

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	115707
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	379131
Inspection dates	3–4 July 2012
Lead inspector	James Henry

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	94
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jacque Derrick
Headteacher	Wendy D'Arcy
Date of previous school inspection	January 2007
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Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	2–3 July 2012
Inspection number	379131



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Introduction

Inspection team

James Henry

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited ten lessons and one assembly and observed five teachers. Meetings were held with senior teachers, the Chair of the Governing Body and a group of pupils. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at school self-evaluation documents and improvement plans, assessments showing pupil progress, teachers' planning and documents regarding the safeguarding of pupils. As well as staff and pupil questionnaires, 75 were received from parents and carers and analysed.

Information about the school

St Joseph's is a much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage with English as their first language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action plus or with a statement of special education need is broadly average. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes apart from children in the Early Years Foundation Stage who are taught in a single Reception class. The school meets the current floor standards that the government set as a minimum requirement for the attainment and progress of pupils. Since the previous inspection in January 2007, there have been significant staffing changes including two headteachers and an acting headteacher. The present headteacher was appointed in April 2011.

The school has achieved an Eco-School bronze award.

There is pre-school provision on site that is not managed by the governing body and was not part of the inspection.

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. It is not good because pupils' achievement is satisfactory and progress in writing is not as good as in reading and mathematics. Schools whose effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Attainment by the end Key Stage 2 is broadly average and on a rising trend because pupils are beginning to make accelerated progress, particularly in reading and mathematics across Key Stage 2. However, opportunities to allow pupils to practise their writing skills in other subjects are not consistently planned. Also pupils do not have individual challenging targets to aim for in writing.
- While teaching is satisfactory, it is improving, with some good teaching observed during the inspection. Staff work well together. However, while there are examples of teachers sharing good practice, there are missed opportunities to share this good practice widely across the school and provide pupils, particularly the more able, with activities that allow them to learn for themselves.
- Pupils are eager to learn and feel safe in school because behaviour is good. There are good relationships throughout the school, with pupils confident that staff will quickly address any problems that may arise.
- The headteacher, in a short space of time, has accurately identified the areas that needed to be addressed in the school and focused on managing the performance of teachers and improved the quality of teaching through rigorous monitoring and feedback. Newly appointed senior leaders have begun to monitor teaching and hold staff to account for pupils' progress, but this is at an early stage of development and has not had a full impact on improving pupils' achievement, especially in writing.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment by improving pupils' progress in writing across Key Stage 2 through:
 - planning consistent opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in other subjects
 - monitoring the progress of average-ability pupils in writing to quickly identify and address any underperformance
 - providing individual targets for pupils in writing.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to learn for themselves, especially the more able
 - sharing the good practice in teaching that already exists in the school
 - ensuring teaching assistants are fully effective in supporting pupils' learning by providing appropriate professional training.
- Strengthen the role of senior leaders in supporting the headteacher by:
 - embedding their work in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching to increase the rate at which pupils learn
 - ensuring they regularly hold staff to account for pupils' progress, especially in writing
 - ensuring they are held to account by the governing body.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities broadly expected for their age and make satisfactory progress in all six areas of learning. Hence, children enter Year 1 with basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics that are expected for their age. In Key Stages 1 and 2, achievement is satisfactory overall but improving. The rate at which pupils learn is beginning to accelerate, especially in reading and mathematics across Key Stage 2. School assessments, pupils' work and the unvalidated results from national tests in 2012 at the end of Key Stage 2 indicate that attainment is set to rise to well above expected levels in both English and mathematics. School monitoring data indicate that pupils make the progress needed to embed the rise in attainment. Attainment in reading by the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is above average.

This increasing rate at which pupils learn was seen in lessons. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make better progress than previously because activities in lessons are more effectively matched to their needs. In one lesson, for example, older pupils made good progress in developing their speaking and

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reasoning skills through writing and reading out persuasive letters about controversial topics, such as, 'Is it better to have money rather than be happy?' Pupils were then given constructive feedback by the class on how well they had argued their case. This not only developed pupils' writing and vocabulary skills but also challenged their ability to reason and promoted their self-confidence.

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire felt that their child was making good progress. This is becoming an increasingly accurate point of view because while pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, their progress is now improving, with rising attainment by the end of Year 6.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is satisfactory, although the very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire believe that their children are taught well. Inspection findings show that while the quality of teaching is satisfactory, it is improving, with an increasing amount of good teaching in the school. As a result, the rate at which pupils learn in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is accelerating. For example, better teaching was observed when lessons were constantly planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. It was a regular feature in these lessons for more-able pupils to be given tasks to complete instead of listening to the whole-class input by the teacher. However, there were occasions when activities for more-able pupils did not fully challenge their ability to investigate and learn for themselves.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well by teaching assistants and, as a result, they take an active part in lessons. While teaching assistants are generally engaged in supporting other pupils' learning, there are occasions when they miss teaching opportunities, particularly in extending pupils' understanding when responding to their questions.

Pupils' work is marked regularly with appropriate comments to help the pupils improve, although this is more consistent in English in some classes than in mathematics. Regular use of assessment by teachers to monitor pupils' progress is now more embedded in the school. Consequently, pupils are given group targets and use them to improve their work. However, while these are not fully effective in increasing pupils' progress in writing, evidence in pupils books show progress in writing is accelerating by the end of Year 6.

Pupils of all ages show good concentration in lessons. For example, younger pupils were focusing well on finding the reasons why a poem was exciting. There was good teacher input in developing pupils' understanding of the use of adjectives to make writing more interesting for the reader.

Pupils are taught basic reading skills effectively, with teachers hearing pupils read regularly. Younger pupils blend sounds to read unfamiliar words and use their good vocabulary skills to understand what they are reading. However, there is not yet a

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consistent scheme of work between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 to teach basic reading skills to support any pupil falling behind in Key Stage 2.

Teachers, including staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage, give pupils regular opportunities to cooperate and work together and provide constant praise to increase pupils' self-confidence and promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is typically good in lessons and around the school. This is supported by the views of the very large majority of parents and carers in their responses to the questionnaire. They felt that behaviour is good and that the school deals effectively with any forms of bullying.

In the responses to their questionnaire, pupils said that behaviour was good and, consequently, they felt safe in school. They felt that there was no real bullying of any kind in school and that they had confidence in staff to deal with any disputes or arguments that may arise. When asked, pupils said that they might fall out on occasions but then quickly make friends again. They said that behaviour was generally good in the playground and whilst it could get a bit noisy in the dinner hall, it was because everyone was enjoying their food. Typically, relationships are good with pupils being polite, friendly and respectful to adults and each other.

Staff have high expectations and a consistent pastoral approach to managing pupils' behaviour. Consequently, all groups of pupils have a positive attitude to school, behave well in lessons and are keen to learn. The school keeps a detailed log of any incidents or accidents in school and the actions taken to resolve any situations that may arise.

Pupils are well aware of how to keep themselves safe and described the activities provided by the school to help them, for example anti-bullying week and the local community support officer talking to them about personal safety. They have a good appreciation of the need to be safe when using the internet and explained the school's approach to e-safety including the need for a firewall to stop unsuitable material being downloaded.

Attendance is above average and there have been no exclusions for a significant number of years.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has focused relentlessly and successfully on raising pupil achievement by improving the quality of teaching. Consequently, there is now some good teaching in the school, with pupils making accelerated progress in both English and mathematics. This has involved both rigorous monitoring of lessons and working with the local authority and other schools to provide professional development for

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staff, especially in ensuring teachers assess accurately pupils' attainment and progress. The headteacher has successfully introduced a new tracking system based on these accurate assessments and this is now used to identify and address underperformance. The governing body is becoming increasingly proactive in holding the school to account. This is partly because the headteacher has worked effectively with the governing body to provide it with the information and data about pupil attainment and progress to allow more challenge as well as support for the school. The headteacher has also worked successfully in involving parents and carers in the school and the impact of this was recognised in the very positive feedback in the parent and carer questionnaires.

In order to develop the school's capacity to improve further, new senior leaders have been appointed. They have made a useful start to monitoring the work of the school and meeting staff to discuss pupils' progress, but their role in supporting senior leaders is not fully embedded.

The curriculum is in the process of being reviewed using a two-year cycle that links subjects together to make learning more meaningful and to meet the needs of pupils in mixed-aged classes. Whilst it provides a broad and balanced approach to the teaching of different subjects, opportunities are not systematically planned to allow pupils to practise their basic skills, especially in writing. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well, for example through weeks based on specific themes, such as Awe and Wonder where pupils' understanding and experience of different faiths, cultures and traditions is broadened.

The school has effective arrangements to safeguard pupils. All staff are fully vetted before working in school and have received appropriate child protection training. There are clear roles and responsibilities within the school for child protection, including the identification of a nominated child protection officer and a deputy child protection officer if necessary.

The school has a strong commitment to promoting equality and tackling discrimination, as shown through the constant support given to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to allow them to be fully involved in lessons and in the life of the school.

There have been rapid positive improvements to the school since the appointment of the present headteacher, including the improvement in the quality of teaching and rising attainment and increasing pupil progress based on more accurate assessments. As a result, the school is demonstrating that it has the capacity to improve.

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.

4 July 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Stonehouse GL10 3TY

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn in lessons. Your school gives you a satisfactory standard of education. You told me that you feel safe in school, that behaviour was good and you had confidence in teachers and other adults to deal with any concerns.

Here are some of the things I found at your school.

- You are keen to learn and concentrate well in lessons.
- Older pupils willingly help the younger ones and everyone is normally polite and friendly.
- You are beginning to make better progress, especially in reading and mathematics but less so in writing.
- The standards you reach by the end of Year 6 are getting higher.
- Teaching, while satisfactory over time, is getting better, with teachers planning activities in lessons to meet your needs. However, chances are sometimes missed to allow you to learn more for yourselves.
- The senior teachers, who help your headteacher, have just started to check on how well other teachers are doing and need more time before they can show that they are making a real difference in helping you to improve further.

In order to help your school improve, I have asked the headteacher and governing body to do the following things.

- Increase the progress you make in writing by giving you constant opportunities to practise your writing skills in other subjects and by giving you your own targets to help you improve in writing.
- Improve teaching so that it is constantly good through teachers sharing their good ideas and by giving you more opportunities to learn for yourselves.
- Make sure that the senior teachers, who support your headteacher, help to improve the quality of teaching and constantly check to make sure everyone makes good progress.

You can help by continuing to work hard and helping one another in lessons,

Yours sincerely

James Henry
Lead inspector

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