

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Leigh

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106501
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	395456
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2012
Lead inspector	Joanne Olsson HMI

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	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Aspden
Headteacher	Anne McNally
Date of previous school inspection	22 January 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Joanne Olsson
Sheila Iwaskow

Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 13 lessons led by nine teachers. Two of these lessons were joint observations with the headteacher. Inspectors also visited classrooms to observe the teaching of reading. Inspectors observed pupils at play and during lunchtime and heard pupils read. Meetings were held with staff, different groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and senior leaders and managers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including arrangements for safeguarding, information about pupils' attainment and progress and pupils' books. They considered the responses to questionnaires from staff, pupils and 82 parents and carers.

Information about the school

This is smaller than the average-sized primary school and admits pupils from a large catchment area. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language are lower than found nationally. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is higher than in other schools. The school meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school has received Healthy School status and the Eco School Silver Award. Four members of staff have taken maternity leave in the past year.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This good school has significant strengths in pupils' behaviour and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Overall effectiveness is not outstanding because teaching is good rather than exceptional and not all pupils make rapid progress from their starting points. Nonetheless, pupils' achievement and well-being are at the heart of this successful school. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers say they would recommend the school to others. The positive views of many are summed up in the comment, 'I am proud that my children attend this school.'
- Pupils make good progress from their lower-than-expected starting points and leave Year 6 with average attainment levels. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 sometimes make slower progress. Pupils achieve well in all areas of the curriculum but fewer pupils are working beyond age-related expectations in mathematics. Teaching is never less than good and is sometimes outstanding. Warm relationships underpin calm and purposeful classrooms which enable pupils to thrive. An imaginative curriculum and enthusiastic teaching leads to exciting learning opportunities which pupils thoroughly enjoy.
- Pupils' behaviour in classes and around the school is outstanding. They are highly considerate and respectful to each other and to adults so learning is rarely disrupted. They have a well-developed understanding of bullying and how to keep themselves safe.
- The inspirational headteacher has the commitment and trust of all staff who share her drive for excellence. The leadership of teaching and the management of performance are good because they have led to improvements over time, particularly in reading and writing. Monitoring activities are wide-ranging. However, some of these activities do not happen frequently enough or provide precise feedback to help teachers improve their practice further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement so that all pupils, particularly those in Years 3 and 4, make rapid and sustained progress from their starting points in all subjects by:

- ensuring teachers use questions to extend pupils' learning during shared and group activities
 - ensuring pupils have greater opportunities to use their calculation skills to solve mathematical problems
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills across the curriculum
 - developing teachers' marking so it provides clear guidance to help pupils improve.
- Enhance leadership and management so that all teaching across the school consistently matches the best by:
- ensuring monitoring activities happen more frequently and always lead to precise guidance to help teachers improve their practice
 - building on the skills of subject leaders and managers so there is greater consistency in how they monitor their areas of responsibility.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils are enthusiastic learners who are willing to work hard and keen to succeed. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children thoroughly enjoyed making Olympic mascots. They worked with imagination, cooperation and creative flair. In a Year 6 English lesson, pupils worked with exceptional levels of concentration to write an advertisement for their production of the Tempest. Activities such as these promote pupils' love of learning because they are purposeful and challenging.

All the parents and carers who returned the questionnaire agree pupils make good progress. Almost all pupils believe they learn a lot in lessons. Inspectors agree that pupils make good progress over time. Children enter the school with skills and knowledge that are much lower than is expected for their age. They get off to a flying start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress from this point to reach attainment levels in Year 6 that are broadly average. Attainment fell in 2011 because fewer pupils gained the higher levels. Inspection evidence confirms this is not a typical reflection of pupils' performance. Staff absence has led to some pupils in Years 3 and 4 making slower progress.

Pupils achieve well in all subjects because the well-planned curriculum enables them to use their reading, writing and communication skills across all subjects. This is less well developed for mathematics. Pupils' attainment in reading is broadly average at the end of Year 2 and by the time they leave the school. They are confident readers who have the necessary skills to tackle new words and understand texts. Pupils enjoy reading and have a good knowledge of authors because they are actively encouraged to read for meaning and pleasure at school and at home. Their achievement in writing is improving securely as they frequently write for a range of purposes. Although most pupils are working at age-related expectations in mathematics, few work beyond. This is because they have insufficient opportunities to apply their learning and use their calculation skills to solve mathematical problems through investigative activities. An over reliance on worksheets hinders the progress of some pupils in mathematics.

Disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. More-able pupils are benefiting from an enquiry-approach curriculum. The good levels of challenge they receive means more pupils are working above the levels expected for their age. Although girls and average ability pupils achieved less well than other groups in 2011, these groups are now performing as well as other pupils in the school.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers are unanimous in their agreement that teaching at the school is good. Inspectors agree that teaching is never less than good on a day-to-day basis. Teachers use assessment information well to shape tasks to the needs of different groups, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Teachers' good subject knowledge means new concepts are introduced skilfully and they model learning well. Some teaching is exceptional. This is because teachers exploit every opportunity to consolidate pupils' learning and extend their basic skills. These teachers have an acute understanding of how to shape independent tasks so no time is wasted and all pupils make rapid progress. Occasionally, teachers do not use questions well enough to extend pupils learning during shared and group activities. Teachers' marking is thorough. Most teachers provide helpful guidance to help pupils improve their writing skills. However, this practice is less well developed in mathematics.

The imaginative curriculum underpins effective teaching across the whole school. Subjects are creatively linked and teachers present exciting activities which fire pupils' enthusiasm. 'Learning in our school is fun, because every day is different' is a typical comment from the overwhelming majority of pupils who think teaching is good. Opportunities to develop pupils' reading, writing and communication skills are successfully seized. Furthermore, activities to promote pupils' creative skills have equal priority. This is evident in the high quality art displays and the musical performances across the school. The teaching of reading and writing have improved since the previous inspection because pupils' skills are effectively nurtured in the Early Years Foundation Stage and consistently built on as pupils move through the school. A history lesson was brought alive as pupils competently used their reading skills to gather information about the Olympics from books and the internet. Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well through memorable learning experiences and the opportunities to consider moral issues and gain an appreciation of different cultures.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Parents and carers unanimously agree that there is a good standard of behaviour and that pupils are safe. Almost none believes that learning is disrupted. Most pupils agree behaviour is good and different groups say they feel safe in school. Inspectors found that pupils' behaviour in classes and around the school is exemplary over time. It is a strength of the school which makes a significant contribution to pupils' achievement and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's caring ethos and highly effective strategies to manage behaviour underpin pupils' respectful and considerate attitudes to each other. Consequently, pupils flourish in an atmosphere of serenity and dignity. Pupils take ownership for their own behaviour and adults rarely need to intervene. This means learning can proceed with very few interruptions. Pupils know how the school expects them to behave and they live up to these expectations fully. This was evident as the whole school watched the Year 6 performance of the *Tempest*. All pupils, regardless of age watched with rapt concentration, clearly enjoying and appreciating the success of the older pupils. The

school's varied strategies to support pupils who find managing their own behaviour more challenging are highly effective so behaviour has improved over time.

Pupils' ability to value differences and to recognise the impact of their actions is at the heart of their exceptional behaviour. Almost all parents and carers and most pupils agree the school deals well with all forms of bullying. Pupils are adamant that bullying does not happen at their school because they care about each other. Pupils talk convincingly about the strategies they use to prevent pupils from being isolated. They have an astute understanding of different types of bullying so they know why racist or homophobic name calling is wrong. As one pupil commented 'It doesn't matter what type of background you come from, everyone gets along in our school.' Pupils have a well-developed sense of how to keep themselves safe. They understand the potential threats of using electronic communication. Older pupils talk with confidence about the steps they will take to avoid anti-social behaviour. Pupils enjoyment of school is reflected in their above average attendance levels.

Leadership and management

Determined leadership by the headteacher, ably assisted by strong leaders and managers has driven improvement since the previous inspection. This school has not stood still. Considerable improvements to the curriculum and the teaching of reading and writing mean pupils continue to achieve well. This proven track record coupled with accurate self-evaluation means the school's capacity for sustained improvement is good. All leaders and managers have a role in securing improvement and all subjects are held in equal regard. Consequently, staff have an increasing role in monitoring the work of the school. However, inconsistencies in the quality and quantity of their monitoring work mean this strategy is having varied success on improving outcomes. Nonetheless, recent improvements show the school is addressing these inconsistencies with greater vigour. The systems to manage the performance of teachers are firmly embedded and lead to timely and focussed professional development. However, the activities to check on teaching across the school do not always happen frequently enough or lead to precise targets for improvement. The school's procedures to safeguard pupils meet statutory requirements.

Members of the governing body have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Positive relationships with parents and carers are fostered through regular communication and an up-to-date website. Equality of opportunity is promoted well because there is little variation in the achievement of groups and very few incidents of harassment. Pupils at risk of underperforming are identified quickly because the systems to check on pupils' performance are firmly established.

The imaginative curriculum successfully builds on pupils' skills and knowledge as they move through the school. It meets the needs and interests of all pupils because it is effectively linked to national and local events. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. A range of art, musical and drama activities coupled with visits and visitors mean pupils have a well-developed sense of their own culture. In studying other countries and faiths and through their excellent respect for differences pupils are well placed to live in a diverse society. Their love of learning is evident in all classrooms. Their exemplary social and moral skills are demonstrated fully in the care they display towards each other and their eagerness to support others through charity work.

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).

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.



20 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Leigh, Leigh, WN7 2PR

It was lovely to meet so many polite and chatty pupils when we recently came to inspect your school. Thank you for making us feel so welcome and for sharing your work and views. We really enjoyed watching the Year 6 perform the *Tempest*. What amazing actors they all are! You attend a good school. These are the main things we found out during the inspection.

- You make good progress over time so that your attainment is average by the time you leave school. Your achievement in reading and writing is improving quickly.
- You are very proud of your school; you think teachers make learning fun and adults care about you. You feel safe and happy at school.
- You enjoy your learning because activities are exciting and you work hard.
- Your behaviour during the inspection and over time is outstanding. You respect differences and really care about each other. You are very good at managing your own behaviour so adults rarely need to remind you to be sensible.
- You feel very safe in school and think bullying is well managed. You know about different types of bullying and how to keep yourself safe. Your attendance is above average and you are punctual to school. Well done!

To get even better we have asked the adults in charge of your school to help you make greater gains in your learning. We have asked them to help you all make better progress in mathematics by allowing you to do more investigative work. We have also asked them to help pupils in Years 3 and 4 make faster progress. Finally, we have asked them to think about the ways they check on teaching and how well you are learning. It really was a treat to meet you. You are fantastic ambassadors for your school and a credit to your families.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Olsson
Her Majesty's Inspector

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