



# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 111373  
**LEA** Warrington  
**Inspection number** 278671  
**Inspection dates** 12 October 2005 to 13 October 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs Marguerite McCloy HMI

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

|                                    |                    |                           |                              |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>              | Primary            | <b>School address</b>     | Walton Avenue                |
| <b>School category</b>             | Voluntary aided    |                           | Penketh                      |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>         | 4 to 11            |                           | Warrington, Cheshire WA5 2AU |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>            | Mixed              | <b>Telephone number</b>   | 01925 723 340                |
| <b>Number on roll</b>              | 317                | <b>Fax number</b>         | 01925 721 402                |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>       | The governing body | <b>Chair of governors</b> | Donna Kendal                 |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b> | 2 October 2000     | <b>Headteacher</b>        | Mrs Susan Bannister          |

|                             |   |                                    |
|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>Age group</b><br>4 to 11 | <b>Inspection dates</b><br>12 October 2005 -<br>13 October 2005 | <b>Inspection number</b><br>278671 |
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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is situated on the outskirts of Warrington, Cheshire. The vast majority of pupils are of white British background, and almost all are Catholic. The school is oversubscribed. Pupils come from a wide catchment area of mainly owner-occupied residential housing. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much lower than the national average, as is the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. When they begin school in the reception classes, children's skills are broadly average, representing the full range of ability. The school has recently achieved the Healthy Schools and Primary Quality Mark awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Joseph's is a good school with some outstanding features. Considering the funding it receives, it provides excellent value for money. The school's view of its overall performance is accurate due to effective self-evaluation, although inspectors graded the school more highly in some aspects than it graded itself. The very good leadership and commitment of the headteacher are the driving force behind the school's positive ethos and high standing in the community. There are strong links with parents and other agencies that contribute to excellent care for all pupils. Pupils flourish socially and academically, and they reach well above average standards from a broadly average baseline. Behaviour is excellent. Teaching is of good quality overall, with some outstanding, but it is not fully consistent. The whole staff work together well as a team.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding, as are aspects of leadership and management. The most able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently, although the school has recognised this issue and has recently joined a local network of schools for supporting gifted and talented pupils in mathematics.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Further raise the quality of teaching to that of the best so that all pupils are consistently challenged and excited in their learning.
- Continue to develop and consolidate the school's provision for higher attaining pupils.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Standards overall have been maintained at well above national averages over the last five years. Children start school with broadly average skills. Very good progress is made in the reception classes in all areas of learning so that, by the end of the year, many children exceed the levels expected of them. Pupils' positive behaviour and attitudes also contribute to the effective provision in the Foundation Stage.

Children make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Nearly all reach the standard expected of them at Year 2, and many exceed this. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout their junior years, and standards at 11 years of age have been at least above average since the time of the last inspection. The latest results from 2005 are very good, with a high number of pupils at the higher levels.

Teachers are making increasing use of assessment information to set challenging targets for pupils. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress and meet their challenging targets because of the support they receive. The work they are given is carefully tailored to their needs. Higher attaining pupils make satisfactory progress, and the school agrees that there is room for these pupils to be challenged even further.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

The school judges itself good in this area, whereas inspectors found that children's personal development and well-being are promoted in an outstanding way. Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and at other times. For instance, during a wet break time they behaved very sensibly when sharing resources. Attendance is very high and punctuality is good because pupils like coming to school and are keen to learn. Pupils treat each other with sensitivity. Bullying and racist incidents are very rare occurrences. Pupils report that any incidents are dealt with quickly and parents fully agree.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Children know about right and wrong and that a society needs rules to function smoothly. They willingly take on the responsibilities given to them and the school council gives them a voice in the running of the school. Children raise funds for charities and show enterprise by organising raffles. The school's distinctive Catholic ethos is reflected both in the shared values and beliefs, which permeate day to day life in school, and in links with the parish community. Pupils have a good understanding of their own cultural heritage and the school makes every effort to raise their awareness of other cultures through the curriculum. For example, there are links with another school in Uganda, and themed weeks are held, such as Arts and Africa, to promote multicultural understanding.

Children know how to stay fit. They take exercise and mainly select foods which are healthy. They understand simple methods of staying safe, like wearing a reflective jacket on the 'walking bus'. They have all the skills to do well in the next stage of their education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall, with some outstanding teaching seen particularly in Years 5 and 6. Good teaching in the Foundation Stage provides children with a positive start to school and, with the pupils' eagerness to learn, they make very good progress. Adults have a good understanding of the needs of the age range. The variety of interesting activities encourages young learners to be creative and independent.

In the best lessons, high expectations, a rigorous pace and challenge generate effective learning. In a literacy lesson on poetry, pupils in Year 4 were on the edge of their seats in their eagerness to be the first to contribute ideas and the pace increased to provide the challenge. In an outstanding Years 5 and 6 mathematics lesson, the pupils made excellent progress in their understanding of ratio and proportion because the teacher had imaginatively adapted the lesson following assessment of pupils' understanding

of the previous day's work. This led to pupils being able to grasp the concept and apply it to solve problems.

On occasion, where teaching was satisfactory, the pace of the lesson and level of challenge did not ensure that all pupils were fully involved. The use of assessment to track pupils' learning is of good quality and enables the school to identify targets for individual pupils to improve their work. As a result, pupils are clear about what they know and what they need to do to improve. Classroom assistants provide effective support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, enabling them to make very good progress.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is of good quality and provides many interesting, exciting things to do. The good quality provision for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) enables pupils to gain good basic skills. Work in the classroom is complemented by lots of opportunities to take part in other activities. These include chances to develop interests and talent in a variety of subjects. There is a broad range of after school clubs and activities. The school gives all pupils the chance to benefit from the activities on offer. As well as adding to pupils' enjoyment of learning, these rich experiences help to develop healthy lifestyles. There is a good emphasis on fitness and healthy competition in sport, and the school is improving the outdoor provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage.

The school regularly reviews the work it offers and is developing the use of ICT across the curriculum. It is seeking to help pupils make sense of what they are learning by improving the links between subjects. Themed weeks, where whole weeks are devoted to science, health or art, for instance, are one way in which this is being achieved.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school judges the care, guidance and support for its pupils as good, whereas the inspectors found this to be outstanding, overall. The academic and personal development of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are tracked very thoroughly so that their needs are met effectively. The school is taking action to ensure that this is also the case for the most able pupils. Pupils feel confident in asking staff for help because they know it will be given sympathetically. Pupils show an enjoyment of school activities and this fosters their confidence and self-esteem very well. Parents are genuine partners in their children's learning. Very effective child protection and health and safety procedures, fully implemented by all staff, pay thorough attention to pupils' safety and well-being. Personal and emotional development is very good, contributing to the school's excellent ethos. Links with parents and outside agencies are very effectively promoted in order to support all pupils. Induction and transfer arrangements are carefully and systematically developed to maximise their benefit for pupils. Pupils grow and thrive within the 'family' of St Joseph's school.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall with some very positive features, ensuring the school's continuing capacity to improve further. The headteacher and her staff have the overwhelming support of the parents, as reflected in the questionnaires returned to the inspection team.

The headteacher's use of information from monitoring procedures has given the leadership team a clear picture of the school's strengths and priorities for development. This is reflected in the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation. The headteacher actively seeks the views of all concerned with the school, and takes action when appropriate. A good range of data on pupils' standards and progress is contributing to target setting and is beginning to sharpen teaching through performance management systems.

Middle managers have contributed to school improvement through their monitoring of children's work and teachers' planning. The school's recent staffing restructuring proposals include plans to incorporate peer observations of lessons in order to share and disseminate good practice and improve consistency in the quality of teaching across the school.

Governors are fully involved in the life of the school and are very well informed through their proactive approach to monitoring all aspects of school provision. Developments in the structure and organisation of committee responsibilities have led to increased effectiveness of the governing body. They know the school's strengths and areas for development very well and provide challenge and support to the headteacher and staff.

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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> |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|

### 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?  | 1   | 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                                     | 2 | NA |
| The behaviour of learners   | 1 | NA |
| The attendance of learners  | 1 | NA |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 1 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 1 | 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>   | 1 | 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  | 1   | NA |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 1   | 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   | Yes |
| <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**

N/A

As you know, inspectors visited your school recently and we would like to thank you for your help and for making us feel so welcome.

We looked at all the things you do in school and enjoyed talking to you about them. We could tell that you and your families are proud of the school. I am pleased to say that we decided you have a good school, with lots of excellent things which are worth celebrating! These are some of the things that we particularly liked.

- Your behaviour and attendance are excellent because you feel safe and happy in school, and really enjoy learning.
- All the adults in school and your parents work closely together to make sure that you are all very well cared for and that you have all the help you need to learn.
- Because of these things, and because the teaching is good, you do very well in your work.
- Your headteacher is a very good school leader. With her team of staff, she makes sure that you are all given chances to shine in your class work and other activities.
- You know a lot about how to stay fit and healthy, and the adults help you by providing healthy food and snacks, encouraging you to walk to school and take part in sports.

We have asked your headteacher to try to make sure that all of the teaching in school is as good as the best teaching we saw. We know that the school has started a special project for those of you who learn more quickly, and think that this is a good idea, to make sure that you are challenged even more!