



St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School, Castleford

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108261
LEA Wakefield
Inspection number 277936
Inspection dates 1 February 2006 to 2 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Kath Halifax CfBT Lead Inspector

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Pontefract Road Castleford West Yorkshire WF10 4JB
School category	Voluntary aided	Telephone number	01977 723060
Age range of pupils	4 to 11	Fax number	01977 723060
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Chair of governors	Rev Duncan
Number on roll	162	Headteacher	Mr Kieron Flood
Appropriate authority	The governing body		
Date of previous inspection	13 November 2000		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St Joseph's is a small primary school, which serves a mixed socio-economic area with some pockets of deprivation. Almost all pupils are of white British heritage. A few are from a mix of minority ethnic groups, but all have English as their main language. Eligibility for free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, as is the number of pupils with statements of special educational needs. Attainment on entry to the school varies each year but is mainly average. Until last year, the number of pupils at the school was falling. The size of each year group varies considerably. A higher than usual proportion of pupils joins the school in Years 3 to 6.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Joseph's is a satisfactory school. This matches its own evaluation. Provision and standards in Reception are satisfactory, so children reach the levels expected for their age. In Years 1 to 6 standards are average, but the school correctly recognises there is room for improvement in writing and science. Teaching is satisfactory so pupils make satisfactory progress. Personal development is good because provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their behaviour is good. All receive good care and support and the curriculum is good. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher and deputy provide good leadership and have worked hard to increase numbers, balance the budget and implement procedures to track pupils' progress. However, some systems are at an early stage because the school has been absorbed with problems associated with the falling roll. Consequently, more needs to be done to help some teachers who have changed age groups. Most subject leaders know the strengths and areas needed for improvement in their subjects, but there is still some way to go in implementing methods of self-evaluation. Governance is effective and parents appreciate the education provided. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The main issues have been tackled, but standards have fluctuated. Nevertheless, the school has a clear view of where it is going and the capacity to improve is good: it provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further improve standards in writing and science by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Improve the quality of teaching by providing more training and support for staff who have changed age groups.
- Ensure the procedures to measure the school's success are understood and used consistently by all staff.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are average and achievement is satisfactory. Standards attained in Year 2, in 2005, appeared low, but this was because a few pupils with complex learning difficulties had a marked influence on the overall results. Achievement for this year group was, in fact, satisfactory. In Year 6 standards and achievement in 2005 were satisfactory. In both Year 2 and Year 6, writing and science were areas for improvement.

Currently pupils in Year 6 are achieving well, in part because extra lessons to raise the achievement of pupils achieving at just below expected levels, are beginning to have a positive effect. Moreover, achievement in writing is starting to show improvement, but there is more to be done. Similarly in science, while there have been increased opportunities for practical work, teachers' knowledge and match of work sometimes limits pupils' progress. The focus on mathematics has raised standards and achievement. Standards and achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) are

good. Pupils from Travelling families and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because of the good support from staff and professionals from outside the school. Those with a gift or talent are identified and helped to flourish, for example, in mathematics and music.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy every aspect. They speak positively about their very good relationships with adults, and are particularly proud of their successes in sporting tournaments. Pupils show good attitudes to work and behave well consistently. Thus, the school is calm and orderly. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Throughout the school, pupils work well with others and show respect for differences. However, more could be done to prepare pupils for living in a multicultural world. The new school council gives pupils good experience of working together for the benefit of the community. This group has already shown significant initiative in terms of fundraising: it has organised jumble sales and other events for charity. Pupils speak proudly about getting rewards in assembly and the fair but decisive way in which incidents of inappropriate behaviour are handled. They understand well how to keep safe and healthy, and are proud of their contributions to the wider community through the Heritage Festival and the work of the Catholic Fund for Overseas Development (Cafod). A suitable focus on basic skills and opportunities to work as a team prepare pupils well for the next stage of their lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and includes some good teaching. Teachers work hard and are conscientious, but a few are still adapting to the change of year group, especially in pitching work at the correct level and in finding ways to gain pupils' attention. On occasion, this affects pupils' rate of learning. Teachers and support staff work well together. Staff make very good use of technology, such as interactive whiteboards, to maintain attention and to check pupils' understanding. In the good lessons, pupils made quick gains in knowledge and skills because of the pace and match of the work. In the one outstanding lesson, pupils gained a very good understanding of the official language used on application forms because of the high expectation of the teacher, humour and a sense of urgency. Homework is used well to further learning in most classes. Methods of assessment are satisfactory, but these are at an early stage of implementation in some classes. Marking has improved since the last inspection, but the quality of comments to help pupils improve is still variable. Older pupils are gaining a useful insight into their strengths through assessing their own work and that of others.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets legal requirements. Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from a varied programme that leads well into the National Curriculum. Teachers have coped well with the reduction in classes brought about by falling numbers and, though there is a mixed-age class, detailed planning and well organised classrooms allow children's needs to be met. Pupils adopt a healthy, safe lifestyle especially through the physical education programme; they particularly enjoy matches against other schools and the fitness programme. Links with the local Catholic secondary school enable pupils to learn Spanish as well as preparing them for transition in Year 7. A good range of clubs, visits and visitors make learning enjoyable and meaningful. In addition to acquiring skills in outdoor education and ICT, a residential experience in Year 5 contributes considerably to pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care is good. Child protection, and health and safety procedures are in place and understood by all staff. The assessment of potential risks is conducted well. Pupils feel safe and well cared for. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Moreover, there are effective links with other professionals, such as Catholic care social workers and support services for Travellers, which contribute to the well-being of pupils. Those experiencing social and emotional difficulties in and out of school are especially well supported by learning mentors. Academic and personal developments are now beginning to be tracked successfully. Adults use praise well when pupils show positive attitudes, politeness and consideration. These qualities serve pupils well in preparing children for the next stages in school life and the world of work. Most staff set and help pupils achieve targets for pupils in English, mathematics and, where needed, for their personal development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The school judges them to be good, but in doing so slightly overestimates the progress that has been possible from some of the new initiatives. The leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher is good, but some middle managers need more training in self-evaluation techniques. The headteacher has been instrumental in increasing the number on roll and the school has made some good appointments. The use of higher level teaching assistants has reduced teachers' workload considerably, and this is making a significant contribution to standards in ICT. Similarly, the appointment of learning mentors has provided excellent support for pupils with problems. The deployment of the deputy into Year 6 has helped to raise standards.

Management is satisfactory. The monitoring of teaching and learning is sound, although the school rightly recognises that it needs to improve the quality of its lesson observations. Systems are in place to measure the school's effectiveness, but these are not always used well enough. The school knows what it needs to do next, which assists improvement particularly in standards and in the tracking of pupils' progress.

Governance is good. The governing body has an accurate understanding of performance in all areas of school life. The budget is closely monitored, and a previous budget deficit has been removed. The school consults well with parents and pupils and respects their views; this spirit of collaboration gives children confidence.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for being so polite and friendly. We enjoyed talking with you and hearing what you had to say about your school.

What we liked most about your school

- You work hard and behave well.
- You do especially well in information and communication technology.
- Staff work hard to make sure you are happy, healthy and well cared for.

What we have asked your teachers to do now

- Raise standards in writing and science.
- Provide some more training for some of the teachers who have moved classes.
- Make sure all teachers work in the same way when, for example, recording your achievements.

We enjoyed our short time with you and wish you well for the future.