



St Joseph's School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125456
Local Authority Surrey
Inspection number 281936
Inspection dates 13–14 November 2006
Reporting inspector Mike Smith

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Amlets Lane
School category	Non-maintained special		Cranleigh
Age range of pupils	7–19		GU6 7DH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01483 272449
Number on roll (school)	72	Fax number	01483 276003
Number on roll (6th form)	27		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr John McManus
		Headteacher	Mrs Mary Fawcett
Date of previous school inspection	3 July 2000		

Age group 7–19	Inspection dates 13–14 November 2006	Inspection number 281936
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Joseph's school is a Catholic residential and day special school located in Cranleigh. There are sixteen placing authorities from the London boroughs and south eastern counties. Learners come from a wide range of social, religious and cultural backgrounds. On entry all learners are working well below the national expected levels and all have statements of special educational need for their moderate to severe and/or complex learning difficulties. Nearly half of learners are on the autistic spectrum and 43 students are in the 14 to 19 age range. The majority of learners are of White British heritage and others represent a range of ethnic backgrounds, including Black Caribbean, African and Asian backgrounds. There are ten learners who are looked after and there are just over three times as many boys as girls. There is a recently reorganised leadership and management structure. The school is actively involved in a number of local educational networks and is currently working towards autism accreditation, Investors in People Award and NAS Autism Accreditation.

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 qualities. It fulfils its Mission Statement, which is to 'Create a supportive Catholic ethos within a Christian environment, with aims, structures and curricula designed to achieve the full potential of learners'. The dedicated headteacher has a clear vision for improving the school and, together with the senior leadership team, hard-working staff and well informed governors, strives to improve the provision and opportunities for all learners. The needs of the learners are at the heart of all decisions. A parent, reflecting the views of many, wrote, 'This is the only school that has taken the time to understand my son and see beyond his autism'. School self-evaluation strategies are well established; the school knows itself well and has a clear understanding of what needs to be improved and how to achieve it.

Learners' standards are below the national average. Given their starting points, their achievement and progress are good, particularly in their language and communication skills. The good progress in their work and outstanding progress in their personal development are results of the good teaching, therapy support and the excellent care, support and guidance for learners' individual needs. The school day is well organised and helps learners become more independent and to improve and practise their social and academic skills. The monitoring, assessment and recording of individual learners' progress in classes are helping to identify appropriately challenging targets, which most achieve. The school is aware of the need to improve the consistency of assessment and recording practices, to enable more accurate tracking and analysis of progress as learners move through the school. The curriculum has developed well and offers a wide, interesting and relevant range of learning activities that meet the needs of learners. There is a very good emphasis on their personal, social, health and citizenship education. Visits into the community and enterprise projects are closely aligned to the curriculum and very effectively support learning, providing links to real life. Currently not all subject leaders are monitoring their subject across the school to ensure that curriculum planning and teaching clearly lead to progression in students' learning.

Learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Meal times provide a high quality experience where social and communication skills can be practised. The standard of food is exceptional and reinforces learners' understanding of healthy eating. Relationships between staff and learners are excellent and form the basis of good behaviour. Learners understand that good listening and good behaviour help them to make progress in their work. Behaviour is good and learners are becoming more responsible for managing their own behaviour. The care guidance and support for learners is outstanding and parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One wrote, 'I think this is an excellent school and my son has made a lot of progress. He is more confident, his social skills have improved and he has learned many useful life skills'. There have been good improvements since the last inspection and the governors take an active part in school monitoring, self-evaluation, and strategic management. The headteacher is well supported by a knowledgeable and challenging chair of governors. Leadership and management are having a positive impact on the

school's provision which is leading to improved chances for learners to achieve and make continued good progress. The capacity to improve even further is good.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

Students have excellent access to appropriate life-skill activities, work-related opportunities and accredited courses. They demonstrate increasing maturity and make outstanding progress in their personal development, gaining confidence and self-esteem through their successes. They are very well prepared for life after school and overall achievement and progress are excellent.

What the school should do to improve further

- Enable teachers to achieve consistency in how they record learners' attainments, in order to facilitate the tracking of their progress.
- Enable subject leaders to monitor planning and teaching in their areas, to ensure greater consistency in practice.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Although standards reached by learners are below national averages, overall, all learners make good progress throughout the school in relation to their learning difficulties and their challenging individual targets. In classes their progress is carefully monitored and recorded, though not in a consistent way, and these data are increasingly being analysed to ensure that individuals or groups of learners are making the expected rate of progress. Learners achieve well as a result of their individual needs being met by the well-delivered curriculum and the good quality of teaching, therapy and teaching assistant support. Students in Year 11 and above achieve well in a range of accredited courses across a number of subjects, including art and design at GCSE level. Students in Post-16 follow accredited courses at a variety of levels and are making excellent progress. The school ensures that learners' efforts and achievement are celebrated at every opportunity within the school community.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Learners' personal development and well-being are outstanding as a result of the extremely positive support of all staff, who put the needs of the learners first and take a genuine interest in their achievement. Relationships between staff and learners are outstanding. Learners are encouraged to be aware of themselves, others, and the environment and all staff help them to become as independent as possible. Parents

are confident that their children enjoy school and learners' enthusiasm for school was clearly evident during the inspection. Attendance is good. A parent commented, 'My daughter goes to school looking forward to her day which is an excellent platform for her progress'.

Learners feel safe, understand healthy lifestyles and follow safe practices, as well as they are able. They acquire useful skills to help them prepare for the next stage of their education or employment. Learners know their views are seriously considered and their opinions are regularly asked for. There are learner representatives on the various School Improvement working groups and the School Council (Key Stages 2 and 3) and the Quality Assurance Group (Key Stages 4 and 5) meet regularly to discuss school issues and consider actions that will improve their provision and opportunities. For example, a larger common room for older learners is currently being considered. Cultural and spiritual development is excellent and is firmly embedded in the formal curriculum and in the many additional opportunities that are arranged outside school. Learners' impressive participation and achievements are well displayed around the school, including work related learning, enterprise projects, charity events, sporting events and good quality art and design work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students enjoy their learning because activities are made interesting and they receive effective individual support that ensures they make good progress. This encourages confidence, communication (good listening) and independence. Teaching is good overall, with examples of excellent practice across the school. Learning targets are generally well matched to individual needs and teaching assistants, therapists and care staff ensure that learners' personal development, communication and care needs are fully met so they can get the best out of their learning opportunities. The best teaching is characterised by high expectations and a clear understanding of the levels to which the learners are working. There is good monitoring and recording of pupils' progress in lessons and information is increasingly being used well to inform planning and generally ensures work is carefully matched to learners' needs. However, the methods used across the school to plan and evaluate lessons and monitor and record learners' progress are varied. The school recognises that this is not helpful in supporting the process of tracking and evaluating learners' progression as they move through the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The curriculum is good overall and offers a broad range of experiences that support excellent personal and good academic development. Independent learning and communication and language skills are emphasised across the year groups. Personal, social and health education, and citizenship make a significant contribution to learners' growing self-confidence and maturity. Not all teachers responsible for leading subject areas are able to monitor across the school to ensure that curriculum planning supports and ensures progression in students' learning. A good range of additional 'real life' experiences are offered and the community is very well used to support students' learning, such as shopping for ingredients before preparing and cooking a meal. Carefully planned visits outside school and lunchtime clubs help improve learners' social and life skills. The school grounds, resources and accommodation are all effectively used to support students' learning. Older learners have the opportunity through various schemes to work in teams and develop enterprise and financial skills. Good use is made of social and cultural events, and visits including art projects and museum trips enhance and support learning experiences. Curriculum opportunities for students in Year 10 and above are excellent and the range of accredited courses and work related opportunities very effectively meets their needs and prepares them for leaving school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The combination of excellent procedures and practice by staff keeps learners safe and secure while helping them to learn self-help and the skills of independence. Safeguarding learners is a first consideration and clear procedures are understood by all staff. There is excellent communication between school staff and care staff ensuring that there are consistent approaches and support for all learners. The monitoring and recording of learners' progress are carefully undertaken and there is ongoing and effective guidance that helps learners to make excellent progress with their personal development, language and communication skills. Relationships between staff and learners are excellent and personal dignity is respected at all times. There is excellent partnership work with support agencies which ensure that learners' needs are well met. The partnership with parents is excellent and communication between the school and home is excellent. A parent wrote, 'Communication on the part of teaching staff and speech therapists is particularly effective and the professionalism of all staff is unequalled'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Leadership and management are good overall and excellent in the sixth form. In the sixth form provision gives students access to learning opportunities that ensure their excellent personal progress and preparation for life after school. The headteacher has a clear understanding of how the school should improve and a determination to put policy into practice. Through effective monitoring and self-evaluation, areas for improvement and strategies for action are identified. The roles and responsibilities of the leadership team are clearly understood and there are high expectations of the impact they will have on provision and learners' achievement. Their focused work is ensuring the promotion of very high quality care and personal development.

Management responsibilities have been shared more widely across the school and have led to a clearer focus on school improvement. There is an awareness that further cross-curricular monitoring of subjects in Key Stages 2 and 3 is needed to ensure that planning and learning opportunities meet the developing needs of learners as they move through the school. Learning and teaching are regularly monitored and inspection judgements agree with the school's own evaluation of quality. Opportunities for further professional development are good. Teachers, therapists, support and care staff work effectively as a team, their work is valued and, consequently, staff morale is positive. The school consults and works very well with external support agencies, such as social services and health and consequently, the best possible support is effectively co-ordinated to meet the needs of the learners. School improvement working groups involve all members of the school community including, governor and learner representatives, demonstrating the school's intention to involve and consult fully on school developments.

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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?	2	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming me into your school and special thanks to those learners in the QA and School Council who spoke to me and told me all about the school. You obviously enjoy coming to school and working in your lessons and you all get on with each other so well. I agree with you and your parents: St Joseph's is a good school that works hard at supporting your needs and ensures that you make good progress in your learning. The school knows what it has to do to make things even better for you and you can help by practicing your good listening and good behaviour. I particularly liked the fact that:

- all staff care, support and guide you exceptionally well
- your relationships with each other and all staff are excellent; staff know you very well and help you to improve your behaviour, which is mainly good
- you make very good personal progress, particularly with your communication, language and self-help skills
- your personal development, including your contact with the community outside school, is excellent
- your parents/carers are really happy with what the school does for you and there is excellent communication between the school and your home
- the school ensures that you learn as well as you can and works exceptionally well with other people to ensure you receive the support you need
- the opportunities for older learners are particularly good and you learn important skills that will help you when you leave school.

Oh, I nearly forgot! I really liked your school grounds, you are so lucky. Also, your art work is fabulous and display boards really brighten up the school. There are a few things the school knows it can improve upon:

- by making sure all teachers record your progress in a consistent way so they know how well you are doing as you get older
- by making sure that all teachers in charge of leading subjects monitor planning and teaching in their areas, to ensure greater consistency in practice.

Once again, thank you for being so friendly and making my visit such a pleasant one.

Yours sincerely

Mike SmithInspector