



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107327
Local Authority Bradford
Inspection number 287802
Inspection dates 18–19 January 2007
Reporting inspector Les Schubeler

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Park Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Bradford
Age range of pupils	3–11		West Yorkshire BD5 0RB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01274 727970
Number on roll (school)	390	Fax number	01274 393458
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr S Barker
		Headteacher	Mrs Catherine Markham
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2001		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 18–19 January 2007	Inspection number 287802
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Joseph's is a large, Catholic primary school close to the centre of Bradford in an area of social disadvantage. The Nursery caters for up to 60 children on a part-time basis. The number entering each year fluctuates. Currently, approximately one third of the pupils are of White British heritage, while the others come from a wide range of ethnicities without any one particularly dominant group. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, as is the proportion of those for whom English is an additional language. The school achieved the Healthy Schools award in 2003 and it was renewed under the new standards in December 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to achievement and standards.

The achievement of pupils is inadequate overall and particularly in mathematics and science. Children enter the Foundation Stage with standards well below what is expected, but make good progress to reach the expectations for their age by the time they enter Key Stage 1. Thereafter, pupils' progress is inadequate and standards are below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and again at the end of Year 6. Overall standards attained by pupils in Key Stage 2 have been below average for the last four years. Results in 2006 showed a marked fall in mathematics and particularly in science.

A history of disruption in the senior management of the school has adversely affected provision and contributed to unsatisfactory results. The school has been slow to respond to the pattern of continuous underachievement. Self-evaluation is accurate in some areas, but not enough attention has been paid to analysing achievement. Consequently, the school's view of its performance has been over generous. However, the recent restructuring of the management team has led to the implementation of a range of measures intended to raise levels of achievement. New procedures for assessment and setting targets show signs of having an impact on some pupils' understanding of how to improve their work, but they are not yet sufficiently established to show significant, sustained improvement. Nevertheless, they do indicate the leadership team's capacity to bring about improvement. In addition, last year a school focus on writing and reading resulted in improved standards in English at the end of Year 6.

Senior leaders monitor the performance of teachers and provide appropriate support, which is beginning to lead to some improvements in classroom practice. There are good elements of teaching in the school but because of inconsistencies in its effectiveness, it is satisfactory overall. There is a satisfactory basic curriculum throughout the school, though outdoor provision in the Foundation Stage is underdeveloped. Popular events such as Arts Week enhance the curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2. Weaknesses in provision for some pupils with learning difficulties mean that their needs are not always identified clearly enough. Insufficient use is made of the resources in the school to meet the academic needs of pupils who have little English, particularly when they first come to the school.

Lack of academic guidance has been a contributory factor in unsatisfactory achievement. This is now improving. The school has introduced systems to identify individuals and groups who are underperforming, but at this early stage of development, there is not yet enough information to support detailed analysis of progress. For some pupils with learning difficulties guidance on how to improve is not clear enough.

Pupils are well cared for and their good personal development is promoted well. Relationships in the school are good and as a result, racial harmony is evident at all

times. Pupils are well mannered and their behaviour is good. They know how to keep healthy and enjoy a good range of physical activities. They enjoy school and this is reflected in the interest they show in lessons and their willingness to take on extra responsibilities by acting as, for example, sports leaders, corridor monitors or members of the recently elected school council.

Governors monitor the work of the school and play an increasing role in holding it to account. Parents place high value on the standards of care that the school provides. The work being done by the recently formed leadership team is focused on improvement and suggests that continued, sustained efforts can put the legacy of unsatisfactory achievement into the past.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and levels of achievement throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, especially in mathematics and science.
- Ensure that the needs of all vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who arrive at the school during the year, are clearly identified and provided for.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

In the Foundation Stage, children achieve well in their communication, language and literacy skills, but mathematical skills are less well developed. However, this good progress is not matched by later progress, which is inadequate. Pupils have not been sufficiently challenged because assessment has not been rigorous enough. By the end of Year 2, standards are below average. No consistent pattern of subject strengths and weaknesses has emerged during recent years. In 2005, writing was weaker than reading and mathematics. In 2006, mathematics was stronger than writing and reading. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels was close to the national average last year, especially in writing and mathematics. Standards in English at the end of Year 6, although consistently below average, are higher than those in mathematics and science, where standards are well below average. Relative to their average standards at the end of the foundation stage, many pupils do not make the progress that they should between the ages of 4 and 11. The achievement of White British pupils is poorer than that of those from other ethnic groups. There was however, a notable improvement in English in 2006, when the proportion of pupils who reached the higher levels matched the national average as a result of targeted action to improve the quality of writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and now matches the national average. Pupils get on well with one another and act

considerately towards those around them. As a result of feedback from teachers' marking of their work and activities during class discussion time, they are beginning to be more self-aware. They say they feel safe and secure. They know that they can use the 'worry box' or turn to adults in the school with confidence if they have a concern. They are sensible as they move around a difficult building in Key Stage 2. Socially and personally, they are prepared well for later life, but basic skills are not well enough developed.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is good in Reception, helping children there to make good progress. In Key Stages 1 and 2, there are some variations in quality but it is satisfactory overall. More effective monitoring has led to some improvements. Teachers plan their lessons well and good use of learning objectives gives a clear focus to most lessons. Consistent strengths across the school are seen in the good relationships shared by pupils and adults in the classroom. Teaching assistants are usually well deployed, but sometimes the needs of pupils new to the school and those who know little English are not met well enough.

Ineffective assessment in the classroom has contributed to low levels of challenge and unsatisfactory achievement. Teachers are now beginning to make use of target-setting, both in their lessons and in pupils' books. This is enabling pupils to increase their rate of learning because they are becoming more aware of how to improve their work, particularly in Key Stage 2.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum for pupils in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and promotes their personal, social and emotional development and language skills. However, there are not enough opportunities for children to develop their literacy and mathematical skills outside the classroom.

The main school curriculum promotes pupils' personal development satisfactorily, though it does not ensure that all pupils consistently develop their knowledge and skills in mathematics and science. The school has begun to make provision for modern foreign languages but it is not systematic as not all pupils have the same opportunity to learn French.

The personal, social and health education programme enables pupils to develop awareness of risks and of the importance of good health. Visits to Bradford University help to raise the aspirations of pupils. A rich variety of extra-curricular and enrichment activities contributes towards their knowledge, understanding and personal development. These include sports, outdoor pursuits, art, dance, drama and visits to the theatre and cinema.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory and the school ensures that pupils are well cared for. Parents appreciate the good pastoral support that staff give to the pupils. Suitable arrangements are in place to safeguard pupils and to ensure that they are free from harassment. A 'nurture group' of pupils with significant learning and behaviour difficulties is supported well by learning mentors.

Learning mentors provide good support to new pupils and their families in helping them to settle. Good links with social services and the family support unit enable the school to offer additional help. However, assessment of these pupils' learning needs has been lacking until recently. The school has not built up sufficient data on these pupils to track their progress and so identify the next steps they need to take.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides strong leadership in promoting the pastoral care and welfare of pupils, which in turn leads to the pupils' good personal development. However, until recently, the issue of pupils' underachievement has not been tackled with enough rigour. The development of systems and procedures to deal with the issue of pupils' underachievement has been hampered by a history of staffing difficulties. There is now a developing, cohesive team that has a clear focus on improvement of the school's performance. The school's self-evaluation of some areas of its work is accurate, but the focus on pupils' achievement has not been sharp enough. Although value for money is unsatisfactory overall, the leadership team has identified appropriate areas to develop and has taken early, determined steps to bring about improvement.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to the three inspectors who visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and finding out your views about the school and would like to thank you for being so courteous and friendly. We spent a lot of time finding out how well you learn in your lessons, looking at your work and talking to your headteacher and school staff. As a result of this, we can see that you do not do as well as you could and so have asked your headteacher to concentrate on raising standards.

We think your teachers and teaching assistants care for you and look after you well, keeping you safe and healthy. We know, too, that you are proud of your school and that you get on well with one another and all the adults who work with you. We think that you are making improvements in English, but you could do better in mathematics and science. Your teachers have introduced new ways of checking your progress that will help you to know better how to improve. We think that if you concentrate on trying to reach the targets that your teachers set for you and listen carefully to the advice they give you on how to make progress, then the standard of your work will get better.

Inspectors will visit again to see how the school is getting on with its work. You have an important part to play by working hard and continuing to behave well so that you can all make good progress in your learning.