

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Reddish

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	136430
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	385884
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2012
Lead inspector	James Kidd

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	533
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maurice O'Connell
Headteacher	Stella Rosindale
Date of previous school inspection	
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Introduction

Inspection team

James Kidd
Ray Biglin
Patricia Cope

Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 26 lessons, or part-lessons, taught by 19 members of staff. Three lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher. Meetings were held with four groups of pupils, two members of the governing body, the local authority school effectiveness officer, subject and aspect coordinators and the senior leadership team. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school development planning, internal and external progress data, pupils' workbooks and child protection and safeguarding documentation. They also analysed 158 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 80 completed by pupils and 51 returned by staff.

Information about the school

This is a much larger than average-sized primary school, which opened in April 2011, as the result of the amalgamation between St Joseph's Catholic Junior and St Joseph's Catholic Infant schools. The former headteacher of the infant school became headteacher of the new school. This is the school's first inspection.

The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below that usually seen. Most pupils are White British and there are few pupils at the early stages of learning English. The school meets the government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for learning and progress. St Joseph's is an Investor in People and holds nationally-accredited Healthy School status.

An external provider runs before- and after-school clubs on the school site. These clubs are subject to a separate inspection and receive a separate report which is available on the Ofsted website.

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	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because not all teaching is good or better, the curriculum does not always enable pupils to see the links between subjects and does not emphasise skills development effectively enough. The vast majority of pupils and staff are proud of the new school and it runs well on a day-to-day basis.
- From broadly expected skills on entry to the Nursery, pupils make good progress in all key stages and reach well above average attainment by the end of Year 6. In 2011, attainment and progress in mathematics were higher than in English, but attainment in both subjects is currently the same. More pupils than usually seen reach the higher National Curriculum levels in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- The quality of teaching is good overall, but there are also examples of outstanding practice. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, manage their pupils well and generally deliver, in the words of their charges, 'fun lessons.' In a minority of lessons, there is too much teacher talk and pupils are not encouraged to take sufficient responsibility for their own learning. In addition, assessment data are not always used well enough to inform lesson planning.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in class and around the school. On occasions, their engagement in lessons is excellent. Pupils feel safe and secure and are proactive in their support for others. Older pupils, for example, accompany Nursery and Reception children to the whole-school Mass.
- A sensitive and well-considered approach to amalgamation and effective leadership of teaching and management of performance by the dedicated headteacher and committed senior team demonstrate that the school has strong capacity to improve further. Members of the governing body have a

secure understanding of the performance of the school in all areas of its life and challenge the leadership with the requisite rigour.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is good or better by:
 - using assessment information more effectively to inform lesson planning, in order that the learning needs of all pupils are met more closely
 - reducing the amount of teacher direction in lessons, in order that pupils can become more independent in their learning and thus take greater responsibility for their own progress.

- Further develop the curriculum by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to see the links between the subjects they are studying
 - placing more emphasis in curriculum planning on pupils' acquisition of discrete subject skills.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

In the majority of lessons, pupils are fully engaged in their learning and are keen to do well. When given the opportunity, they work well in pairs and in groups and are more than willing to act as extra learning resources for their classmates. When the subject-matter fascinates them, for example when studying the Aztec human sacrifice ceremony in Year 5, they demonstrate an outstanding enthusiasm for learning and activities develop into an on-going dialogue between the pupils and their teacher and between the pupils themselves; they ask questions of each other and discuss quite complex issues naturally and with confidence. On occasions, however, and when there is too much teacher explanation, pupils become more passive in their learning.

Children's skills on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage vary from year to year, but are generally broadly in line with the expectations for their age. They make good progress in both Nursery and Reception as a result of a broad range of activities covering all areas of learning and because there is a wide variety of bright and attractive resources. They play and share together well and take full advantage of the many opportunities they have to take part in collaborative learning activities with other children.

This good progress continues across the rest of the school and pupils reach well above average attainment in both English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. This represents good achievement for all groups, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs: this good achievement was confirmed when lower-attaining pupils in Year 6 demonstrated to their peers on the interactive whiteboard

their calculations of the area of complex figures. Parents and carers justifiably believe that their children achieve well.

Pupils enjoy reading and value the guided reading sessions they have, explaining to visitors how books are chosen to match and to challenge their current reading levels. By the end of Year 2, pupils' reading skills are above average and by the end of Year 6, they are well above average.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable receive good support and focused guidance from the well-qualified team of 'co-educators.' As a result, they learn as effectively as their peers and achieve well across the school.

Quality of teaching

Most parents and carers who returned the questionnaire believe that the quality of teaching their children receive is good. Inspectors support this view, but judge that there are also examples of outstanding teaching across the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and relationships in the classroom are positive. Pupils have confidence in the adults who work with them and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs benefit from focused in-class and small group support by 'co educators', who ensure that they are able to take part in everything lessons have to offer. Teaching has a positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and serves to raise the self-esteem of pupils of all levels of ability. For example, pupils in Year 3 burst into spontaneous applause when they heard the performance poem of one of their number:

Mondays' child is fun and wise.
Tuesday's child is yellow and lies.
Wednesday's child eats pizza and peas.
Thursday's child has knobbly knees.

The best teaching, outstanding practice in Year 2, for example, comprises sharp starter activities, challenging questions which require pupils to think for themselves and a range of activities to motivate all learners. In lessons such as these, expectations are high, pupils are keen to do well and enjoy learning collaboratively in pairs and in groups. In addition, when pupils are required to find things out for themselves, for example, when Year 4 pupils were considering the evacuation of children during the Second World War, they become engrossed in their learning. As early as in the Nursery and Reception, children are encouraged to practise their skills and extend their learning by taking part in investigations and following their own interests.

However, although assessment is generally accurate, it is not always used effectively to plan activities which meet pupils' individual learning needs closely enough. Occasionally, therefore, there is a 'one size fits all' approach to lesson planning and delivery. Similarly, and in a minority of lessons, there is too much teacher direction and explanation, and insufficient opportunities for pupils to learn independently and to take more responsibility for their own progress.

Reading is taught well and, as a result, most pupils are motivated to read for themselves. They talk confidently of the types of books they enjoy and many comment that they read every day both at school and at home.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils feel safe in school because, in their words, 'The grown-ups are always there if we need them and other pupils look after us too.' They have a secure awareness of what constitutes an unsafe situation and talk accurately about 'stranger danger' and safe use of the internet. Almost all parents and carers believe that their children are safe in school and one spoke for many with the words, 'The school fosters a caring approach and deals well with any issues or concerns, immediately reassuring children and parents.' Pupils are fully aware of the dangers of bullying in all its forms, including cyber- and prejudice-based bullying. They say that, although bullying does exist, it is tackled rapidly by the school on the rare occasions it occurs. A small minority of parents and carers express dissatisfaction with how the school confronts bullying, but the large majority is of the view that the school deals effectively with such behaviour.

Pupils are keen to take on responsibility, as head councillors and when looking after younger pupils, for example. They are proactive during 'road safety week' and classes deliver their own assemblies on a regular basis. Older pupils benefit from a residential experience and also enjoy visiting the Bridgewater Hall to make music with the Hallé Orchestra. They represent the school with dignity outside its walls and also behave well in school, during lessons and at breaks and lunchtimes. The school is, indeed, an orderly community and pupils treat visitors with the utmost respect, open doors for them and are more than willing to direct them to where they wish to go. Pupils are invariably punctual to school and their attendance is above average.

Leadership and management

The experienced headteacher and committed senior team lead by example and continue to place emphasis on consolidating the many positive aspects of the amalgamation of the two schools. Subject and aspect leaders have a keen awareness of the strengths and issues for development in the areas for which they are responsible. They are of the view that there is now a shared vision for the future and comment, 'Amalgamation was not easy but good leadership, camaraderie and support have ensured that we are now getting somewhere and that we are proud to feel part of one school.' Strong emphases on relevant professional development, on improvements in the quality of teaching and on focused management of performance are bearing fruit. For example, subject leaders observe teaching, evaluate the quality of teachers' planning and scrutinise pupils' work on a regular basis. As a result, subject action plans are accurate and inform school development documentation. Staff at all levels of responsibility are fully involved in school self-evaluation, which is both honest and accurate. For example, they have identified that curriculum planning is often too content-based and does not emphasise pupils' acquisition of discrete skills effectively enough.

Members of the governing body are experienced and committed, have a good awareness of school performance and are never afraid to challenge the leadership

when they feel it is necessary to do so. The governing body also ensures that equality of opportunity is promoted well and that there is zero tolerance for any forms of discrimination. Child protection and safeguarding policies and practice are fully in place, reviewed regularly and meet current requirements.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. 'Sunnygrammes' in Year 2, for example, give pupils opportunities to speak positively about their classmates and the consideration in Year 4 of whether animals should perform in circuses, encourages pupils to examine moral and ethical issues. There is a good range of extra-curricular clubs, including sport, and pupils speak highly of the many out-of-school visits they have, to Bramhall Hall for example. However, the curriculum does not always enable pupils to see the links between the different subjects they study.

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 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.



22 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Reddish, Stockport, SK5 6BG

We enjoyed our visit to Joseph's and would like to thank you for your kindness and courtesy to us. We are particularly grateful to those of you who came to talk to us and who read to us. We enjoyed our discussions with you and you made a very positive contribution to the inspection. Here is the letter I promised to write to you.

St Joseph's is a good school and we know that you are proud to attend it. You behave well and sometimes exceptionally well, and feel safe in school. You have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves secure and you believe that the grown-ups are always there for you if you have any problems. Although you say that bullying does exist, you believe that there is little of it and that, if it happens, your teachers deal with it quickly. You speak highly of the many clubs and sports activities and enjoy the variety of trips you attend. Your teachers teach you well and all the adults take good care of you. As a result, you make good progress in your studies and reach standards which are well above what we normally see.

Your headteacher and all the other staff want to keep on improving St Joseph's. I would like to help them do this and so I have asked them to make all the teaching you receive good (and even better!) by ensuring that you always receive work which is just what you need to make progress. I have also asked them to give you more opportunities to find things out for yourselves so that you can take more responsibility for your own learning. I also think it would be a good idea if your teachers helped you to see the links between all the subjects you study and planned the work to enable you to practise your skills more.

Thank you again for help. You should be very proud of the way you represented yourselves, your families and your school. Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

James Kidd
Lead Inspector

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