



# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 115201  
**Local Authority** ESSEX  
**Inspection number** 290164  
**Inspection dates** 7–8 December 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Keith Gilbert

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>	Trinity Square
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		South Woodham Ferrers, South Woodham Ferrers Chelmsford, Essex CM3 5JX
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11	<b>Telephone number</b>	01245321828
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Fax number</b>	01245321795
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	163	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Elizabeth Suddick
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sarah Ginzler - Maher
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 September 2001		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Pupils come from a wide area to this smaller than average primary school. Linked to the church and sharing a building with a Church of England primary school, also adjacent to the secondary school, this campus forms a valuable learning community. At St Joseph's, fewer pupils are entitled to claim free school meals than at other schools. The proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average, although more pupils than average have statements of special educational need. Very few pupils use English as an additional language and all speak English well.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils, but it also has some good and outstanding features. This judgement matches the evaluation made by the school's staff. Pupils enjoy coming to school because they know that the headteacher and staff care about their welfare. Parents agree and have overwhelmingly positive views of the school's work. One parent wrote; 'it has a strong sense of identity, providing a caring, nurturing environment'. The school has welcomed several pupils recently who have found it difficult to find a place elsewhere.

Attainment on entry varies from year to year but is generally similar to national expectations. Children get a sound start to their education in the Reception class; by the end of the Foundation Stage they have made satisfactory progress and standards are close to those expected for their age. Pupils' achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory. At the end of Key Stage 1, results are in line with most schools nationally. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' test scores are significantly above average in English. However, results in mathematics and those for higher-attaining pupils in science are below average because fewer pupils attain or exceed the expected standard for their age in these subjects than in schools nationally. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress in their learning and outstanding progress in their personal and social development.

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The recently appointed headteacher and her hard working leadership team have accurately identified areas for improvement and added them to a valuable development plan. Because they are tackling them energetically, there is a good capacity for the school to improve. Consequently, initiatives such as the tracking of pupils' progress towards their targets are being embedded and are starting to have an impact on standards, particularly in Key Stage 1. Monitoring by the senior team and some co-ordinators is sound, but this has yet to have an impact across all subjects, for instance in geography and history. Governors are involved and supportive. Finances are managed well and the school gives satisfactory value for money.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They behave extremely sensibly and are encouraged to develop into caring and considerate members of society. They relate exceptionally well to each other so that there is a lot of laughter and fun in the playground and around the school. This makes for a really happy learning environment, hence pupils want to attend. They are looked after very well so that they feel safe and supported with systems in place to protect them. The school's use of assessment for setting them targets for their learning is effective in helping the pupils to understand how they can improve their work. Although some teaching is outstanding, too much is satisfactory because tasks are not always appropriate for the needs of all groups in class. The curriculum is good, often making useful links across subjects, and is supported by a wide range of extra activities that add to pupils' enjoyment in learning.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Raise teachers' expectations of the standard of work that pupils can produce in mathematics and science.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, by matching tasks to the learning needs of all groups in the class.
- Further develop the role of subject leaders so that they are able to identify areas for development and take the action required to raise standards.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

By the end of the Foundation Stage some children have achieved, and most have made steady progress towards achieving, the expected learning goals for their age. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 and by the end of Year 2 achieve standards that are above average in reading but in line with national averages in writing and mathematics. Pupils' overall attainment by the end of Year 6 is satisfactory. There were major improvements in English as a result of the emphasis placed on improving writing standards and results were significantly better than those nationally, with half the pupils reaching the higher Level 5. Standards in mathematics remain below the national average and in science the higher attaining pupils did not attain to their potential. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive well focused support which enables them to be fully included in lessons and they make good progress towards their targets.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy coming to school and involve themselves enthusiastically with all that it has to offer. As a result, attendance has improved markedly and is now at the national average. Pupils flourish in the excellent respect, care and consideration shown to them by adults and consequently they show outstanding levels of respect and care towards each other. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they have a really clear understanding of right and wrong. Within the strong Roman Catholic ethos, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils gain a thorough understanding of being part of a wider community, for example when they take part in the Farleigh Hospice Festival of Light, by planting bulbs in the Compass Gardens and by raising money for those in need. Through membership of the school council, they gain a clear understanding of the democratic process.

Pupils take responsibility and make a valuable contribution to life in the wider community. Their very efficient running of the tuck shop and management of class and school council budgets enhances their understanding of the world of work enormously. No hot meals are provided, but the school has responded strongly to the promotion of healthy eating. Pupils respond very positively to the guidance that they receive on the contents of lunch boxes, and to their choices from the healthy foods

tuck shop at break. They also participate enthusiastically in the many opportunities for keeping fit, both during the school day and during extra activities.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers make good use of the new interactive whiteboards to make lessons enjoyable and interesting. Most teachers have good skills in managing pupils' behaviour, although some pupils become restless if the pace of the lesson is slow and the tasks are insufficiently demanding. Occasional, highly effective lessons promote independent thinking and teamwork that results in good achievement but on occasions teachers' expectations are too low. Tasks are not always well matched to pupils' learning needs. This particularly affects the more able pupils who do not always do as well as they can.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and meets pupils' needs well. It is enriched with French and a wide range of visits and visitors. Good links are made between subjects such as geography and art to make learning meaningful and enjoyable. The good variety of clubs, especially for sports, for which there is a high take up, promotes healthy lifestyles and the values of sportsmanship effectively. As a result, the school is successful in various inter-school sports competitions, such as hockey and cross country. The school's comprehensive programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education ensures that pupils know how to keep themselves safe and gives them a thorough understanding of the challenges that they will face as young adults.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

Care, guidance and support are outstanding and underpin the work of the school,, in particular pupils' personal development. A significant strength is the care, support and guidance for pupils with high levels of learning difficulty. These pupils make good progress in their learning and develop good self-esteem. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and comply with the latest government requirements. There is consistent practice in matters of health and safety and all necessary checks on teachers and other adults working in the school are undertaken. The school's excellent system for tracking pupils' progress is beginning to be used effectively by some teachers. Although they are still to make an impact on standards overall, the improvements in English at Key Stage 2 are a clear indication of the success of the initiatives. Exercise books and folders are marked well and give clear guidance for improvement. Effective links with parents means that they are well informed about school events, how well their child is doing and what they can do to help at home.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has quickly formed an accurate view of what needs to be done to improve the school. She provides clear leadership and appropriate challenge and, along with other members of staff, has produced a sound development plan. A satisfactory monitoring framework is in place, but this work requires extending, in particular to raise standards and to improve the quality of teaching. The identification of the areas for development and the sound processes for improvement that have been put in place indicate the school's good capacity to improve further. The special needs co-ordinator provides good leadership and effective management for a proficient team of teaching assistants who support pupils exceptionally well. The great majority of parents have full confidence in the school and measures are in place to listen and respond to their concerns. Governance is satisfactory. Governors know the school well through their regular visits. Finances are managed and targeted appropriately, ensuring that the school gives satisfactory value for money.

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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>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
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>	3
<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>	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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

December 2006

Dear Pupils

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Trinity Square, South Woodham Ferrers, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 5JX

Mrs Thompson and I enjoyed visiting you and we thank you for being so helpful and for telling us all about the school.

There are lots of good things happening in the school. You told us that one of the best things is the good friendships that you make. You said that having good friends makes you happy and when you are happy you learn better. We think your behaviour is excellent and you are sensitive to the feelings of others. You like sharing and playing with the pupils from Trinity St Mary's School. We saw that you listen carefully to the teachers and you are keen to learn more about the world. We think that the new computerised white boards are great and help you to concentrate well. The class councils discuss school issues sensibly and the school councillors represent you all well. They really get things done. You are encouraged to keep fit and to eat healthy foods. We hugely enjoyed watching the nativity play and hearing you sing.

There are some things that the school should do to help you to reach higher standards in your work. We think that teachers should have clearer advice on how to make lessons more exciting. Sometimes work in maths and science is a bit too easy and if teachers expected more from you then you could do even better. Lastly we think that teachers who are responsible for raising standards in particular subjects should be given more help to show everybody how to make lessons more interesting, so that you all make better progress.

There are exciting times ahead and we believe the school will continue to improve. We wish you all every success in the future.

Keith Gilbert

Lead Inspector