

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Preston

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119430
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	291417
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	George Crowther

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	345
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Pauline Anderson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Valerie McNamara
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 September 2001
<b>School address</b>	Rigby Street Preston Lancashire PR1 5XL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 796112
<b>Fax number</b>	01772 652158

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Joseph's is larger than average and serves an area of considerable social disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) is about average. Approximately 70% of the pupils are from White British backgrounds and the remainder from Pakistani, Indian and other minority ethnic heritages. Twenty-three pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The school has the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy Schools, Investors in People and International School awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Joseph's is a good school where respect and care for the children are outstanding. Many pupils have to overcome significant barriers to get the best from their education but the staff have created a very positive environment in which each child feels valued and is helped to succeed. Pupils grow in confidence in a climate where learning is fun and success is celebrated which provides the impetus for good achievement. Parents think the school is doing a good job. They particularly like the way they can approach the staff easily if they have any concerns. These strengths, combined with good teaching, have enabled the school to raise standards significantly over recent years. By Year 6, pupils achieve well in their academic and personal skills. They are confident in their own ability, keen to express their views, and are well prepared for the future.

Often from low starting points, children do well in the Nursery and Reception classes. A wide range of practical activities, with good use of the outdoor environment, captures their interest and stimulates their learning. Good teaching supports individual needs well. In Years 1 and 2, interesting lessons and good teaching help pupils to build their basic skills quickly. In Years 3 to 6, lessons are enjoyable and purposeful. Good teaching is based on a clear understanding of what pupils need to learn next and encourages them to be increasingly independent in their work. A strong focus on helping pupils to reach challenging targets led to a marked improvement in the results of the 2006 Year 6 national tests, but standards in English and mathematics are still only broadly average.

Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy school, are keen to learn and behave well. They respond impeccably to the staff's high expectations of their attitudes and conduct. A typical comment was 'Everyone gets on well here because we are a friendly school'. They know how to be healthy because this has a high profile in school, and they feel safe and cared for. All the Year 6 pupils, and many others, carry out extra responsibilities which make a significant contribution to the school community. Good achievement in academic and personal skills prepares pupils well for the future. A good curriculum, which has a wide range of experiences, promotes pupils' learning and enjoyment successfully.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, well supported by a strong senior leadership team, has appropriately focused on raising standards. Good systems for tracking pupils' progress have enabled leaders to identify and tackle potential underachievement. The school's cautious evaluation of its own effectiveness led it to undervalue some aspects of its work. In practice, however, leaders have a clear view of what the school does well and what needs to be done to improve further. This provides a good platform for further development. The school provides good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English and mathematics.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils' attainment when they start school is well below average and has declined over recent years. They make good progress and, by Year 6, have done well to reach broadly average standards. In the Nursery and Reception classes a good range of purposeful activities, well

matched to children's needs, help them to make good progress. By the time children join Year 1, however, standards are still below average. During Years 1 to 6, progress continues to be good because teachers build pupils' basic skills systematically in lessons that are enjoyable and challenging. Pupils who find learning difficult or who are learning English as an additional language have good additional support and clear targets which help them to make good progress. The results of national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have improved significantly over the past three years. In 2006, they were broadly average, as are current standards. Across the school, however, there are still weaknesses in pupils' mathematics and English skills, particularly in writing. Measures of pupils' progress from Year 2 to Year 6 have been average but evidence from the school's own tracking of pupils' progress shows that the current Year 6 have achieved well.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Many of the pupils start school with weak personal skills but, by Year 6, they are confident, work well together, and have developed very positive attitudes to learning. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy being at school. A typical comment was 'I like all the lessons because they're fun and in each one you learn something new'. Pupils are keen to learn, and they enjoy the wide range of interesting activities. Around the school, pupils are friendly, polite and well behaved. All pupils, whatever their background, get on well together. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Celebration assemblies, the rules for behaviour, and the respect given to the pupils' varied cultural backgrounds all contribute to their growing self-awareness. Pupils have a good understanding of how to take care of themselves. They know that exercise and eating the right things are important for good health. They feel safe in school because they know the teachers will help them if they have a problem. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community, for example, when Year 6 pupils help the Nursery children at lunchtimes.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. A strong focus on ensuring teachers clearly establish what they intend pupils to learn in each lesson helps everyone to know what they are trying to achieve. Teachers make lessons enjoyable and use a good variety of methods to help pupils learn. For example, Year 5 pupils contributed well to a whole-class discussion, worked in pairs to generate ideas, and quizzed a pupil who took on the personality of a character in a book, all of which helped them with a writing task. Good relationships help teachers to organise and manage learning well, so that lessons move at a good pace and no time is lost. Good support for learning from teachers and teaching assistants helps pupils to do their best. Occasionally, the whole-class part of the lesson lasts too long, and so the pace of learning slows. Good systems for assessment and tracking pupils' progress help the school to improve achievement. For example, the school identifies groups of pupils for extra support; this has been successful in raising standards.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

A good range of activities and experiences, both in and outside lessons, meets the needs of all pupils successfully. Over the past three years, a strong emphasis on English and mathematics has helped to raise standards. In science, teachers use a good range of practical activities which strengthens the pupils' understanding of the subject. Pupils learn computer skills steadily but these are not used and developed enough through work in other subjects. In the Foundation Stage, children's learning is benefiting from an enhanced outdoor learning area. Pupils' good personal development owes much to a well structured programme of personal and social education, both in lessons and as part and parcel of the daily life of the school. For example, the Behaviour Improvement Programme provides lots of ways for pupils to become better school citizens. The school is particularly good at ensuring that all pupils, whatever their needs, have an appropriate curriculum which helps them to enjoy learning and to succeed.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The quality of pastoral care is outstanding. Staff believe strongly that each child is important and so they go the extra mile to meet individual needs. Parents recognise this as a major strength. The school provides a secure environment where the required safeguarding procedures are in place. Guidance for pupils' personal development is good. For example, learning mentors work successfully with groups of pupils to help them manage their attitudes to learning. Academic guidance is good because the school checks regularly on pupils' progress to ensure they are doing as well as they can. If they are falling behind, the school provides extra activities and additional support so they can catch up. Able or talented pupils are recognised and challenged effectively to extend their learning in areas such as English, mathematics, sport and music. Pupils who join the school settle quickly and make friends because everyone is very welcoming.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher is a determined leader who sets a clear direction for the development of the school. This has led to significant improvements since the last inspection, particularly in recent years. All those associated with the school say that it has always been a welcoming and happy place, with high quality care, which helps pupils to feel positive about their learning. Over the past three years, the school has built on this firm foundation by setting much higher expectations for pupils' academic progress, particularly their basic skills. With valuable help from external consultants, leaders have identified areas for improvement and tackled them systematically. As a result, standards in English, mathematics and science have risen significantly. The school has good systems for checking on the quality of teaching and learning. In recent years, these have been strengthened by the growing involvement of a wider leadership team. Consequently, the school has been able to improve more aspects of its work. Governors know the school well and provide strong, well-informed support. They were the driving force behind the development of a Sports and Arts Centre which is broadening the curriculum and increasing community involvement. The school makes good use of its resources to help raise standards. For example,

in recent years an extra teacher enabled Year 6 pupils to be taught in smaller groups for English and mathematics which produced much better results in national tests.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<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>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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

<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>	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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Preston

Rigby Street

Preston

Lancashire

PR1 5XL

24 March 2007

Dear Children

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school to find out how well you are doing. There are lots of good things about your school, but we also found one way in which it could be even better. The strengths we found are:

- you enjoy lessons, particularly the practical ones, which helps you make good progress
- your teachers make lessons interesting and give you a variety of things to do
- you behave well in lessons and around the school
- the prefects do a very good job in helping everyone to enjoy school
- all of you are working hard and making good progress
- everyone is friendly and you all get on well together
- the older children enjoy doing extra jobs, for example helping in the Nursery
- your celebration assembly makes you very proud of your achievements
- your teachers do a good job in making sure you learn quickly
- there are lots of interesting things to do, both in lessons and in clubs
- you like the way the staff take care to make sure you are safe and happy
- your headteacher and other staff are doing a good job in improving your school.

We would like you to work with your teachers to improve the way you learn.

- We think all of you could be doing even better in mathematics and English, particularly in your writing. We have asked your teachers to make sure the work they give you helps you to build your skills quickly. You must keep on trying hard as well.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection of your school.

Yours sincerely

George Crowther

Lead Inspector