

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Banbury

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123208
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	292611
Inspection dates	26–27 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Charalambos Loizou

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr S Wright
Headteacher	Miss M Lewicki
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2001
School address	Fiennes Road Banbury OX16 0ET
Telephone number	01295 264284
Fax number	01295 264284

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Joseph's is a smaller than average size primary school serving an area of mixed social and private housing. The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Others come from a wide range of backgrounds, the largest group being of Pakistani heritage. An increasing number joining the school is of Polish heritage. The number of pupils joining or leaving at different times is quite high. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. The school opened its Nursery in September 2006 for three-year-old children, all of whom attend part-time. There have many staff changes in recent years. Most of the staff currently in the school were not in post at the time of the school's last inspection.

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 is an improving school that provides a satisfactory education with some good features. Pupils enjoy school and are safe because the staff provide good care. There is a strong sense of respect shown for different cultures and to everyone associated with the school and the local community. Parents are very pleased, as one rightly commented, 'This is a very friendly and welcoming school.' Staff and governors work hard to involve parents and have established good partnerships. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are well behaved and form strong friendships, as one said, 'I have lots of friends in school and we like being together'.

Children make a satisfactory start in the Foundation Stage. The teaching and curriculum provided for them are satisfactory, with good teaching in the Nursery. Standards are below average by the end of Year 6 and achievement is satisfactory. By the end of Year 2 standards are well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards are improving but too few pupils reach higher levels by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

Teaching is satisfactory and is supported by well managed provision and teaching for pupils with learning difficulties and for those in the early stages of learning English. Pupils who join at different times quickly settle into school and do well because they are supported well. Pockets of good teaching in Years 3 to 6 are helping to raise standards. However, in too many lessons across the school tasks are not matched to the abilities of the pupils so they do not all reach their targets. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is not having enough impact on accelerating the achievement of all pupils. The curriculum is satisfactory with good opportunities for the pupils to take part in sports and activities that help them to develop healthy lifestyles. Information and communication technology (ICT) resources have improved since the last inspection. Interactive boards in lessons provide good visual stimuli that focus pupils' learning. However, pupils do not get enough opportunities to fully use and explore ICT across the curriculum.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, staff and governors have guided satisfactory improvements since the school's last inspection in challenging circumstances, given the many staff changes. Assessment systems have been strengthened to track how well pupils are doing. However, teachers are not using assessment accurately to provide work that is matched well enough to the abilities of higher ability pupils. The leadership team and governors monitor pupils' progress and lessons, but this is not rigorous enough to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can. This accounts for inconsistencies in the school's evaluation of its effectiveness which disagrees with that of inspectors. The school has rightly judged standards and achievement as satisfactory but the lack of focused monitoring has not provided an accurate evaluation of the teaching. The headteacher has deployed teachers and support staff well to raise standards by the end of Year 6. These improvements demonstrate that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further. However, the leadership team recognises that there is still more to do to improve the teaching right across the school.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching has a greater impact on improving pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics to raise standards by the end of Year 2.
- Sharpen the monitoring of lessons so that teachers focus more on accelerating the progress of higher ability pupils.
- Improve teachers' skills in using assessment to ensure that the work they provide in lessons is better matched to the needs and abilities of all pupils.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use ICT across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are below average and achievement is satisfactory overall. The majority of Foundation Stage children start with levels of knowledge and skills that are well below those expected of three and four-year-olds. By the end of the Reception year, children reach the standards expected in their personal and social development but standards remain well below average in communication, language and literacy and in their mathematical development. By the end of Year 2, standards are well below average in reading, writing and mathematics because of inconsistencies in assessment and teaching. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make satisfactory progress and standards are below average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. The proportion of pupils reaching higher levels by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is too low. Across the school teachers do not specifically target more able pupils, so standards should be higher. Pupils joining the school at different times, including those in the early stages of learning English, make good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities also do well, as most reach the standards expected for their age.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are brought about by the school's strong ethos. Attendance figures are improving. Pupils behave well and are considerate of each other's needs. As one new arrival in the early stages of learning English stated, 'I like this school because I am learning to speak English and it is good fun'. As they mature, pupils demonstrate an increasing enthusiasm for their learning and all ages identify that their opinions are valued. Pupils have a good grasp of healthy lifestyles through diet and exercise. They feel safe and secure although not all are familiar with the hazards of Internet access on computers. Some have maturity beyond their years when discussing how they have made a significant contribution to the school community, such as helping lonely children in the playground or in the wider community when supporting children in Rwanda. Those who attain expected standards in their English and mathematics skills are well equipped for their future economic well being, but not all pupils reach these standards.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is good teaching in the Nursery and in some classes in Years 3 to 6. Lessons typically start with well-focused questions and class discussions.

They have good pace and are practical so that pupils are engaged, motivated and attentive. Nursery and Reception children learn about the world and themselves because skilled staff provide a balanced programme of activities. Throughout the school, the support provided for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good and enables many of them to reach very challenging targets. Similarly, well-focused support provided for new arrivals and those in the early stages of learning English is helping them to achieve well. Teachers regularly assess pupils' progress, but the tasks they provide in lessons do not match the abilities of all pupils. This is especially the case for pupils of higher ability. Teachers are not always making accurate assessments of pupils' work. Consequently, tasks are not always planned to build on what has previously been learned. Where this occurs, pupils' progress slows.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and is enriched by a good range of visits and clubs. There is a good range of sports and activities. Together with the promotion of healthy eating and nutrition information in science lessons, pupils learn to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Pupils say they find their learning enjoyable, although at times it is a little too easy for more able pupils. The curriculum is modified well for pupils with difficulties and disabilities and those at varying stages of learning English. Personal and social development are enhanced by strong pastoral support for all pupils. Basic literacy skills, such as letter-sound matching to aid spelling are insufficiently emphasised in Year 1 and Year 2, and this accounts for well below average standards in reading and writing. Teachers make good use of interactive white-boards to focus pupils' learning, but the use of ICT to support learning across all subjects is a weakness. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is broad and considerably enhanced by the good quality outdoor learning environment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care guidance and support provided by the school is good. The school promotes a strong ethos of personal care and attention for vulnerable pupils. Those who are learning English and those with learning difficulties are particularly well supported. Their needs are identified early and they are provided with good and well matched support. There are good links with external agencies who are often contacted and used where possible to enhance support for pupils across the school. Assessment procedures are developing, but are not yet always used with precision and therefore some pupils are not sufficiently challenged in lessons. The learning targets for pupils are newly introduced and are not yet guiding their learning and helping pupils to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, staff and governors have a shared vision for the school which takes account of the views of parents and pupils. Staff changes have hampered the progress made by the school, but staffing has now stabilised so that overall, this has been satisfactory since the last inspection. Standards are improving but staff and governors have not focused sufficiently on improving standards by the end of Year 2. Priorities in the school development plan are too general and do not focus on specific groups

of pupils, so that standards and achievement are uneven across the school. The lack of focus to monitoring by subject leaders and the leadership team also accounts for their inaccurate evaluations of the school's effectiveness and the teaching. Governors provide satisfactory support and hold the school to account quite well. Increasingly they are monitoring the school's performance and they provide good pastoral support for pupils and families. The school's track record of improvement shows that it has satisfactory capacity to build on its strengths and to improve further.

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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>	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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
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	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

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	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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

10 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Banbury, Fiennes Road, Banbury, OX16 0ET

Thank you very much for welcoming the inspectors to your school. You were all very friendly and helpful.

Your school provides a satisfactory education and there are some good things that are helping it to improve. These are the things that pleased inspectors most.

- You are well behaved and try hard.
- You enjoy school and we were really pleased with the way that pupils new to the school settle in very well.
- Your parents are pleased with you and your teachers.
- The staff take good care of you and make sure you are all safe and happy.
- Children who need extra help do well because the staff support them well.

I have asked your teachers to:

- help the children in Year 1 and Year 2 to improve their reading, writing and mathematics work so they can reach higher standards
- check lessons and your work better to make sure that you all do as well as you can, especially those of you who sometimes find your work too easy
- make sure that in all lessons the work you get is just right for all of you to help you all reach your targets
- give you more opportunities to use computers during lessons and in all subjects.

I wish you all the very best.

Yours faithfully,

Charalambos LoizouLead Inspector