



St Joseph the Worker Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115183
LEA ESSEX LEA
Inspection number 279534
Inspection dates 10 October 2005 to 11 October 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. David Manuel LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Highview Crescent
School category	Voluntary aided		CM13 1BJ
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01277227282
Number on roll	197	Fax number	01277227282
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs. Shelagh Facchini
Date of previous inspection	3 July 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Bernadette Rossiter

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 10 October 2005 - 11 October 2005	Inspection number 279534
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors from Cambridge Education.

Description of the school

St Joseph is a smaller than average sized Catholic primary school. The area it serves has a broad mix of socio-economic circumstances and the number of pupils entitled to free school meals is average. There are 197 pupils in the school, with slightly more girls than boys. The majority of pupils are from white British families with 13 per cent of pupils coming from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. A small number of these are at an early stage of learning English. There is a small number of refugees/asylum seekers and one looked after child. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly similar to most schools. There are low levels of pupil mobility and in an area of falling rolls, the school is oversubscribed.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is a highly effective school which has made good improvement since the previous inspection. The school views itself to be good with some outstanding features and has slightly undervalued itself. Pupils make consistently good progress and by the end of Year 6, achieve outstanding standards in mathematics and science and good standards in English. They also achieve very high levels of personal responsibility and self-esteem. Teaching is good with some outstanding features. Teachers provide a wide and exciting range of activities and pupils enjoy their lessons greatly. Good provision for learning begins in the Foundation Stage (reception class) where children achieve well in all areas of learning, and attain good standards in personal and social education. Good progress continues throughout the school. The school has created an excellent learning atmosphere where everyone feels extremely very well cared for and highly valued. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is particularly effective. Parents and pupils are highly supportive of the school's work. Leadership and management are outstanding. Funding is used very efficiently to support the commitment to provide the best for all pupils. The school provides outstanding value for money and is well placed to continue improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

Make more regular use of all aspects of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning in classroom lessons in addition to using the ICT suite.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start school with broadly average levels of knowledge and skills, although this varies from year to year. Emphasis is placed on the all-round development of children, who make good progress, particularly in personal and social development, preparing them very well for future learning and later life. By the end of Year 2, pupils make good progress. Standards are consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Occasional variations occur due to the proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Pupils make good progress overall and outstanding progress in mathematics and science. By the end of Year 6 standards are good in English and outstanding in mathematics and science. Pupils respond well to the very close monitoring of progress and older pupils carry out their own effective self-assessment. Challenging targets are set by teachers and these are met by pupils. Standards in ICT, which have been limited by factors beyond the school's control, are now beginning to improve and are satisfactory overall. The school has introduced effective new strategies to improve standards, particularly in boys' writing. As a result writing is better than last year. Pupils with learning difficulties and those at an early stage of learning English make good progress and achieve as well as they can.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. The pupils behave very well, are enthusiastic and have excellent relationships with all staff and one another. As a result, the school is a very happy and caring place in which all pupils make at least good progress. This is reflected in attendance which is above the national average. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy accepting responsibility, helping one another and doing jobs around the school. They are encouraged to think of others and understand their roles as members of the school and the wider community. They benefit from safe practices and develop healthy lifestyles. Pupils and parents show a zest for school life and know that their opinions are valued. For example, the pupils expressed their concerns about the lack of interesting games to play at lunchtimes. Consequently, new playground games were purchased and play leaders were trained to help pupils to play constructively together. This very good provision makes a substantial contribution to pupils' social development and helps to ensure calm and trouble-free play and lunchtimes. Provision made for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils learn about a range of different cultures to help them understand the diverse world outside. The links with the church, times for reflection in assembly and discussion time in class groups all help to foster their spiritual development well. Pupils are being given a very good start in life to prepare them very well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and some of it is outstanding, especially in mathematics, where pupils are constantly challenged to use a range of strategies and calculations. The quality of teaching across the school is one of the reasons why pupils achieve so well. This is due to the very rigorous and effective monitoring and sharing of good practice by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and as a result pupils are keen to learn and improve. Teachers require pupils to use their initiative and try different ways to solve problems and present work. This results in pupils becoming independent learners. Teachers make very detailed and accurate checks on pupils' progress. They know, therefore, what they need to plan for all pupils to reach their full potential. The school makes good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English. Teaching assistants are well trained and provide good levels of support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The work pupils do covers all the subjects and areas that it should. There is strong emphasis on English and mathematical skills. Following recent initiatives in ICT, better

links are being established with other subjects. However, computers and other forms of technology are not yet used regularly enough to support learning beyond the computer suite. There is an inspiring range of out-of-school activities and clubs. These include maths, ICT, sewing, gardening, cycling proficiency and a range of sporting and musical activities. All this encourages pupils to lead an active and healthy life and to develop an interest in the arts. Pupils' learning is enriched by visits to museums, the local environment and to residential centres. Members of the local community visit the school to talk about their work. Such opportunities give pupils a good start in life and help guide their future lifestyles. The school makes good provision for pupils who have learning difficulties. Because of the sensitive support that is provided, these pupils make good progress. Pupils who are gifted and talented also have their skills extended effectively. The number of pupils at an early stage of learning English is small but the school thinks ahead to ensure provision continues to meet their needs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides an attractive, clean, healthy and safe environment in which all feel secure. Child protection arrangements are securely understood by all staff. Good links with a range of outside agencies have a positive impact on the work of the school. For example, a qualified support worker from the Catholic Children's Society visits the school to work with pupils who need extra emotional support. This excellent level of care provided, helps these pupils work through their problems and settle well. Pupils know their concerns will be listened to by all staff. Staff know the pupils well and provide effective extra support when necessary to ensure that all pupils make good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and pupils at the early stages of learning English, receive sensitive guidance and support from knowledgeable teaching assistants. Refugee children and looked after children are also very sensitively supported. Gifted and talented pupils attend workshops at a local high school and sporting events at local clubs. The impact of these challenges helps them achieve high standards. Pupils all have individual targets to work towards and know what these are and when they have achieved them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding and provide the school with a capacity for significant further improvement. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and gives a very clear sense of direction and purpose to the school. With the strong support of staff, particularly the deputy headteacher, she has created an atmosphere where everyone feels valued and is committed to achieving the best for pupils. There are very rigorous systems in place to ensure that the school continues to improve. All staff are aware of what is expected of them and form a strongly committed team. Subject co-ordinators have a clear view of standards and ensure that their subjects offer pupils a stimulating range of learning opportunities. Performance is regularly monitored and improved. All staff are involved in directing improvement and providing

high quality care and education. Governors, staff, parents and pupils are all consulted regularly. Ideas are shared and reviewed, giving the school a clear overview of how well it is doing and where further improvements can be made. Governors and parents work hard to support different elements within the latest improvement plan. Governors support the work of the school very well. They are fully involved in strategies for improving provision and standards, including the accommodation, the school environment and the current focus on improving ICT. Very good use is made of the accommodation and resources to create a very positive learning environment which enhances pupils' enjoyment and achievement.

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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?	1	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	1	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	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	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	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?	2	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?	1	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?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	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

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

Following our visit to your school, the inspectors would like to thank you for helping us. We very much enjoyed being in your school and talking to groups of you. We believe that you go to a very caring school where your headteacher, teachers and teaching assistants look after you very well. All staff are very kind and are working very hard to help you to learn. Your teachers prepare very interesting lessons and everyone seems to enjoy them. You are doing very well in mathematics and science and we know you are trying very hard to match this in English by improving your writing skills. We were very impressed by the way that older children look after younger ones at playtimes. We were also very pleased to see you taking such care with the sensory garden, carrying out jobs to help the teachers and looking after the playtime equipment. Your hard work and excellent behaviour are helping you all make good progress in your learning. We think that your school council also has good ideas to help everyone enjoy their time at the school. We have asked your teachers to help you improve your ICT skills by making more regular use of ICT equipment in classroom lessons as well as in the computer suite, especially when learning about other subjects. We wish you all well and feel sure that your school will continue to improve.