

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106943
<b>Local Authority</b>	Rotherham
<b>Inspection number</b>	287659
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 April 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ann Sharpe

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	238
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Dermot Moore
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John Greenwood
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 June 2002
<b>School address</b>	Lidgett Lane Dinnington Sheffield South Yorkshire S25 2QD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01909 550123
<b>Fax number</b>	01909 560283

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Almost all of the pupils attending this average sized school are White British. The school serves a very wide catchment, although about three quarters of pupils come from the St John's ward. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The Nursery offers places for more children than the school can accommodate in the Reception class, and some children start in the Reception class who have not previously attended this Nursery.

## 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's view of itself as a good school with outstanding features is correct. It is a happy, friendly and welcoming school, where pupils enjoy their education and thrive on the outstanding care they receive. Parents think highly of the school. Many say how much they appreciate the approachability of the headteacher and staff. Their views show how successful the headteacher has been in realising his clear vision for a 'caring and sharing' school. This theme threads through everything that the school does, and even school council representatives say that their aims are to make the school a happier place by following the 'caring and sharing' motto. Outstanding partnerships, particularly with parents, St Joseph's Church and the parish, help pupils to feel part of their community and encourage them to want to play an active part in it. The sense of pride about 'who we are and what we do' is evident in the dedication of governors and staff, excellent relationships, and the good personal development of the pupils.

As a result of the headteacher's calm and reassuring leadership, everyone works together as a united team, living out the characteristics of the school's Catholic status and keeping pupils' best interests at heart. Consequently, good teaching and learning help all pupils to achieve well and to reach above average academic standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school. This stands them in good stead for their future economic well-being. A good quality of education in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) gives children a flying start to their work in Year 1. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well from their starting points because of the very sensitive approach to meeting their needs. Standards by Year 6, however, are not as high in information and communication technology (ICT) as they are in English, mathematics and science. This is because a shortage of resources in the past meant that pupils did not learn some of the skills they should have, and there are gaps to fill in their learning now that resources have improved. Otherwise, a good curriculum ensures that pupils have an outstanding knowledge of how to stay healthy and safe. They greatly enjoy a broad range of subjects and activities, such as educational visits, linking with communities in Tanzania, Uganda and Ethiopia, and taking part in local community events.

Leadership and management are effective in ensuring that the school meets its performance targets. A new leadership team has been established fairly recently, and teachers are extending their roles as subject leaders. Some initiatives are relatively new, such as the revised procedures for tracking pupils' progress over time and setting them learning targets. Although procedures for watching over the school's performance and development are in place, they are not always sufficiently tight to avoid inconsistencies. Nevertheless, there has been good improvement since the previous inspection, and the new leadership team is demonstrating good capacity to improve St Joseph's in the future.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' achievement by Year 6 in ICT, so that they reach the same standard of work as they do in English, mathematics and science.
- Tighten existing procedures for checking how well actions result in raised achievement and an improved quality of education for the pupils.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

When children start Nursery, their attainment is broadly average. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and through Years 1 to 6, and attain above average standards by the time they leave the school. Although national assessments in Year 2 have dipped since the previous inspection, recent assessments suggest that they are climbing back up again. Year 6 national test results have improved faster than the national trend since 2002. Although the current Year 6 pupils are on track to meet their targets, the school anticipates a decline in performance this year because there are more pupils than is typical for the school with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Nevertheless, most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve well from their starting points, as a result of good teaching and pupils' willingness to learn. Standards in ICT are not at the same level as in English, mathematics and science. This is because the older pupils are still making up for ground lost previously when a shortage of resources held their progress back.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' good personal development is a significant factor in the above average academic standards they achieve. Pupils are friendly, polite and caring, and by Year 6, they are very confident, mature and sensible young people. Their behaviour and attitudes towards learning are excellent. They say how much they enjoy school, and their attendance, so far this year, has improved a lot on last year's below average figures. Pupils have an exceptionally good knowledge of how to stay healthy and safe, for example, older pupils explained clearly why it is important to have regular fire practises. The work of the school council in Years 3 to 6, including fundraising, demonstrates a good contribution to pupils' future economic well-being. Pupils enjoy getting involved in the community, particularly the life of St Joseph's Church and the parish. Although their spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding, pupils' knowledge and understanding of Britain as a culturally diverse society is not as strong.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Parents are very pleased that good teaching and learning ensure that their children enjoy school and make good progress. Teachers and helpful classroom assistants work well together in order to ensure that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, play a full part in lessons and make good progress. Enthusiastic and lively teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well, so that no time is wasted dealing with problems. They have adapted well to using new technological equipment, and are correcting any remaining lack of expertise in ICT caused by a previous shortage of resources. Teachers give pupils good feedback during lessons. They guide individual pupils well towards assessing their own work in writing. Some pupils are less clear, however, about how well they are doing in reading and mathematics. This holds back the rate at which they could improve further. Teachers promote pupils' understanding of how to stay healthy and safe at every opportunity, and this makes a considerable contribution to pupils' good personal development.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The interesting and varied curriculum enables pupils of all ages and capabilities to thoroughly enjoy their education and to achieve well. It is well matched to pupils' needs, with suitable adjustments for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils gain an outstanding knowledge of how to stay safe and healthy, for example in physical education lessons. This is the result of a good emphasis upon their personal development. Through its extensive partnerships, the school is extending opportunities for pupils identified as gifted or talented to further their learning. Strong links with communities in Africa give pupils a good understanding of the idea of 'inequality' in our world. Work in art and design provides good opportunities for pupils to show how thoughtfully and carefully they can represent their ideas, for example, through sketching and printing. Now that resources for ICT have improved, the school is in the process of plugging previous gaps in the ICT skills of older pupils.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Outstanding care and support for all pupils ensures that they are happy, feel safe and secure and receive extra support when it is needed. This helps them to do well, both in academic work and their personal development. Procedures for safeguarding and protecting pupils are in place. Staff work closely with parents and external agencies, for example to cater for the very specific needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Parents express their appreciation that staff are always there for them and listen to any concerns. When below average attendance rates in 2006 took the school by surprise, staff responded quickly, and attendance is now improving. Pupils' health and safety is a priority; for example, staff who supervise at break times do not take hot drinks outside for fear of accidental injuries to pupils. There are satisfactory, and improving, procedures for tracking pupils' academic progress and setting them learning targets. Individual guidance for pupils on how to improve their work over time, however, is inconsistent. Although it is good in writing, it is patchy in reading and mathematics.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Good leadership, management and governance ensure that parents have significant confidence in the school. It is because of the headteacher's vision for a 'caring and sharing' school that everyone works as a team and relationships are excellent. This ensures that staff play their part in taking the school forward and supporting one another, for example by gaining an increasing knowledge of standards and teaching in their areas of responsibility. Senior staff are particularly influential, for example, in helping teachers to adapt to recently revised procedures for tracking pupils' progress and setting them learning targets. The school has a broadly accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. Rising standards and pupils' good achievement are a mark of the school's success in meeting their individual needs. The school has pinpointed a need to keep an even closer eye on how well it is doing, for example, checking the impact of initiatives on pupils' learning and progress.

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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?	1
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	2
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	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	2

### 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	2
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 Catholic Primary School, Sheffield, S25 2QD

I really enjoyed my visit to your school. Thank you for making me feel so welcome and for answering all my questions so patiently and thoughtfully. Your behaviour was excellent all the time, and you were very polite and sensible. You showed how hard you all try to follow the motto of a 'caring and sharing' school. Your headteacher helps a lot with this, because he makes sure that everyone knows how much he believes in it himself.

St Joseph's is a good school, and you, understandably, feel proud of it. Your parents, too, feel very pleased with the school. Everyone works together to make sure that you are happy, feel safe and do well in your lessons. You make good progress right from Nursery through to Year 6 because teachers are good at helping you to learn and to enjoy school. Adults care a lot about every one of you. They give you lots of interesting and exciting things to do, and make sure that there is nothing that can get in the way of your learning. Your knowledge and understanding of how to stay healthy and safe is excellent. I was impressed with many things, but will always remember hearing the choir singing the beautiful words of their new song with such enjoyment and enthusiasm. I know that they recently sang at an important community event - just one of the many good chances you have to get involved in things outside school.

You are now making faster progress in information and communication technology (ICT) because you have more and better computers and programs than in previous years. Nevertheless, older pupils still have some catching up to do in order to reach the same standards as they do in English, mathematics and science.

The school keeps an eye on how well you are doing and how the school is improving. They sometimes need to check things more thoroughly, for example, how well you understand what you have to do to reach higher levels of work in reading and mathematics. You can help the school by:

- working very hard to learn new skills in ICT
- asking what you have to do to reach higher levels of work in reading and mathematics.