

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	103436
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	376904
Inspection dates	10–11 July 2012
Lead inspector	Steven Hill

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	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dirk Hermans
Headteacher	Mary Baines
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Steven Hill

Additional inspector

David Heald

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 14 lessons taught by 10 teachers, and made visits to short sessions focused on pupils' reading skills. Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and the director of the Education Action Zone. Inspectors observed the school's work, for example in assembly or at break times, and looked at a variety of documentation, particularly that related to pupils' progress and keeping them safe. A range of evidence about the school's work was scrutinised in displays, in written and photographic records, and in samples of pupils' books. Inspectors listened to some younger pupils reading. Questionnaires were analysed from staff, older pupils and from 49 parents and carers.

Information about the school

St Joseph's is slightly smaller than the average primary school, and is in an urban area. Its pupils come from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds and about one third of them speak English as an additional language, a high proportion. A relatively high proportion of pupils start at the school other than during the Reception year, and many of these pupils speak little or no English when they arrive. About half the pupils are known to be entitled to free school meals, which is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average.

A new deputy headteacher took up post just after the last inspection, in April 2009, and a new headteacher started in September 2010. There have been a number of other staffing changes in this period.

In 2011, the school met government floor standards, which are minimum levels set for pupils' attainment and progress.

The school runs a breakfast club each morning for up to 16 pupils.

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 is a good school. It is not outstanding, because teaching is not consistently of a high enough quality to make achievement outstanding. The school is a vibrant, harmonious multicultural community where pupils from diverse backgrounds thrive socially and academically.
- Pupils make good progress throughout the school, regardless of background or ability. This academic year, some underachievement from previous years has been eradicated and attainment has gone up at each key stage. Differences in achievement between different groups have been eliminated.
- Good teaching in most lessons underpins pupils' good achievement. Teachers consistently match activities to pupils' different needs, using the school's much improved assessment systems. An increasing amount of outstanding teaching takes place, although a small proportion of teaching remains no better than satisfactory. The active involvement and enthusiasm of pupils ensure a good pace in most lessons, as does the monitoring of their ongoing progress. Occasionally, there are inconsistencies in such monitoring, and in some pupils' active involvement, which slow progress. Marking of pupils' work is good but here, too, there are some inconsistencies.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they feel extremely safe in school. They are unfailingly polite and considerate, keen to succeed, enjoy learning and work hard. Relationships are excellent and all pupils work and play together happily. They collaborate exceptionally well in lessons.
- Excellent leadership from the headteacher and her deputy has built rapidly on the improvements identified at the previous inspection. Good management of teaching has increased its quality and raised expectations, with a consequent improvement in pupils' performance. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, leading to much improved behaviour and attitudes. Leaders at all levels now form a very effective team,

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and play a full part in monitoring provision and driving improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement by increasing the consistency and quality of teaching, so more is outstanding and none only satisfactory, by:
 - ensuring that all pupils are actively involved and engaged throughout lessons, so that the pace of their learning is consistently good
 - making marking more consistent, more clearly showing pupils how they can improve, and ensuring that they always respond fully to their teachers' comments and questions
 - ensuring that the progress of different groups during lessons is always monitored, so that any confusion that arises can be identified and addressed quickly.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Achievement is good and all groups of pupils make good progress in lessons. For example, pupils in Year 1 improved their subtraction skills because they listened attentively to the teacher's explanations. They concentrated well on different questions, which were matched to their varying needs, as they worked out how much change customers needed in a shop. Pupils' excellent collaborative skills were seen to good effect when an able group from Years 5 and 6 worked in pairs to investigate Pythagoras' theorem, sharing ideas enthusiastically and drawing on their excellent mental arithmetic skills. They made outstanding progress as they persevered in tackling a very challenging task with enthusiasm.

Attainment is now above average and has risen quickly throughout this school year. Provisional data suggest national assessments will be above average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2, having previously been broadly average. At the end of Year 6, unvalidated data show attainment is above average this year in reading, writing and mathematics. For the previous three years, although rising steadily since the last inspection because of improving progress, attainment in Year 6 had been significantly below average.

Children start in Reception with a range of skills and understanding, but most are below the levels typically expected for their age, and some well below. They make good progress, and attainment in the current class is now average in most areas of learning. Children make a good start in their understanding of phonics (the sounds that letters represent in words). This was seen when they enthusiastically responded to fast-paced questions from the adults, as they worked in groups matched to their different stages of learning.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same good

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progress as their classmates. This is because their specific needs are analysed meticulously, and they are given tasks which are carefully tailored to provide a good balance of challenge and support. Pupils who are new to learning English acquire language skills quickly and soon make good progress in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils who arrive at different ages with little knowledge of English make rapid progress because of the extra help they are given, including effective support in their home language. There is no difference between the achievement of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and that of other pupils. A previous shortfall in the achievement of boys compared to girls has been addressed well, so boys and girls make the same good progress to reach similar standards. Parents and carers are very positive about their children's achievements.

Quality of teaching

Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils and set clear and consistent expectations of work and behaviour. As a result, pupils are keen to please their teachers, behave extremely well and work hard. Teachers set work that is carefully matched to the different attainment levels of different groups and individuals, so that tasks are manageable but challenging. This is a particular feature of the good teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. These pupils often have good support from skilful adults, who have particular expertise in dealing with their specific needs. Parents and carers are rightly very positive about the quality of teaching.

In the large majority of lessons, the adults keep a close eye on how everyone is doing, intervening effectively to correct any misconceptions and challenging pupils to improve their work. Very occasionally, adults' focus on specific groups means that the progress of some other pupils slows because errors or misconceptions are not picked up quickly enough. Teachers' lively explanations of ideas, often making good use of interactive whiteboards to clarify things, generate interest and enthusiasm. A good example was observed when, at the start of an athletics lesson in Year 4, pupils were shown video clips of athletes training to throw the javelin and putt the shot. Teachers use good strategies to ensure all pupils are involved and interested, such as getting them to share their ideas in pairs before answering questions. Occasionally, the pace of learning slows when some pupils spend too long waiting for their turn at an activity, or watching and listening to others. Teachers' marking identifies clearly where pupils have done well, and often points out how they can improve, although advice is not always specific enough for pupils to know just how to do this. The best marking gives pupils extra tasks to help them address weaknesses, or asks them supplementary questions, but pupils do not consistently respond to these.

Teaching promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. In an excellent lesson with Year 6, for example, pupils' social understanding was greatly extended as they considered how they could speak to a friend about their weight or personal hygiene. They answered very thoughtfully and sensitively, in response to the teacher's consistent, gentle and humorous challenge

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to their initial suggestions, as she invited them to put themselves into the shoes of the person receiving the advice.

In Reception, there is a good balance between activities directed by adults and those children choose for themselves. The adults are particularly skilled at intervening sensitively in children's play, encouraging them to extend their learning and developing their speaking and listening skills well.

Reading is taught effectively from the start, and an emphasis on the systematic teaching of phonics develops pupils' skills well. Every pupil in the younger classes is heard to read by an adult daily, and daily 'guided reading' sessions in older classes enhance their skills and engender an enjoyment of reading.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' politeness and consideration for others are striking features of school life. They behave extremely well in class, take a pride in their accomplishments and, as a group from Year 6 agreed, 'It's a friendly school, and we all get along'. They concentrate very well in class, follow instructions closely, and persist in the face of difficulties, cheerfully putting right any mistakes. The very positive relationships, between boys and girls from a wide range of backgrounds are evident when they collaborate in class and when they play together outside. Pupils feel extremely safe in school and can explain why. They have learned a great deal about how to keep themselves safe, and they have great trust that their teachers and friends will look after them if there are difficulties. One boy said, 'We keep safe by respecting each other'. The very consistent management of behaviour by staff contributes to these very positive attitudes. Parents and carers agree that their children behave well and are safe in school. The good provision in the breakfast club continues the school's very positive contribution to the enjoyment and the social development of pupils who attend.

Pupils have a secure understanding of different kinds of bullying, helped by external agencies such as the police, who have talked to them about cyber-bullying. They can clearly explain the difference between bullying and other poor behaviour. Pupils are very positive about behaviour in the school, agreeing it has improved a lot, and that there is now no fighting and no bullying because of the firm approach by the headteacher and staff. Pupils see it as their role to look out for their friends, and to tell the adults if they think anyone is having problems. Their great enjoyment of school is reflected in their attendance, which has risen sharply to be securely above average.

Leadership and management

Good leadership and management have successfully driven improvements in all areas of provision. The excellent senior leadership is now complemented by good teamwork from key-stage and subject leaders. A clear, shared vision is focused on better academic and personal outcomes for pupils. Rigorous monitoring of teaching

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and effective performance management have helped staff improve their practice, through good support from colleagues and relevant professional development. Achievement and behaviour have improved considerably as a result. Attendance has risen and persistent absence has been greatly reduced. There have been no exclusions this year, overturning a high incidence in previous years. Parents and carers are given better information about school and their children's progress. These successes illustrate the school's good capacity to improve further. The governing body has good systems to understand the school's performance so it can both support developments and hold it to account for its performance. It has worked effectively with staff to ensure safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

A thorough tracking system has helped boost achievement for all, ensuring that any shortfall in the attainment or progress of individuals and groups is tackled quickly and effectively. This contributes to the excellent provision to ensure equal opportunities. The improved curriculum is good, and provides pupils with exciting activities that involve and interest them. The outstanding provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes to everyone being included in all aspects of school life. Discrimination is combated very well, by pupils as well as staff. Good use is made of pupils' wide-ranging backgrounds to enhance their understanding of the wider world and celebrate diversity.

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.



12 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Birmingham, B7 5HA

Thank you for your warm welcome when we inspected your school. We were impressed by many things at St Joseph's. One of the most important was your excellent behaviour, and we particularly liked how polite and considerate you are, and how well you all get along together. You are growing up into sensible, friendly and thoughtful young people who are a great credit to your school, and to your parents and carers.

Your school gives you a good education. You told us that you enjoy school and we could see why. You are making much better progress than you did at the time of the school's previous inspection. You are learning a lot, because your teachers are good at helping you to learn. They give you interesting things to do that are challenging but not too difficult. They generally keep everyone involved and interested so learning whizzes along, and they usually keep a careful eye on how you are doing. In one or two lessons, things slow down a bit, or a few of you get confused. We have agreed with your headteacher that the adults are going to try to avoid this happening in future, so you make good progress in all your lessons. The teachers give you good advice about how to improve when they mark your work, and we have asked them to make sure that you always follow their advice, and have time to do this.

The adults are good at organising the school and they make sure everyone is safe and happy. You told us you feel very safe there and you are right. All the adults have worked hard to improve the school. They want to make the school even better, and you can help by keeping up your excellent behaviour and hard work, and by always doing what your teachers suggest when they mark your books.

We hope you carry on enjoying life at St Joseph's,
Yours sincerely

Steven Hill
Lead inspector

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