

St Joseph's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105965
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	395480
Inspection dates	5–6 July 2012
Lead inspector	Lyn Pender

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	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paula Howe
Headteacher	Margaret Ambrose
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2007
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Introduction

Inspection team

Lyn Pender
Bimla Kumari

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited nine teachers in their classrooms and observed 15 lessons or part lessons, including a joint observation with the headteacher. They held meetings with pupils, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, parents and carers and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors evaluated pupils' achievements over three years, progress in lessons and in pupils' books, and analysed the school's assessment data. They listened to pupils read and observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation and planning, safeguarding arrangements and policies. The inspectors took account of the responses to 53 questionnaires from parents and carers, and others from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This school is smaller than most primary schools. The number of pupils on role is rising but some year groups, especially in Key Stage 2, continue to have small cohorts. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. An above average proportion of pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The majority are of White British heritage. Other relatively large groups include pupils from White European and Black African backgrounds. An above average number of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is much lower than the national average. The school has Healthy School status and has gained the Hall Orchestra Performance Award.

The school failed to meet the government's current floor standard which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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 school provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. It provides a welcoming, inclusive environment and pupils, and their parents and carers are very positive about the care provided. It is not yet good because there are inconsistencies in teaching, pupils' rates of progress across the school are uneven and there is scope for improving some aspects of leadership. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Children join the Nursery with skill levels well below those usually expected for their age. Last year, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 declined to below average. However, school data, lesson observations and work in pupils' books show that attainment in Year 6 has now improved to be broadly average in writing and mathematics. Attainment in reading, however, remains below average at the end of Key Stage 2 and too few pupils gain the higher levels in all subjects across the school.
- Teaching over time is satisfactory. Although good, and very occasionally outstanding teaching was seen during the inspection, a minority of lessons were only satisfactory. One reason why teaching is satisfactory is because the work teachers provide, particularly for the more able, does not always meet pupils' needs.
- Pupils' polite, caring and considerate behaviour is typical of the 'family' ethos which exists in the school. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning. They say they feel extremely safe and secure and that incidents of bullying are rare. Attendance has improved, especially the level of persistent absence.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory but are not yet having a consistent impact on pupils' achievement. Changes to the role of senior leaders are enabling them to be increasingly effective in the leadership of teaching and management of performance. As a result, improvements are taking place, for example in teaching, but are not yet having full effect across the school. However, the improving picture of pupils' outcomes demonstrates that the school has the capacity to continue to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better in order to further accelerate progress across the school and raise attainment, particularly in reading at Key Stage 2, by:
 - making precise use of assessment information to ensure that the level of challenge in lessons is appropriate, particularly for more able pupils
 - ensuring that the good practice in teaching reading in Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are built on in Key Stage 2 so that all pupils leave school with secure reading skills.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management so that pupils' achievement is at least good by:
 - ensuring, through more regular and rigorous monitoring by senior and middle leaders, that the quality of teaching is consistently good or better across the school and that all teachers are held robustly to account for pupils' outcomes
 - bringing an increased rigour to the use of progress data to allow leaders, including members of the governing body, to identify quickly any underachievement, take swift action and measure the impact of interventions accurately.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory. They enjoy school, display positive attitudes to learning and work hard in lessons. Pupils are responsive in lessons; they listen to instructions carefully, work well with a partner or in a group and are keen to discuss and share ideas collaboratively.

Early Years Foundation Stage children settle well and quickly develop curiosity and interest to become active learners. Good progress is made as a result of good teaching, particularly in Nursery, and more children are now entering Year 1 with skill levels closer to that expected for their age. Some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching lead to variation in progress across Key Stages 1 and 2. Gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills that develop as a result of this, impact on their subsequent attainment as they move through the school. This is especially true of more able pupils who are not always given sufficient challenge to help them to reach their full potential.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress overall. Pupils eligible for free school meals and those who learn English as an additional language are well supported and make similar progress to these groups nationally. Inspection evidence shows that the gap between the achievement of boys and girls in the school is beginning to close; boys' attainment is now closer to that of boys nationally. In recent years many pupils have reached the national average in either English or mathematics at the end of Year 6, but not in both. School data shows that this gap between subjects is narrowing.

Early reading skills, now promoted well through the systematic teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make), is leading to broadly average attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 1. However, attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 2 remains below average and few pupils at both key stages achieve at the higher levels in reading, writing or mathematics.

All parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire feel that their children are making good progress. Inspectors judge that, while the rate of progress is accelerating, pupils' progress is satisfactory overall.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers believe that teaching in the school is good. Inspection evidence shows that there is some good and outstanding teaching but not enough to ensure that all pupils make consistently good progress in learning; teaching is satisfactory overall. Excellent relationships that exist in all classrooms mean that pupils are secure and happy and ready to learn. Teaching assistants contribute well to all pupils' learning. In the most successful lessons teachers plan well and use accurate assessments, including quality marking, to provide tasks which are carefully matched to pupils' specific needs and capabilities. The pace of learning is brisk and teachers have high expectations of pupils. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs benefit from careful planning by teachers and good support received from teaching assistants. In less effective lessons, pupils' interests are not fully captured and tasks are not well matched to their needs, most notably for the more able pupils.

Nursery provision in particular is well organised and provides children of all abilities with interesting and exciting activities. These enable them to develop their communication and social skills well while encouraging them to use their imagination and become increasingly independent. For example, children decided spontaneously to build a train from large crates and had a great time counting the carriages, and buying and selling tickets.

Guided reading sessions are successfully helping pupils in Key Stage 1 become more fluent and accurate readers. This is also the case in some but not all Key Stage 2 classes and some pupils in Year 6 in particular are still not confident readers. Teachers do not use the information gained from the analysis of pupils' progress in reading to help them intervene when pupils get 'stuck'.

Curriculum planning often contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In some of the most effective lessons, pupils were encouraged to consider sensitive issues. In Year 4, for example, pupils had been learning about the events surrounding the Titanic. They had each taken on the identity of one of the passengers and were preparing to tell their fate in a storyboard before using moviemaker to bring the story to life. They showed maturity and empathy for their 'character'.

All lessons have good features; relationships are strong and contribute well to pupils' good behaviour. The school has focused on improving pupils' communication skills and the provision of additional speech and language support for those who need it is having a positive impact.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are friendly to staff and visitors and kind and helpful to each other. They are keen to learn and conduct themselves well in lessons and around school. Even when lessons are not as effective, pupils' behaviour remains positive and focused on learning. Pupils make a good contribution to school life. For example, pupils have planned and developed the wild life garden and flourishing allotment in the school grounds. Pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying. All are confident that adults in the school will keep them safe. If incidents occur they trust the adults to deal with them. Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe both in school and when at home.

Appropriate systems are in place to encourage pupils to attend school regularly. These include the popular and well attended breakfast- and after-school clubs. There is a rising trend in pupils' attendance, which is now close to national average, and pupils come to school on time and ready to learn.

Almost all parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire feel that behaviour is good around school and inspection findings support the view that behaviour is good over time.

Leadership and management

The overall impact of school leadership is satisfactory. Senior leaders and the governing body are ambitious for the school and its pupils. Links with parents and carers are strong; they are very positive about the school, praising it for the way staff look after pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable in particular. Since the last inspection much work has been done by school leaders, including the governing body, to promote positive links with the local community. This has resulted in a significant reduction in the amount of vandalism experienced by the school.

The number of pupils in some year groups is small and the school knows and tracks progress individually to promote equality of opportunity. Changes to the roles of school leaders are allowing them to contribute with increasing effectiveness to the management of performance. The use of tracking information is satisfactory but not consistent in swiftly identifying underachievement in groups and cohorts, measuring the impact of interventions made and holding staff robustly to account for pupils' progress. Similarly, monitoring of teaching is leading to improvements in quality, but this monitoring is not yet carried out with sufficient rigour by senior and middle leaders. However, improvements to pupils' attainment, especially in writing and mathematics, and the closure of gaps between the progress of different groups of pupils clearly demonstrate leadership's capacity for further improvement.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which contributes to pupils' enjoyment of school. It is effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral and social development well. All pupils have the opportunity to learn to play musical instruments and the study of well known local artists has a high profile. For example, 3D masks based on some of LS Lowry's most famous paintings are prominently displayed around the school. Opportunities for pupils to practise the basic skills in other subjects across the curriculum are satisfactory.

Members of the governing body are supportive and are continuing to develop their role in holding the school to account. However, they do not have access to a succinct summary of data which would provide greater clarity about the progress of groups in the school and

enable them to ask more searching questions of school leaders. They support the school's initiative to drive improvements by ensuring that the necessary resources are targeted effectively. For example, the provision of dedicated speech and language support has enabled disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to make at least satisfactory and sometimes better progress. Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements.

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.



9 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's RC Primary School, Salford, M5 3JP

Thank you very much for the warm and friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You and your parents and carers told us that you enjoy being at St Joseph's very much, that you learn a lot and that the adults care for you very well.

Everyone we met was extremely polite and helpful and we were impressed by your behaviour and the way you care for each other. We very much enjoyed visiting your lessons and talking to you about why you enjoy your time at school.

You work hard in your lessons, are very keen and enthusiastic and always try to do your best. Your school is a satisfactory school. You make average progress from your starting points when you join the school and reach average standards in writing and mathematics by the time you leave Year 6. You told us that there is little bullying.

To help your school to improve further, I have asked your headteacher and the governing body to ensure that you are always given work that closely matches your ability and helps more of you reach the higher levels in all subjects. They will also make sure that all the leaders in the school are involved in checking that teaching, and the work in your books, is as good as it should be. Finally, they will use the information from your assessments to check very carefully that you are doing as well as you can.

You can help by continuing to try hard in lessons. I hope you continue to enjoy school and attend regularly.

Yours sincerely

Lyn Pender
Lead inspector

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