

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Bracknell

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110027
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bracknell Forest
<b>Inspection number</b>	288567
<b>Inspection date</b>	5 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Townsend HMI

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	205
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr D Gray
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs G Lindley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 February 2002
<b>School address</b>	Gipsy Lane Bracknell RG12 9AP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01344 425246
<b>Fax number</b>	01344 305463

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St. Joseph's is an average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average, as is the number of pupils with a statement of special needs. The proportion of pupils for whom English is as an additional language is well above average, as is the percentage of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds. A higher than average proportion of pupils joins the school at times other than the start of the Reception year. Children start at the school with levels of attainment that are generally around average. An acting headteacher has been leading the school for two terms following the secondment of the headteacher to work for a neighbouring local authority.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School is an outstanding school. The inspector judges the school has been too modest in its overall evaluation of its performance. Rigorous tracking of pupils' progress results in action taken to raise achievement for every pupil. This enables them to reach high standards by Year 6. One parent's comments reflect their overwhelming support for the school when she remarks that the atmosphere in the school is 'so welcoming; everyone feels included'.

Led by an outstanding headteacher and latterly acting headteacher, all those in school have high expectations of pupils and themselves and work tirelessly to innovate. Consequently, the curriculum, which is based on practical, fun learning experiences, receives a big 'thumbs up' from the children, who say, 'learning is exciting here!'

Children start school with skills that are above those expected for four year olds. The highly stimulating learning environment, high quality teaching and level of care from the adult carers enable children to settle into school quickly and to flourish.

Consistently good teaching, with some outstanding elements, and the highly stimulating curriculum enable all pupils in school, whatever their abilities or particular needs, to make excellent progress over time. The school's assessment of what and how pupils are learning and the progress they are making is very good. The information teachers regularly gather is used effectively to help set learning targets for individual pupils and inform lesson planning. These targets are followed up verbally in class but teachers' marking in books does not always evaluate pupils' learning against these targets.

The personal development of pupils so that they become happy, confident and independent learners is outstanding because the care, guidance and support they receive are of high quality. The spiritual, moral and cultural development of pupils is excellent. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection. Nevertheless, there is no sense of complacency. The school's rigorous, ongoing evaluation of performance is followed up with well targeted intervention and support to help pupils successfully meet challenging targets. Consequently, there is excellent capacity to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teachers' marking in books is more directly related to pupils' learning targets to help remind them of what they need to do to improve their work.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. By the end of Year 6 they attain high standards in their work. Children start school with skills that are above those expected for four year olds. They make very good progress in all areas of the Foundation stage curriculum and are very well prepared for entry into Year 1. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and attain standards that are generally above average in reading, writing and mathematics. There was however, an uncharacteristic dip in writing at the end of Year 2 at the higher level in the assessments for 2007.

In Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve exceptionally well due to an exciting, stimulating curriculum, a highly positive learning ethos and consistently good teaching. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in national tests in 2006 was significantly above average. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make outstanding progress because teachers set challenging targets based on a clear understanding of their needs. As a result, standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 have been significantly better than the national picture for the past three years. The results for 2007 show that these high standards have been maintained.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well being are outstanding. The school's ethos, based upon its values as a Christian school, is lived out day to day by the pupils. There are high standards of behaviour, which are closely monitored and modelled by the staff. Pupils have been successfully taught strategies for resolving difficulties and know to whom they can turn, including peer mentors, when worried. Thus, they feel very happy and safe. They enjoy school and treat each other with respect and consideration. Attendance is above average. Pupils are also very health conscious. They take much regular exercise, drink water and eat a nutritious diet.

Pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well promoted through special events, discussions in class and assemblies. All learners are developing a keen awareness of their rights and responsibilities as members of society. They are encouraged to become independent learners from an early age. Children in the Reception class help organise learning resources. All pupils can become decision makers on the school council and take on responsibilities such as being a house captain, peer mediator or playground leader. Pupils regularly participate in local fund raising and community events, such as the 'Our World' inter-school music concert. Pupils are well prepared for their own and others' future economic well being because literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are well taught. Year 6 pupils develop enterprise skills, recently creating a mini-business with the aim of donating profits to worthy causes.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is consistently good with outstanding features. Teachers are adept at making learning fun and investigative and at helping pupils lead their own learning. All teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. The pace of most lessons is brisk, although occasionally this is slowed because there is too much teacher talk. Lessons are well planned and teaching assistants work very effectively to support both groups and individuals, who meet the clear learning objectives set for them. Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent. Across the school, some very effective practice was seen in using film and sound effects to help stimulate pupils' thinking. Teachers regularly encourage learners to reflect on the progress they have made. There is outstanding teaching in the Foundation stage which enables children to make equally good progress in all areas of learning.

Teachers use a range of accurate assessments to inform and re-shape their daily planning so that learning experiences are closely matched to pupils' changing needs. These checks enable teachers to set targets with each learner, which pupils know and understand. These targets are

regularly followed up in conversation with pupils. However, opportunities are missed in teachers' marking to evaluate work in books against these targets. The teachers' expectations for high quality work are made clear to all learners and so pupils typically make rapid progress in lessons.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

Curricular provision is outstanding and has a very positive impact on pupils' enjoyment and achievement. The curriculum is broad and balanced. Basic skills are taught well. There is a strong emphasis on spoken language, which has helped pupils become confident and articulate learners. Themed weeks and visitors to the school with specialist skills enrich the curriculum. These events are closely informed by pupils' views at the start of the planning process. Links between subjects are made at every stage, helping pupils see the connections in their learning. Enquiry based study and practical learning is built into the daily work so that pupils are active learners. There are excellent opportunities to develop personal, social and thinking skills in the challenging and exciting activities in lessons and through the well-regarded programme of after school clubs. The curriculum in the Foundation stage is outstanding. Children are immersed in a rich variety of pupil and adult led learning experiences.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The outstanding quality of its care lies at the heart of this successful school. The school is justly proud of its strong community ethos and the excellent levels of pastoral care. Parents are extremely appreciative of the dedication with which the staff ensure every child matters and receives close, personalised support. Teachers track their progress rigorously and intervene quickly to support any who are falling behind in their work or who need particular provision. The school's links with external agencies are excellent. The whole staff team works tirelessly to improve provision for the individual, many of whom have specific learning and social or emotional needs. Essential risk assessments are conducted thoroughly. Child protection procedures are robust. All adults in school are checked for their suitability to work with children.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The headteacher and acting headteacher have provided inspirational leadership. They have united the school as a learning community around a vision based on shared values and a determination to help each child be all that he or she can. There is an unrelenting focus on pupil achievement and continual improvement. There are very good systems in place for checking how well the school is performing. Senior and subject leaders continuously monitor and evaluate. They are fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and their analysis of the underlying reasons for these is penetrating and incisive. This shows there is excellent capacity to improve. Actions taken have raised achievement for pupils. Staffing levels are generous and the skills of the teaching assistant team are utilised carefully to maximise support for the youngest children and pupils with specific additional needs. The school has improved markedly since the last inspection. Governors are involved as partners with the leadership team in driving up standards and creating a school where every child feels valued and achieves well.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<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>	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	1

### 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>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<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>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

13 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Bracknell, Bracknell, RG12 9AP

I very much enjoyed visiting your school and meeting you recently. I particularly liked having the chance to talk with the school councillors and those of you I met around the school. You all had a lot to tell me!

I am delighted to say that St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School is an outstanding school. You are very lucky to go to this school. There are lots of things that you do very well.

- You are very keen on learning, work hard and achieve well.
- You reach high standards in your work.
- Your teachers make learning exciting and challenging for you in lessons and help you make very good progress.
- The curriculum is always interesting and you love the range of clubs, trips and visitors on offer.
- The headteacher and acting headteacher are outstanding and lead and manage your school very well.
- Your personal development and well being are outstanding.
- You are cared for very well by your teachers and the other adults.

I have asked your acting headteacher and teachers to help you achieve even more. I have asked them to keep your learning targets in mind when marking the work in your books. This way, you will be able to tell just how well you are meeting these targets and move to the next step in your learning even quicker.

With best wishes

David Townsend Her Majesty's Inspector