



# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 112926  
**Local Authority** City of Derby  
**Inspection number** 289466  
**Inspection dates** 23–24 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Kenneth Thomas

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 address</b>	Mill Hill Lane
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Derby
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		DE23 6SB
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01332 361660
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	360	<b>Fax number</b>	01332 205759
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Rev W Naylor
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Joan Stannard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 July 2002		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This above-average size primary school serves a diverse community drawn from the City of Derby and surrounding areas. Thirty percent of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds including about 26% who have a language other than English as their first language. There are 17 children of refugees or asylum seekers. The number of pupils who join or leave the school at other than the usual times is above that found in most schools. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties is about average, as is the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals. However, this figure does not fully reflect pupils' social circumstances as many parents do not register their entitlement. Children enter the school with a wide range of starting points, but taken overall, they are below average. The school achieved Active Mark accreditation in 2006.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Although the school judges its effectiveness as good, inspectors judge it to be outstanding because St Joseph's meets the diverse needs of its pupils exceptionally well. In St Joseph's every child matters! At the heart of the school's success is the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and her deputy, with strong support from staff and governors. They share a firm commitment to providing an education which meets the needs of each individual, within a Catholic Christian framework. Pupils are educated in an environment based upon clear values and principles which influence every aspect of the school, so that pupils feel safe, secure, valued and respected. They respond exceptionally well to the school's high expectations and this creates excellent conditions for learning. Because the school sets and achieves challenging targets, all groups of pupils make exceptionally good progress from the time they enter the Reception classes (the Foundation Stage) and standards at the end of Year 6 have been maintained at a well above average level in most years since the last inspection. The school provides excellent value for money.

The headteacher has played a pivotal role in the improvement seen since the last inspection. All staff are firmly committed to providing the best for all pupils and this gives the school an excellent capacity for further improvement. Performance is rigorously monitored and prompt action taken to tackle any weaknesses. This is seen, for example, in the action taken to raise standards in science which led to a sharp rise in the 2006 Year 6 national test results. Particular attention is given to ways in which teaching and learning can be most effective. Because of this, teaching in most lessons, and particularly in the upper years, captures the interest and imagination of pupils. They thoroughly enjoy learning and make rapid progress as a result.

The school provides an interesting and stimulating curriculum which is enriched by an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities. The curriculum is carefully planned to meet the needs of all pupils, and particularly those with learning difficulties or disabilities, and pupils with English as a second language. This makes a significant contribution to their good progress. However, the outdoor curriculum in the Foundation Stage does not provide enough opportunities to promote pupils' creative and physical development.

Staff share a desire to help pupils develop into confident, mature and caring individuals and the guidance and support given to pupils are excellent. The school works exceptionally well with other schools, agencies and with the community to enrich pupils' education and ensure their well-being. Pupils have numerous opportunities to demonstrate leadership and their self-confidence increases as they progress through the school. They adopt a healthy lifestyle and their contribution to the community is excellent. As a result pupils' personal development is excellent and they are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their lives. The success of the school is recognised by the overwhelming majority of parents and they appreciate the care and support the school provides. As one parent wrote 'My children see the school as an extension of the family'.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the outdoor curriculum in the Foundation Stage by providing more opportunities for children to experience a wider range of physical and creative activities on a daily basis.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding. Some children speak little or no English when they start school, either in the Reception classes or when they join in later years. In the Foundation Stage, children make good progress in their communication, language and literacy skills, but limited opportunities restrict pupils' progress in creative and in outdoor physical development. Nevertheless, most children reach the expected standards by the time they start Year 1 and some exceed them. Across Years 1 to 6 pupils make exceptional progress. As a result, standards are well above average by the time pupils leave school and achievement is extremely good for all groups, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, and pupils at the early stages of learning English. Because the school sets and achieves challenging targets, pupils' performance in the 2006 Year 6 national tests in English, mathematics and science was significantly above national averages. In mathematics, pupils have a firm understanding of number and they can use this knowledge well to solve problems. Good practical and observational skills are the foundation of the well above average standards in science. While standards in English are also very good, pupils' skills in reading are slightly better than those in writing.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils' learning is strongly aided by the excellent relationships, both with other pupils and with adults in the school. Consequently, pupils have very positive attitudes and enjoy their lessons exceptionally well. Because pupils enjoy school, attendance is very good. However, a few pupils are not punctual and arrive after registration has started.

Pupils' social, moral and spiritual development is excellent. The school is very successful in developing pupils' awareness of life in a multicultural society. This makes a real contribution to the happy atmosphere in the school and to community cohesion. Behaviour is outstanding and pupils know who to go to if they have a problem. Older and younger boys and girls work and play together very well. Pupils successfully adopt a healthy lifestyle and the emphasis on healthy meal options that are available at lunchtimes effectively contributes to this.

The school prepares pupils extremely well for later life. Issues which are relevant to all are discussed through the school council and pupils' views are sought, for example when revising whole school aims. Pupils are friendly, courteous and polite and are very aware of the wider world. They make an exceptionally good contribution to the

community, for example, raising significant amounts for charity and taking part in working for sustainability in resources, by recycling. These activities contribute well to pupils' developing understanding of responsible citizenship.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teaching and learning are excellent and particularly strong in Year 6. The school has done much to promote active learning strategies and these are seen in many lessons. Typically lessons have good pace, there is a high level of challenge and teachers plan interesting learning activities that stimulate pupils' imagination and encourage them to think creatively. Pupils appreciate the efforts of their teachers to make learning interesting and enjoyable. This is particularly evident in literacy lessons, as one Year 6 pupil said, 'lessons are exciting, especially literacy'. Because pupils enjoy lessons of this quality they show real enthusiasm for learning and make rapid progress as a result. In a few lessons in the lower years, progress is not always as good because there is a lack of variety and pace, and teachers do not give pupils enough scope to work out an answer before providing an explanation. Assessment is used very effectively to identify learning targets and underpins the extremely good progress pupils make in lessons. This, together with effective support from teaching assistants, ensures that pupils who are at the early stages of learning English and those with learning difficulties and disabilities can participate fully in lessons.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good, and there is a particularly strong emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills, which help pupils to prepare well for their future economic well-being. Careful planning provides a clear structure for the teaching of each subject. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties, those learning English as an additional language, and those who are from black and minority ethnic groups are very carefully considered. This has a positive impact on the progress that all groups of pupils make. There is an exceptionally good range of visits and visitors to school to extend learning and an extremely wide range of extra-curricular activities. These have a very good take-up as virtually all pupils between Years 3 and 6 attend at least one club. This benefits their social, physical and academic development enormously.

In the Reception classes, provision is good overall. It is particularly good for the development of communication, language and literacy skills. Provision for physical and creative development is satisfactory overall and the school has rightly identified outdoor work and role-play as an area for further development.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

Pupils' care, guidance and support are at the heart of the school's Catholic ethos and are an outstanding strength. Together, they have contributed to the school's consistently good performance in national tests. Arrangements for child protection are working well and meet government requirements. Careful attention is paid to health and safety. Staff know pupils well and provide them with excellent personal support. As a result, pupils trust adults and feel very secure in school.

Support and guidance for pupils' academic development are highly effective. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, vulnerable pupils and the gifted and talented are very well supported. This underpins the good and sometimes very good progress these pupils are making. Very good support is provided for pupils in the early stages of English language acquisition, who make rapid progress as a result. Assessment procedures are robust and effectively assist teachers in monitoring pupils' progress. Target setting is now well established in literacy and is being extended to other areas of the curriculum. Many pupils know how to check their own work because of the clear guidance given to them. The school works closely with parents, carers and a range of external agencies to maximise pupils' learning at school.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

Leadership and management are excellent. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, with excellent support from a highly effective deputy, has had a huge impact on the improvement seen in the school. Real strengths of the school are the strong team spirit which lies at the core of all that the school does and the commitment of all staff to continued improvement. This is supported by the regular monitoring of teaching and learning and the extremely careful analysis of performance information which allows any weaknesses to be quickly identified and tackled. The school's self-evaluation is honest and accurate but unduly modest and it makes a significant contribution to standards. The quality of middle management is good. The management of provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, or with English as an additional language is particularly effective, as is the co-ordination of literacy and numeracy. The school is successfully working to improve further the effectiveness of management in a few other areas. Governance of the school is good. Governors are very supportive and play a strategic role in monitoring the school's work and performance. Resources are managed well and financial management is good.

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## 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?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
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	2
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	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1
<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>	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.

## 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	2
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	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

24 January 2007

Dear Children

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Mill Hill Lane, Derby, DE23 6SB

Following our visit to inspect your school I am now writing to tell you what we found out. Before I do, I would like to say thank you for making us feel so welcome and making our visit one that we will remember for a long time. We have told your teachers how you were all so helpful and polite, and, through our discussions with you, it was good to hear how much you enjoy school and the after-school clubs and other activities that are available for you.

Our main finding is that this is an outstanding school and one that is helping you to do as well as you can. This will not be a surprise to you because this is what you and your parents also say. You are given a very good start in the Reception class and this helps you to make excellent progress as you move through Years 1 to 6. You told us how in most of your lessons, teachers and other staff make learning challenging but fun and this helps you to make such exceptionally good progress. The care and support the school provides are excellent and this is particularly true for those of you who may be experiencing difficulties. You are helped to learn about the importance of keeping fit and staying healthy and safe. Another real strength is the way in which Mrs Stannard and her staff run the school and help to make it such a great place to learn, and in order to make it even better, we have asked Mrs Stannard and the governors to provide the Reception classes with more outdoor learning activities. But you the children are also key players in the school's success. Your excellent behaviour, hard work and the care you show each other, together with willingness to take on responsibility all help to make St Joseph's such a happy and successful community.

Mrs Stannard, the staff and governors all want the school to carry on getting better and better. Having met you we know you will all want to continue to play your part as well.

With best wishes for your future success.

Dr Kenneth C Thomas

Lead Inspector