



# St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 108383  
**LEA** Gateshead  
**Inspection number** 277960  
**Inspection dates** 6 February 2006 to 7 February 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs Andrea Lyons

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Prince Consort Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Gateshead
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Tyne and Wear, NE8 1LR
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 4901517
<b>Number on roll</b>	151	<b>Fax number</b>	0191 4901517
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs E Potter
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 May 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Eileen Donelly

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 6 February 2006 - 7 February 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 277960
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector.

## Description of the school

St Joseph's is a smaller than average primary school, which serves mainly Roman Catholic families. There is considerable deprivation in its catchment area. The school has a higher than average number of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who are eligible for free school meals. Pupil mobility is higher than average. The school has comparatively few pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language. The school has recently gained 'extended school' status, jointly with six other local schools. This enables it to offer a wider range of extra curricular activities.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school considers itself to be a good school, and inspectors agree with this judgement. Children enter the school with attainments which are considerably below what would be expected for their age. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage. By the time they leave in Year 6, standards are above the national average. The school is a very inclusive school, which welcomes and successfully supports children from all backgrounds and all abilities. Pupils' personal development is excellent and they have good links with the community. Their attendance is good and their behaviour exemplary.

The school is well led and managed. It has made good progress in improving the key issues identified in the previous inspection. It provides good value for money. However, while the school has a wealth of information on pupils' attainment, it does not yet use this to track their rates of progress as effectively as it could. Also, pupils' writing is not good enough, particularly in the early years, which reduces their ability to learn in all areas of the curriculum.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve children's ability to write and spell, especially in the early years.
- Use assessment information effectively to ensure that interventions are targeted where and when pupils need them most.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Children are considerably below average in what they know and can do when they start school. They make good progress and, by the end of the reception year, most are on course to achieve the goals for the age group. Progress has slowed over the past two years in Years 1 and 2. The 2005 national test results showed that standards were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards were particularly low in writing, with very few pupils reaching the higher levels.

Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2. National test results for Year 6 pupils have risen over the past two years and in 2005 they were above local and national averages. The progress these pupils made between Year 2 and Year 6 was very good and in the top ten per cent of schools nationally. The best results were in mathematics and science, while those in English were slightly lower than in the previous year. The school's targets were met in all three subjects.

Work in lessons and in pupils' books indicates that progress remains relatively slow in Key Stage 1, especially in writing, but increases through Key Stage 2. The school is working hard to raise attainment in writing. It recognises the need to identify precisely which skills are not being learnt sufficiently and to take every opportunity to develop writing across the curriculum. The majority of pupils make good progress during their

time in school including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the most capable pupils. The small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds also make good progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Children's personal development and well-being are outstanding. Teachers set high expectations for behaviour and children are keen to cooperate to make their school a safe and happy place. Behaviour is excellent and children show care and consideration for each other in class and in the playground. Teachers make lessons fun and children enjoy learning and work hard. The school's drive to improve attendance has been successful and attendance is now just above the national average.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional. Provision is underpinned by the school's strong Christian values and children make a positive contribution to the school and local community. They show respect for themselves and they have a good understanding of the customs and needs of children from different cultures. Social development is promoted very effectively in lessons. Children are good at sharing ideas and at helping each other with their learning.

Children feel safe in school and older children enjoy taking responsibility for the care of younger ones. Incidences of bullying are rare and parents and children trust the teachers to sort out any problems which may arise. There is no racial harassment. The school's council has taken an active part in promoting health and safety. Children are developing skills that contribute to their future economic well-being, for example organising fundraising projects.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching is good. Staff are extremely hard working and have a good level of expertise. They have excellent relationships with the pupils, who are very well behaved and keen to learn. In the good lessons, pupils participated enthusiastically in a range of well structured activities, and teachers used questioning skilfully to check progress and make teaching points. In the few satisfactory lessons, teachers did not encourage all pupils to participate sufficiently, and the lessons lacked focus and pace. Pupils appreciate the variety of learning experiences available to them: 'We have new topics every week, so you're always learning something new'.

In most lessons, even good teaching could have had more effect on pupils' progress through a more focused use of assessment in order to target areas of need most effectively. For example, in the early years there is a bias towards speaking and listening, which has come from good analysis of children's needs on entry, but it has not been combined with a similar analysis and focus on early handwriting and spelling skills. Throughout the school, there is not enough focus on reinforcing specific writing

skills across the curriculum. Marking is not used effectively to address problems in writing promptly and consistently.

The school is in the process of developing a more focused assessment system. Although this is in its early stages, it is a very positive development, and is already producing some good results.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. All the requirements of the National Curriculum and for the teaching of religious education are met and, in addition, French is taught in Year 6. Each subject receives an appropriate emphasis. Due regard is paid to the teaching of the basic skills and the school is seeking ways of raising the profile of writing across the curriculum. English and mathematics are taught by specialist teachers in sets in Years 5 and 6. This has been successful in raising standards at Year 6. Lessons and experiences are provided so pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy. For example, a sports coach leads training in a variety of sports and physical activities. Learning is enhanced by visits to places of interest and by visitors to school, which pupils talk about with enthusiasm. A good range of clubs and after school activities contribute to the development of pupils' self confidence and social skills. The school has identified its gifted and talented pupils and is in the early stages of providing appropriate activities for them. Good provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The care, guidance and support for children are good. Pastoral care is outstanding and it is only in the area of academic guidance that developments are needed. The school's aim is to create a happy, caring environment where children are valued and supported. It has succeeded in this aim. It provides a friendly, welcoming community where relationships are excellent and children feel safe. Children know they will be listened to by a member of staff and feel able to share concerns or worries. The school is highly inclusive and achievements of all children are celebrated. Child protection procedures are in place.

Guidance for children in their academic progress requires further development. Recent developments in marking and planning have gone some way to addressing this but they are not yet put into practice consistently across the whole school or all subjects. As a result, some children do not do as well as they could, particularly in writing.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher provides good leadership and management. She knows her school well, ensures that parents and pupils are regularly asked for their views, and is clear

about the areas which need development. The school improvement plan covers all these areas, but is sometimes insufficiently clear about the specific actions required and outcomes expected.

The headteacher and staff form a strong team which provides excellent pastoral care for the pupils and helps to create the happy and purposeful environment in the school. The school is popular in the local community and parents are extremely positive about all aspects of the school, particularly the care given by staff to pupils. The school runs smoothly, and all necessary routines and procedures are in place.

There are comparatively few opportunities for staff to develop management responsibility, which is a weakness when at the same time some staff are stretched too far in the number of roles they are managing. Appropriate arrangements are in place for the induction of new staff.

The governing body is supportive, but is at an early stage of developing a more challenging role, particularly with regard to the monitoring of the school's performance. The school manages its budget well to ensure there is a good number of staff per pupil, and to improve and extend its buildings. The school has made steady progress in improving the key issues noted in the last inspection, and is well placed to improve further.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	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	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	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	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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	NA
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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

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The School Council

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary

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Tyne and Wear

NE8 1LR

6 February 2006

Dear Children

We would all like to thank you for welcoming us to St Joseph's. You were very polite and helpful throughout the inspection and you told us many interesting things about your school. We agree with you that St Joseph's is a good school.

We were particularly impressed by:

your excellent behaviour in class and around the school

how well all the staff care for you and you care for each other

how hard you work and the good progress you make in your lessons (the progress you make is in the top 10% across the whole country!)

how welcoming your school is for every child

how much you know about 'Every Child Matters'

your buddy system and the School Council

your excellent displays of work and art all around the school.

We have asked Mrs Donnelly and all the staff to:

help you with your writing, especially with handwriting, punctuation and spelling, in all your work

look carefully at your assessments so as to help you wherever you need it most.

You can also do something to make things even better for yourselves and your school, and that is:

to really try to develop your writing skills, especially in other subjects like history, geography, and science.

We saw how well you all succeeded in lots of different ways and know that, if you put your minds to it, your writing will just get better and better!

Please thank your parents for sending back so many of the questionnaires. They were all very happy with your school.

We thought that St Joseph's was a very caring and special school, and you should be very proud of it. You should also be very proud of yourselves. We wish you all the very best for your future.

Best wishes

Andrea Lyons HMI

Jean Kendall HMI

Iain Rodger Additional Inspector