

## St Joseph's RC Primary School Manchester

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105550
<b>Local Authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	287260
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 April 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Blackburne

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	246
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mgr Davies
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs B Porter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 February 2002
<b>School address</b>	Richmond Grove Longsight Manchester M13 0BT
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 2245347
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 2487663

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Joseph's is an average sized school in Longsight, an area of Manchester which has high levels of social disadvantage and much unemployment. The profile of the school has altered over the last two years since the change in the school's admission policy, which now allows pupils from other faiths to enter the school. A high proportion of pupils, more than half, come from minority ethnic backgrounds. About one third of the pupils have English as an additional language, which is well above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The school has achieved a bronze healthy schools award.

## 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 where pupils are well cared for and helped to make good progress in their academic and personal development.

Pupils' achievement is good. Children enter the Nursery with levels of attainment that are well below national expectations. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage due to the good teaching and stimulating learning experiences. Although progress is good, children enter Year 1 with below average standards. Over recent years standards in reading, writing and mathematics have declined by the end of Year 2. This is due to the change in profile of the school population and the language difficulties arising because of the increasing numbers of pupils entering school with English as an additional language. The school has responded well to this by providing extra support for these pupils and focused on developing the language skills of all pupils. As a result of these positive steps, the standards in reading and writing improved in 2006. However, standards in mathematics continued to fall and were too low. Pupils at the end of Year 6 attain standards in English, mathematics and science which are broadly average. From the well below average starting point at which most pupils enter the school, this represents good progress.

The quality of teaching varies across the school and although it is good overall does not always ensure pupils learn at a consistently good pace in all lessons. Where lessons offer greater interest and challenge pupils progress at a good rate and achieve more. However, pupils are not always set work that matches their needs throughout the whole lesson and, consequently, on these occasions their learning is only satisfactory. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are well supported in their learning. The school celebrates strongly the small steps of progress made by those pupils learning English as an additional language and consequently they are excited about their achievements and eager to learn much more.

Pupils behave well and enjoy their time in school. This is due to the interesting curriculum that they experience as well as the good relationships that they have with their teachers and friends. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to enliven learning and capture pupils' interest. The many visits and visitors into school provide a wide range of enriching experiences for pupils. Parents' and pupils' views are listened to and their suggestions have helped to improve the school for all pupils. For example, opportunities have increased for after school and lunchtime clubs and better lunchtime arrangements make this time a happier one for all pupils. Pupils are well cared for and staff are responsive to their individual needs. They are encouraged to choose healthy food options, by being offered fruit for snacks and a healthy menu for their school lunch. Pupils have close links with the local community and are involved in sharing celebrations in the parish with the residents of a local home for the elderly. Their involvement with the wider community can be seen by their generous donations to a range of charities.

The school is well led by an excellent headteacher who encourages and empowers staff to be creative and take on responsibilities. Staff are clearly focused on raising standards and this results in pupils of all abilities and with a variety of individual needs making good progress. The good leadership and management have ensured that effective steps have been taken to secure improvement since the last inspection. Many initiatives have been introduced by the school to improve pupils' attendance, which is now broadly average.

The headteacher and the senior leadership team monitor the performance of the school constantly. The governing body is supportive and is beginning to challenge the senior leaders more and play a bigger part in helping the school improve further. The school has a clear understanding of its strengths and where it could do better. New ideas are frequently introduced and evaluated to find the best ways to help all pupils make good progress. The result is a purposeful school in which pupils are happy, enjoy learning and consequently achieve well. The school is well placed to improve further and provides good value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- Improve the consistency of teaching to ensure that in all lessons pupils are challenged to make the best possible progress.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils make good progress during their time in school. On entry to the Nursery, the majority of children have skills that are well below those of most four-year-olds. Their skills are particularly low in mathematics and communication and language but stronger in personal and social development. As a result of effective teaching, children make good progress in all areas of learning by the end of Reception.

In recent years standards have declined in Key Stage 1 due to the language difficulties experienced by the increasing number of pupils joining the school speaking very little or no English at all. At the end of Year 2 in 2006, the school's actions to tackle the weaknesses in reading and writing successfully halted the decline. However, standards in mathematics declined further. Initiatives put in place during the current year have begun to have an impact on pupils' mathematical ability but standards in mathematics are still lagging behind those in reading and writing.

By the end of Key Stage 2 standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average. As pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below average this represents good progress across the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and also make good progress. Those pupils learning English as an additional language are helped to settle into school well and also make good progress because of the good provision that is made for them.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They really enjoy coming to school and develop a good understanding of respect for others and the difference between right and wrong. Behaviour around school is good and pupils are extremely courteous and friendly. Any incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with effectively. Pupils explain that, 'When accidents happen we learn to say sorry and if something more serious happens our teachers help sort the problem out.' Pupils respect their teachers, want to please them, and understand that they are at school to learn. They say, 'lessons are enjoyable and everyone takes part'. As a result they attain the basic skills required for the world of work. Attendance is much improved and now at a satisfactory level due the many initiatives introduced and the positive impact of the Child and Family Support Coordinator. Effective links with the local church and events such

as the annual 'International Week' do much to support pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Fresh fruit provided at break time makes a valuable contribution to supporting pupils' healthy lifestyles. A range of sporting activities also encourages healthy exercise. This is recognised by pupils when they say, 'we're a healthy school'. Pupils contribute well to school life through, for example, an effective school council. Older pupils develop their social skills well by taking on responsibilities such as 'Playtime and Special Friends' looking after younger children and helping them to feel safe.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school modestly judged teaching and learning to be satisfactory. However, good teaching secures pupils' good progress overall. Where teaching is outstanding pupil progress is accelerated. There are, however, some inconsistencies as on occasions teaching does not always challenge pupils sufficiently to help them learn at a good pace. Typically, teachers' organisation of their classroom is good and they have clearly established routines that support good learning. Effective discipline and reward systems also successfully encourage good behaviour and pupils talk positively about the 'Golden Time' reward. Good relationships ensure all pupils gain confidence to take a full part in lessons. This can be seen in their enthusiasm to ask and answer questions and to give opinions. Effective teaching assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning by supporting individuals and groups of pupils. Good systems enable teachers to identify and support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Intervention programmes are carefully monitored so that their impact can be measured.

The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation stage is good. Children are helped to settle quickly and encouraged to become independent learners. Staff work hard to create a fun and stimulating learning environment. Children feel safe and confident to learn and explore through a range of exciting activities. Consequently, children are helped to make good progress. Children at the early stages of learning English soak up new knowledge at a fast pace through imaginative teaching and encouragement. Their tiny steps of success are celebrated and this leads to a buzz of excitement at what they achieve one day compared with the previous day.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and caters well for the needs of all pupils. Good provision is made for English, mathematics and information and communication technology and leads to pupils' good achievement in these subjects. The use of interactive whiteboards serves to enliven the curriculum in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and adds vitality to lessons, helping keep pupils' interested in their learning. The curriculum is strengthened by specialist teachers who teach music and physical education and whose expertise in these subjects helps pupils to enjoy these lessons. The curriculum for the children in Foundation Stage is generally good but outdoor provision for Reception is limited by the constraints of the building. The curriculum for health education is good with pupils having a good understanding of a healthy diet and why regular exercise is good for them. Pupils are involved in a range of visits and benefit from the expertise of a number of visitors into school which enrich their learning experiences. Special whole school events such as 'International Week' and 'Breakout Week' help pupils to gain a better understanding of other countries and cultures as well as taking care of the environment. A

range of extra-curricular activities, including a residential visit offered to older pupils, helps to boost pupils' learning and develops a variety of interests.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. There is a strong caring ethos, which is evident in all aspects of the school's work. The school cares passionately about the whole family and not just the individual child. Positive relationships between pupils and adults ensure that all pupils feel safe. Behaviour is closely monitored and incidents of bullying and other forms of harassment are dealt with firmly and effectively. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those pupils learning English as an additional language are well supported and consequently make good progress. Children new to the school are helped to settle quickly enabling them to make good progress. Arrangements for child protection are in place and procedures are understood by staff. The school meets the current requirements for safeguarding children. The school has established a secure process for tracking pupil's progress which is central to their good achievement. Pupils are generally clear about how to improve their work further and targets are set for ability groups helping pupils to have more control of their own learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The excellent leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by her dynamic deputy headteacher sets a clear direction for the school. Her strong leadership has ensured that the school has continued to improve despite the challenges of a changing population and a number of staffing difficulties. Leadership responsibilities are distributed effectively and all staff have a clear focus on raising standards. Staff are well trained to carry out their responsibilities and feel both empowered and encouraged by the senior leadership of the school. The school has developed clear and productive links with many outside agencies for the benefit of the pupils and their families, helping to ensure pupils' well-being. A large majority of parents are supportive of the school and this has been enhanced by the work done by the Child and Family Support worker delivering popular parenting courses.

Governors are supportive of the school and are beginning to ask challenging questions to help the school develop further. The school is well resourced and manages its finances efficiently to achieve good value for money. The school has successfully tackled priorities identified at the time of the last inspection, with improved attendance now being broadly in line with the national average and pupils being more involved in assessing their own learning. The school demonstrates a good capacity to improve in the way it monitors performance rigorously and takes effective action to make things better.

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## Annex A

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

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
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	2
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	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	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**

Inspection of St Joseph's RC Primary School, Longsight, Manchester,

M13 OBT

I am writing on behalf of the inspectors to thank you for the special welcome you gave us when we came to your school recently to inspect it. Everyone was very polite and helpful in answering our questions to help us find out about your school.

We would like to share with you what we found. St Joseph's is a good school. You all work hard and learn well. You are learning to be healthy and have come up with some good suggestions to make lunchtimes better for everyone. We were pleased that attendance is getting better and that you know how important it is to come to school on time. We found that you are getting better at reading and writing but we have asked the teachers to help the children in the Years 1 and 2 to get better at mathematics.

Your headteacher leads the school really well and all the teachers care about you and your families. Your behaviour is good and you know that if anyone has a problem your teachers will help you to sort it out. You told us that you enjoy school and we thought that most of your lessons were good. We felt that you would do even better at school if all your lessons were as good as the best ones.

Your teachers help you by telling you what you have done well and what you need to do next, when they mark your work. We could tell that you like your teachers and that they help you to learn well. We really liked the work you did about other countries that we saw displayed around the school. We were very impressed by the way you try to help others by collecting money for charity.

You are all part of a good, healthy school where people care for each other and enjoy themselves. Thank you for helping us with the inspection of your school. We hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make St Joseph's an even better school.