



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115707
Local Authority Gloucestershire
Inspection number 290308
Inspection date 24 January 2007
Reporting inspector Shirley Billington

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Nympsfield
School category	Community		Stonehouse
Age range of pupils	4-11		GL10 3TY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01453 860311
Number on roll (school)	133	Fax number	01453 860311
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ian Crossland
		Headteacher	Dominic Whyte
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school serves a widespread rural community. Children's skills when they start in Reception are broadly in line with those normally found. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average, but a significant number of these pupils join the school in Years 3 to 6. Most pupils are of White British heritage, with a small number from minority ethnic groups. A few of these pupils are in the early stages of learning English. The school is part of a cluster that organises a range of activities to extend opportunities for learning.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils achieve well and thrive in a caring family atmosphere. This particular quality is recognised by parents, several of whom made comments such as 'we are very impressed with the level of education, care and support provided by St Joseph's'. The school's success results from a number of factors. Good leadership and management underpin the aim to improve provision wherever possible. Standards in English, mathematics and science are generally above average. The school has a good view of its strengths and weaknesses and acknowledges where there are issues to tackle. Last year, for example, a significant proportion of pupils did not do as well as they should have done in mathematics tests at the end of Year 6 and standards in this subject dipped to below average. Analysis of the reasons for this and action taken has resulted in improvement this year so that pupils currently in Year 6 are back on track. There is good provision for children in the Reception Year and they make good progress in all areas of learning. They have a very good base of skills in language and literacy. This is successfully built on in Years 1 to 6 and pupils make particularly good progress in reading but also do well in writing. As a result, performance in English is consistently good. Those pupils at the top end of the school are confident in using their skills for independent research. A good curriculum and good teaching are also important elements in pupils' good achievement. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and apply themselves well in lessons. Pupils' personal development is good and the majority of those at the top end of the school are mature and responsible and very well prepared for the next stage in their education. Care, guidance and support for pupils are good. There is very good attention to meeting individual needs, and the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is a particular strength. Good support is provided for pupils in the early stages of learning English and they make good gains in their acquisition of the language. New tracking systems are being used well to target extra support to boost pupils' achievement where necessary. Pupils themselves, however, are not aware of what they need to do next to improve their learning. The headteacher, staff and governors share a clear sense of direction and work with determination to achieve the best for the children. Regular checks are made on the quality of the school's work by the headteacher and subject leaders and this leads to action for improvement. Subject leaders' roles are limited, however, because they lack detailed information on how well pupils are doing through the school in the areas for which they are responsible.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the role of subject leaders in checking on the progress being made by pupils throughout the school.
- Set targets for individual pupils so that they have a clear view of what they need to work on to improve further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. Children get off to a good start in Reception and the vast majority are working well within expected levels at the end of the year. A significant proportion exceeds these. Children have a particularly good base of skills in reading, their personal and social skills are well-developed and they are well prepared for the next stage in their learning. This good foundation is successfully built on in Years 1 and 2 and standards at the end of Year 2 are above average overall and particularly high in reading. In Years 3 to 6, good progress continues in English. Mathematics has been a weaker area and some pupils did not make the gains that they should have in 2006. Work that has gone on since then has turned the situation around and current Year 6 pupils are set to do well in this subject. Results of national tests at the end of Year 6 are generally above average, but are sometimes affected by a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties in the year group.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are generally enthusiastic about school and work hard in lessons. They particularly enjoy the opportunity to work in pairs and small groups and focus well on the task in hand when tackling a problem together. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Links with the church, fundraising activities and participation in a range of competitions and special events extend their experiences and appreciation of the wider world. Behaviour is exemplary for many pupils, but a small number find it difficult to conform to expectations. Their peers show a good degree of tolerance and understanding when this occurs. Attendance is broadly average. The school is trying to improve attendance levels by discouraging families from taking holidays in term-time. Pupils have a good appreciation of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, knowing, for instance, that fruit makes a good snack and that 'salty foods are bad for you'. They have good awareness of safe practices and are confident that they can turn to an adult if they are worried about anything. The school council enables pupils to make a good contribution to decision making. Council members are proud of the improvements they planned for play facilities in the grounds.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are carefully planned and well organised so that pupils have a clear view of what they are going to learn. Teachers make good use of resources, including interactive whiteboards, to explain and demonstrate key ideas. This engages the pupils' interest and they are keen to contribute to discussions or to respond to questions. Expectations of what pupils will achieve are generally high and strategies such as setting time limits

for activities give lessons a clear sense of purpose. Just occasionally, the pace of learning drops and a few pupils switch off and don't make as much progress in the lesson as they might. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning, particularly in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities or those in the early stages of learning English.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Good adaptations have been made to the curriculum to ensure that the needs of different groups of pupils are effectively met. Provision for mathematics has been enhanced through more focused activities and a greater emphasis on problem solving. Good links are being made across subjects so that pupils can use their literacy skills in researching history or geography topics and present information using information and communication technology (ICT). However, opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills across the curriculum are limited. The curriculum is enriched well through a wide range of activities. There is particularly good provision for sport and music and participation rates in clubs and special events are high. Specialist teaching by secondary school staff, for example, in French, extends opportunities for older pupils. There is good attention to enhancing pupils' personal and social development through joint activities with cluster schools, teaching of health-related issues and work with the life education team.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All pupils are known well by staff and there is a high level of care for individuals. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, or those who need some extra care, is very well organised and these pupils thrive as a result. Parents of children with learning difficulties are very positive about this aspect of school life, typically saying, 'special needs care is fantastic and our son has flourished in all areas'. Pupils who have joined the school in Years 3 to 6 are very positive about the way that they have been supported and helped to settle in. New tracking systems are proving useful in highlighting groups of pupils that need some extra support to boost their achievement. This is a key factor in the improvements in mathematics in Year 6. A range of targets has been introduced and these are being used well to guide teachers' planning for pupils of different levels of ability. Pupils themselves, however, do not have individual targets and are therefore not clear about what they should be working on to further improve their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Thorough evaluation of the school's performance is used well to identify key areas for improvement. This has resulted in effective action to improve provision for mathematics. Subject leaders are involved in analysing test results and identifying where the

curriculum needs some adaptation to improve any areas of weakness. They have some opportunity for checking up on work in their subject but do not yet systematically evaluate the progress of pupils in each year group. As a result, they do not have a clear view of standards throughout the school. Governors are very supportive and well organised to fulfil their responsibilities and to gain a good view of the school's work. They recognise the need to be more involved in strategic planning and plans are in hand for this. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection and there has been good recent improvement in tackling the weaknesses in mathematics. It has good capacity to improve further.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	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

- You may remember that I visited the school recently to see how you are getting on. Thanks to all those of you who gave me so much information, particularly the members of the school council, who are very good at bringing your ideas forward and helping to make the school a better place. Yours is a good school. Some of the best things about it are:
 - You are taught well so you have good skills by the time you leave.
 - You have lots of good opportunities to attend clubs, take part in sports and special events and to learn new things.
 - Adults take good care of you, know you all well and make sure that anyone who needs a bit of extra help is given it.
 - Most of you behave extremely well and you are good at listening and keen to learn.
 - Your headteacher, governors and staff work hard to make the school a better place. I have suggested two things that the school needs to do now. These are:
 - Make sure that the teachers who are in charge of different subjects check on how well you are doing in each year group.
 - Give you targets so that you know what you are aiming to improve. You can help by making sure that you keep working hard and try to meet those targets when you are given them!
- Thank you again for all your help.