

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Medlar-with-Wesham

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119629
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379858
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30–31 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Steven Hill

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>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	78
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Taylor
<b>Headteacher</b>	Margaret Wright
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 March 2009
<b>School address</b>	Garstang Road North Medlar-With-Wesham Kirkham Preston PR4 3HA
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Steven Hill

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Teaching and learning in nine lessons were observed, taught by four teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, other staff, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and an adviser from the local authority. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a variety of documentation, concentrating on information about pupils' progress and arrangements for keeping them safe. Work in pupils' books was sampled and questionnaires scrutinised from pupils, staff and from 50 parents and carers. Several younger pupils were heard to read.

## Information about the school

This is a very small primary school. The very large majority of pupils are White British, with just a few from different minority ethnic heritages. None speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils supported at School Action Plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is very high. A relatively high proportion of pupils start in the school part-way through their primary education, sometimes with high levels of special educational needs or disabilities. The school meets the government's floor standard, which sets minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

The school provides a daily breakfast-club for its own pupils and those of another school nearby.

During the inspection, the school had largely suspended its usual timetable for a week when a range of outside partners provided extensive enrichment activities for all classes.

**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>1</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key Findings

- This is an outstanding school. It is an exceptionally cohesive and inclusive community, where all thrive socially and academically, whatever their background, ability or needs. Excellent systems to monitor provision and track pupils' progress have led to outstanding achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. The school is starting to extend this process to other subjects.
- Outstanding achievement by all groups leads to high levels of attainment, with three quarters of the current Year 6 achieving above the expected levels in English and mathematics, for example. The school is particularly effective in helping disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to make rapid progress. Pupils who arrive in the school at different times often make outstanding progress once they have settled in.
- Behaviour is outstanding and pupils feel exceptionally safe and secure. They are extremely positive about all aspects of school, greatly enjoy learning and form excellent relationships. They value each other's achievements, accept and support each other's difficulties, and join with staff in making sure everyone is fully included in the life of the school.
- Outstanding teaching is a key factor in pupils' excellent progress. Teachers are particularly skilled at providing each individual with tasks that are challenging, manageable, and adapted to their particular needs. Teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour, which pupils consistently meet because they like and respect their teachers, and are keen to please them.
- Clear leadership from the headteacher and exceptionally good teamwork have produced a coherent, shared vision that is focused on driving up every pupil's progress. Excellent provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins the school's many strengths. The monitoring of lessons and clear feedback to colleagues has improved teaching. More refined tracking of attainment has boosted achievement to a high level.

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

- Extend the outstanding practice that has resulted in outstanding achievement in English and mathematics to help ensure similarly outstanding achievement in other subjects. In particular:
  - enhance the arrangements for monitoring teaching and learning in these subjects so staff can share expertise and good practice further
  - refine assessment systems to give a more detailed picture of pupils' attainment in each subject
  - establish a clear timetable and order for improving different subjects, so that the task is manageable.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Achievement is outstanding and attainment high and rising. Pupils now make excellent progress throughout the school. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about their children's progress, and about how well their particular needs are met. Children in the Reception class make at least good progress and many do exceptionally well. They start with skill levels that vary between individuals and from year to year, but which are generally at or below those expected. Attainment at the end of Reception has risen and, recently, pupils have started Key Stage 1 with above-average skills. The excellent teaching of phonics (how the sounds in words relate to how they are written) provides a firm basis for high reading standards. In an excellent, fast-paced session, all the Reception children made rapid progress in recognising letter patterns. They happily tackled different tasks matched to their different levels, with lively encouragement from the adults ensuring that they were all completely involved.

Attainment at the end of Year 2 has risen, and is currently above average, including in reading. Pupils enjoy the many practical tasks they are given. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 improved their understanding of their own bodies as they observed the effect of energetic exercise, before acting out the role of red blood cells or body parts. Outstanding progress through Key Stage 2 has led to attainment at the end of Year 6 which is well above average, including in reading. All current pupils have reached the expected levels and most have exceeded them. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 made excellent progress when writing a 'stream of consciousness' account of running in the Olympics. Their consideration of the feelings of an injured athlete greatly enhanced their spiritual, moral and social understanding, as well as their literacy skills.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including the many who start in different year-groups, make outstanding progress. This is because they are given tasks that are carefully modified to meet their needs, and provide a suitable level of challenge. Pupils who have behavioural problems are supported to help them conform, so that they do not disrupt others, settle happily into school and then make outstanding progress. Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals do as well as their classmates, with virtually no gap in achievement.

## Quality of teaching

Teachers make excellent use of assessment data to match tasks to different pupils' needs. This is a major factor in the outstanding achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Very good use of external advice from a variety of specialist partners feeds into the carefully-judged balance of challenge and support provided by teachers and highly-skilled teaching assistants. Parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire were extremely positive about the quality of teaching their children receive, especially if their child had particular needs.

Teachers carefully monitor on-going progress in lessons, quickly intervening to support any who are confused, and challenging all pupils to refine and extend their work to the next level. This positive feedback continues through some high-quality marking of pupils' written work, where they are praised for what they have done well, and given clear pointers of how to improve, often linked to their individual targets. Reading is taught very well from the start, and pupils have many opportunities to use and develop their literacy skills in other subjects. The adults in the Reception class are particularly effective when intervening in children's play. This was observed when excellent use was made of the outdoor area for the 'Alien Olympics' activities, originally suggested by children. Children thoroughly enjoyed a variety of energetic pursuits, while careful questioning by adults enhanced their understanding and skills in literacy and numeracy, for example.

Teachers explain things in a lively and engaging way, often using interactive whiteboards to clarify explanations or generate enthusiasm. There is a strong focus in many lessons on extending pupils' personal development, and concern for others and empathy are thoughtfully considered in a variety of subjects. Pupils rightly stress that lessons are fun. Teachers actively involve them in exciting activities and generate a lot of enthusiasm. Excellent use is made of discussion in pairs to involve all pupils. This was observed when pupils from a wide range of abilities in Years 3 and 4 made good progress in learning Spanish, copying the teacher's clear pronunciation well. Very good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT), seen when pupils in Years 5 and 6 independently used laptops to research information about the Olympics to help them with their designs in art.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they bubble over with enthusiasm for school and for learning. They make an exceptional contribution to their own learning. For example, they concentrate determinedly in class, greatly enjoy lessons and work very hard. Attendance is above average. Pupils' relationships with each other and with adults are excellent and contribute to their outstanding progress, especially when they work collaboratively. A group of pupils in Year 6 agreed that they are 'all friends...like one big family...' and that, '...everyone's included in everything...never left out'. Pupils have a secure understanding of different kinds of bullying and say it is extremely rare here. They have great confidence that the adults and their classmates will not allow problems to develop. They agreed that adults deal with any issues well, sorting out arguments between friends and helping any pupils who have worries or problems. They greatly value each other's achievements, and particularly praise the successes of pupils who struggle academically. They understand moral

and social issues extremely well. This was exemplified when pupils in Years 1 and 2 made excellent progress as they learned about the values of the Olympic Games, in a way that related the values to their own lives as well as to sport.

Pupils who have recognised behaviour problems greatly improve their conduct over time because of the support and acceptance of both the staff and their friends. Scrutiny of behavioural records and discussions confirms this. Pupils recognise their own problems and are very positive about how the adults and other pupils value them as individuals.

Pupils feel very safe in school and have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They take responsibilities seriously and Year 6 pupils see it as natural that they should look after each other, especially in helping the younger children. As one said, 'We look after our friends and our family...and our teachers, and they do the same back.' Parents and carers agree that behaviour and safety are strengths of the school.

### **Leadership and management**

Excellent systems to track pupils' progress and evaluate the school's provision in English and mathematics have helped raised standards and the quality of teaching to high levels. A good start has been made on extending these high-quality systems to other subjects. The major improvements since the previous inspection, and the maintenance of excellent behaviour, show the school has an outstanding capacity to build further on its strengths. The performance of teachers is managed very effectively through clear identification of need and the provision of advice and targeted professional development to raise skills.

The careful monitoring of the needs of individual pupils and their progress means that no-one is allowed to fall behind. Outstanding use is made of the expertise of outside specialists as well as the school's own skilled staff to ensure that pupils with a wide range of complex issues are supported very effectively. Along with the excellent focus on ensuring that all pupils are fully included in every aspect of school life, this leads to outstandingly good equality of opportunity, and an excellent combating of discrimination.

The governing body contributes effectively to the excellent leadership. It has very good systems to understand the school's performance and is very able to hold colleagues to account. It takes a full part in setting direction and evaluating success. Working with staff, it has ensured that the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements. The school's deep understanding of individuals and families greatly enhances secure child-protection procedures.

The schools' broad and balanced curriculum makes an excellent contribution to pupils' outstanding achievement and great enjoyment of school. A focus on literacy and numeracy is based on exciting and relevant activities that enthuse pupils, as well as developing their skills and understanding. The Reception curriculum draws a careful balance between adult-led activities and those chosen by children, making excellent use of the very good outdoor area. Excellent development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a thread that runs through lessons

in many subjects. This continues in the welcoming setting of the breakfast-club, which provides interesting activities, and healthy eating in the context of a positive social gathering. Outstanding enhancement to the curriculum strongly supports this, exemplified during the inspection by a MADD week (of music, art, dance and drama) with an Olympic and Paralympic theme. Pupils took tremendous enjoyment in the chance to learn photography skills, improvise dramatic performances, and take part in wheelchair basketball, joined at times by friends from the local special school.



## 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 up 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.**



1 June 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Medlar-with-Wesham, Preston, PR4 3HA**

Thank you for your cheerful welcome when I inspected your school. I greatly enjoyed talking to you and seeing you enjoy yourselves in lessons, especially the wheelchair basketball. You told me that you really enjoy school and are very happy there. I was pleased to see how well you all get along with each other, and to find that your behaviour is excellent. You are particularly good at helping take care of each other and making sure no-one is left out of things. You are growing up as friendly, caring, sensitive and happy young people that your parents, carers and school can be really proud of. You said that you feel very safe in school because the adults and your friends can always be relied on to look after you.

Your school gives you an outstanding education. You get lots of interesting and exciting things to do that make learning great fun. You make excellent progress and reach high standards in English and mathematics because the teachers are so good at helping you to learn. They have worked very hard in the last few years to keep track of how everyone is doing in reading, writing and mathematics, so they can give extra help if it is needed. This means everyone does very well. I have agreed with the staff that they are going to keep this up, and extend it into different subjects so that you make excellent progress in all areas.

The adults are keen to carry on making the school better and better, and I know you will want to help. You can do this by keeping up your hard work and excellent behaviour, and carry on taking such good care of each other.

I hope that you carry on enjoying life at St Joseph's.  
Yours sincerely,

Steven Hill  
Lead Inspector

