and this has a positive impact on their speaking and listening skills. The teaching of basic skills, such as letters and their sounds, is effective. Younger pupils are well organised into groups of similar ability for the teaching of reading. They make good gains in reading and spelling. The promotion of good handwriting is less evident. Questioning is used effectively to check pupils' understanding.

In the main, assessment information is used well to plan teaching and to match tasks to pupils' different abilities. In just a few lessons, tasks are not sufficiently challenging, particularly for the more-able, and the pace of learning slows. Teaching and the curriculum promote pupils' skills of investigation and problem solving well, especially in mathematics. For example in Year 4, pupils had good opportunities to design an investigation to find if dissolving sugar or salt in water increased its volume. At times, there is an over reliance on worksheets requiring a limited written response from the pupils. These hinder extended writing and pupils' ability to plan

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and organise their own work. In a Year 3 and 4 lesson, pupils made good progress in writing interesting sentences about Henry VIII and his wives after skilful questioning and effective modelling of sentences by the teacher. Pupils had good opportunities to review the sentences and improve them. However, strategies to promote pupils' writing, such as using demonstration, drama and visual stimuli are not used regularly enough across the school. As a result, pupils' achievement in writing lags behind that of reading and mathematics.

Teaching assistants are effectively deployed and they and the teachers make good contributions to pupils' learning, particularly that of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. These pupils make good progress because tasks and support are well matched to their needs.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children feel safe, secure and are well behaved. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 behave well in lessons and around the school. They are keen, interested and have positive attitudes to learning. Their good behaviour contributes well to the flow of the lesson and to their good learning. The school's detailed records confirm that behaviour is typically good over time.

The inspector's findings are fully endorsed by virtually all parents and carers who completed the questionnaire, who believe that their children feel safe at school and all stated that their children are well looked after. One parental comment was, 'The school provides a safe and nurturing environment.' Pupils confirmed to the inspector that they feel safe and very well looked after by adults. They said, 'We are safe, very well looked after and our behaviour is usually good.' All parents and carers are right to believe that the school sets high standards of behaviour and deals with bullying effectively. Pupils show a good awareness of different forms of bullying, including persistent name calling and cyber-bullying, and how to deal with it. Incidents of misbehaviour of any sort are rare because the school has clear and effective systems to tackle them. Attendance levels are high.

### **Leadership and management**

The acting headteacher and staff have successfully created a positive climate in which all pupils can successfully learn and develop. She has fostered good teamwork among the staff and has established positive partnerships with parents and carers and the governing body.

Self-evaluation is accurate and effective and positive action is being taken to bring about improvement. Improving writing and investigative skills in mathematics are the school's correctly identified priorities. Key leaders are effectively involved in monitoring and improving their areas of responsibility. Year 6 attainment dipped after the previous inspection but is now back at above-average levels in reading and mathematics. Good progress has been made in improving pupils' skills in using and applying mathematics. Sustained good achievement and behaviour, supported by

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good teaching, show the school's clear capacity to improve further.

Effective procedures for the monitoring and development of teaching contribute to the good practice. Professional development and training are well linked to the school's improvement priorities. Although the school recognises that the teaching of writing is not effective enough, action to improve it has not yet had the full impact on attainment.

Leaders and staff provide an interesting curriculum which promotes good outcomes for pupils. A good range of clubs, visits and visitors enrich pupils' learning. For example, a parent helper and visitor made a valuable contribution to a successful singing practice. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is successfully promoted. Pupils show considerable care, respect and support for others. There are good opportunities for prayer and reflection in assemblies and lessons.

The school successfully engages with its parents and carers. The questionnaire responses indicate that the vast majority are very pleased with the care and education provided for their children. However, inspection findings endorse the views of the few parents who are concerned that the school is not fully effective in helping them to support their children's learning and lack information about what the children will be learning. The acting headteacher and the governing body are keen to address this issue.

The governing body show a good understanding of school performance and the community it serves. They are supportive and provide constructive challenge. Good attention is given to safeguarding and all requirements are met. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and discrimination is very effectively tackled. Pupils have full access to all learning activities and staff strive to ensure that all pupils do as well as they can.



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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](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.

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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.**



16 May 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Harwich, Harwich CO12 3SU**

Thank you so much for welcoming me into your school, giving me your views and showing me your work. I enjoyed my visit. St Joseph's is a good school. These are its main strengths.

- You enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have a good start and achieve well.
- Good progress continues in Key Stage 1 and 2 in reading and mathematics because of good teaching and interesting topics.
- You get on well with others and your behaviour is good.
- You feel safe at school because teachers and other adults take very good care of you.
- The school is well led by your acting headteacher and she receives good support from other staff and members of the governing body.

I have given your school a few points for improvement.

- I want you to reach higher standards in writing by the end of Year 6 by teachers making sure those of you who need to improve your handwriting and presentation do so. Also all of you should be given more opportunities to write extended pieces and to practise your writing skills in different subjects.
- I have asked your school to make sure that you are always suitably challenged and learn, whenever possible, at a quick pace. Teachers should use a wider range of methods to help you improve your writing.
- Your school should take positive steps to help your parents and carers support your learning.

You can all help by continuing to work hard, especially on your writing.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts  
Lead inspector

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