



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Goldenhill

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124314
Local Authority Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number 292954
Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006
Reporting inspector Lois Furness

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Mobberley Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Goldenhill
Age range of pupils	3–11		Stoke-on-Trent ST6 5RN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01782 235393
Number on roll (school)	220	Fax number	01782 235394
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	C A Hulme
		Headteacher	J P Tierney
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This above average-sized school serves an area of varying social and economic backgrounds. A below average number of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities. Most pupils come from a White British background and there are a small proportion of pupils from Traveller communities. The school offers a before and after school club.

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, a view endorsed by parents, one saying, 'We are more than happy with the education our children receive at St Joseph's'. There is a warm and welcoming atmosphere and staff work hard to provide a good level of care, guidance and support for pupils. This generates an enthusiasm for learning and pupils who really enjoy school. Pupils like their teachers and appreciate the way they help them to understand what they must do by setting targets, and explaining things clearly, so that they achieve them. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their behaviour is good. They get on very well with each other and show concern for any pupil who is unhappy on the playground. They know the importance of healthy lifestyles, how to keep themselves safe and are pleased their views are taken into account through the work of the school council. Spiritual, moral and social development is very good and although cultural development is good, pupils do not have a thorough understanding of the multicultural world in which they live. The curriculum is good and broadens pupils' experiences well. Pupils enjoy taking part in all the extra clubs and the before and after school club provides parents and pupils with a valuable service. By Year 6, pupils attain standards that are average in English and mathematics and above average in science. This shows good achievement from when children first start at school. Younger children get off to a flying start in the Nursery. The exciting curriculum and good teaching enable them to make rapid progress from a below average starting point. In the past this rapid progress was not maintained, and progress slowed in Reception and Years 1 and 2. School leadership took firm action, changes were made and progress in these years is now satisfactory, although there is still some way to go to ensure achievement matches the best elsewhere in school.

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. However, in the classes where achievement is satisfactory, teachers do not always set tasks which demand enough of the more able pupils and the pace of lessons is sometimes too slow. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are vulnerable, make good progress because of the effective support that they receive. One parent says, 'As a mum of a child with very special needs, the school has been fantastic!'

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and senior managers work well together and have an accurate view of strengths and areas for development. They take action quickly when weaknesses are identified. Teaching and learning are checked regularly and the leadership knows that if provision is to continue to improve, then teachers must be given clearer information about the strengths of their teaching and how to make their teaching better. There have been a number of improvements since the last inspection, most notably in the Nursery and in the use of assessment information. Taking into account this good track record and the teamwork evident in the school, the capacity for further improvement is good

What the school should do to improve further

- In Reception and Years 1 and 2 improve the pace of lessons and raise teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to do, particularly the more able.

- Provide teachers with clearer information about the good aspects of their teaching and how they can make it better.
- Increase pupils' awareness of the multicultural world in which they live.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the Foundation Stage in the Nursery with skills below those expected particularly in their use of language. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils attain broadly average standards in English and mathematics and above average standards in science. This shows good achievement from when they first start at school. However, progress throughout the school is uneven and pupils make the best progress in Nursery and Years 3 to 6 because of good and outstanding teaching. Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2, and achievement is satisfactory. However, in the past pupils have not achieved as well as they should because of low teacher expectations and this has affected standards by the end of Year 6. More able pupils have not achieved well enough in English and mathematics but as a result of actions taken this year more pupils have attained the higher level in these subjects than have done so in the past. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because of effective support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are proud of their school and have very good attitudes towards learning. 'Our lessons are smashing!' said one Year 6 pupil. This very positive attitude is evident in the way pupils answer questions eagerly and approach their work with enthusiasm. Behaviour is good and pupils attend school regularly. They take a pride in their work and welcome the chances they have to influence what is happening in the school. Their very good spiritual, moral and social development is a tribute to the school's strong Catholic ethos. Cultural development in terms of art, dance and music is good but pupils do not have a thorough understanding of the multicultural world in which they live. Pupils know how to lead healthy lifestyles and how to keep themselves safe. They make good food choices at lunchtime when they are offered a very good range of healthy options. Pupils are involved well in their local community and enthusiastically raise money for local, national and international charities. Pupils acquire the skills necessary to equip them well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching enables pupils to learn well and reach average standards by Year 6. Adults in the Nursery have a clear understanding of how young children learn. They

talk to and question them constantly and urge them to make the most of new experiences, so they make good progress. In Years 3 to 6 teachers use assessment information well to challenge pupils to do their best. Many pupils say how much they enjoy work because teachers 'make it fun but it's hard too!'. Pupils answer questions enthusiastically and are keen to finish activities once started. In other year groups, the pace in lessons is sometimes too slow and tasks set do not demand enough of pupils, particularly of the more able. Throughout the school, teachers consistently enhance pupils' self-esteem by establishing very good relationships and through regular praise and encouragement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced with good emphasis on creativity as shown by the silver Artsmark award. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are provided for well and now there is an increasing focus on how more able pupils may be challenged to reach higher standards. Initiatives such as the 'Challenge Chasers' club which challenges them to solve problems such as making vehicles or rockets are proving effective. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good ensuring pupils' knowledge of potential hazards outside of school and the importance of trusting relationships. The curriculum is enriched well by a wide range of visits, visitors and after school activities. Good links with other organisations including the Church and other local schools help to improve pupils' experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff work successfully to ensure that pupils feel highly valued and safe. Pupils say they are confident that there is someone they can turn to for support. Good arrangements are in place for keeping pupils safe, and health and safety procedures are rigorous. The systems for academic monitoring and support for learning are thorough and rigorous, but do not allow pupils' progress to be checked quickly. However, pupils are given good guidance about how to improve the level of their work and are helped well to achieve their targets. Pupils from Traveller communities who arrive at different times receive good help to settle them into school and to assess their needs. This underpins their subsequent good progress both academically and socially. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is managed well, and their individual education plans are of good quality.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and leadership team work well together and know clearly what to do to improve provision and pupils' achievement. Governors are very supportive and, knowing the need to be more involved in the school's work, have taken good steps to improve their knowledge of strengths and

areas for development. Evaluation is thorough and good actions are in place to remove identified weaknesses. For example, initiatives to improve the proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 by Year 6 have been successful. The school is working successfully to extend the very good start the children make in the Nursery into Reception and Years 1 and 2, but changes are recent and there is further work to be done. Regular checking of the quality of teaching takes place. However, the leadership team knows the information provided to teachers about the strengths of their work and how they should improve has not been sufficiently precise in the past. Parents speak highly of what the headteacher and leadership team have achieved and they fully support the school's work. Pupils also are pleased with what the school offers. They say, 'It is good to learn in this school'.

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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	3
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	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

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	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	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	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

Thank you for your very friendly welcome during our recent visit to your school. You made us really feel welcome. Mr Moodie and I enjoyed talking to you, listening to your views and seeing how well you work in lessons. We think you go to a good school.

The things that we particularly liked about it

- You get a really good start to your education in the Nursery where there are lots of exciting things to do.
- You try hard in lessons and get on well with your work because teaching is good. This means that by the time you leave school in Year 6, you have made good progress.
- Your school is a happy place and you behave well. We particularly like the way you are very willing to help other children who may be unhappy.
- It is good to know that you feel safe in school and know there is someone to talk to if you are worried.
- A few of you who have difficulties in your learning are helped very well by the adults in the school.
- Your headteacher leads the school well and is helped by other teachers to make things even better.

What we have asked the school to do now

- We think that that your teachers need to help you to make faster progress in Reception and Years 1 and 2 and make sure you all receive work that makes you think hard.
- We have asked your headteacher to help all teachers to know more about how to make their teaching better.
- We think that you need to know more about the different faiths and cultures in Britain today.

We hope you continue to work hard and enjoy your time in school.