



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124357
Local Authority Staffordshire
Inspection number 292969
Inspection dates 18–19 January 2007
Reporting inspector Marion Wallace

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Cherry Orchard
School category	Voluntary aided		Lichfield
Age range of pupils	4–11		WS14 9AN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01543 263505
Number on roll (school)	209	Fax number	01543 410105
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ruth Thomson
		Headteacher	P Flahive
Date of previous school inspection	4 March 2002		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 18–19 January 2007	Inspection number 292969
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is an average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is significantly lower than average. Some pupils with English as an additional language have recently joined the school. The proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and pupils entitled to free school meals are lower than average. Most children have attended the private nursery on the school site before they enter Reception.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Overall effectiveness is good. All individuals are valued and respected in this friendly, caring community and as a result, pupils enjoy school and have a positive attitude to their work. This view is supported by the majority of parents and pupils. 'We like the trips and activities and enjoy school,' said a group of older pupils.

Pupils' achievement is good and enables them to reach standards that are above average by the time they leave the school. Attainment on entry is average. Children in Reception experience a good curriculum and are extremely well taught and consequently they make an excellent start to their education. They reach above the expected levels by the time they start Year 1 because of the flying start they receive in Reception. Standards remain above, and sometimes well above, average as pupils' progress through the school. Pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities make the same progress as their peers. Pupils new to this country have settled into school life very well. They are making good gains in their learning because they are extremely well supported by the school and learning support assistants. Preparation for future economic well-being is good and pupils develop good personal qualities. They become mature, considerate and sensible individuals who make good progress in the basic skills needed for their future. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school and wider community. The pupils' overall good progress is the result of good, and sometimes excellent, teaching. Throughout the school, teachers know their pupils well and plan interesting lessons for them. There are very good systems in place to check on how well pupils are doing.

Pupils' personal development is good. The school demonstrates good awareness of health and safety. It places a strong emphasis on the importance of listening to pupils and encouraging them to voice their views. All pupils learn to adopt healthy lifestyles. They say they all feel safe and that their views are valued. The school council is proactive in reflecting and acting upon pupils' views. Provision to ensure pupils' care, guidance and welfare is good and procedures to ensure that academic progress is maintained are very good. The curriculum is good and enriched by specialist teaching in music and physical education. Whilst there are good opportunities for pupils to use literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills to enhance learning in other subjects, opportunities to link learning in subjects such as science, history, geography, art, design and technology and physical education are limited.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together and are good role models. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and has good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities in the curriculum for pupils to link learning with subjects such as science, art, design and technology, music, history, geography and physical education.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children in Reception make significant progress in all areas of learning because they benefit from high quality teaching and learning. Opportunities for outside play are well planned and the outdoor area is used well to enhance learning. Children enter Year 1 with above average skills in all areas of learning. Achievement is good in Years 1 and 2 and consequently standards are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This is reflected in national test results for 2005-6 although more able pupils did not do as well in writing as they did in reading, mathematics and science. Progress is good throughout the school and reflects the quality of teaching.

By the age of eleven, pupils achieve above average standards in mathematics, English and science. Effective monitoring has helped raise standards. The school rigorously challenges any slip in achievement and successfully puts measures in place to help pupils make the best possible progress. The current Year 6 are on course to repeat the above average results gained in 2005-6. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress towards their individual targets in lessons and small groups. Standards in ICT have improved since the last inspection as a result of better resources and good use of the new ICT suite.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. They behave well in and around the school and are keen to learn because expectations of behaviour and work are clear. Attendance and punctuality are good. In assembly, pupils are proud to receive commendation awards for good work or behaviour. Pupils are considerate and courteous towards each other and show good levels of maturity. Cultural development has improved since the last inspection, but pupils need to develop a greater awareness of life in multicultural Britain. Pupils regularly raise money for charities, including Shelter and chickens for farmers in Africa. The school council representatives enjoy their role and make a positive contribution to the school, such as promoting improvements to the toilet accommodation, and playground markings. One pupil said, 'I am proud to be a member of the school council'. Pupils feel safe and secure in school; they know that any concerns will be dealt with. They understand that leading a healthy lifestyle is important, including the importance of a healthy diet. When asked to comment on the inspector's choice of food at lunchtime, pupils confirmed he had chosen a healthy meal.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Children experience high quality teaching in Reception and during their final year at the school. This enables them to make a cracking start in Reception and to attain good standards in Year 6. Planning takes account of the different abilities of pupils in the class. There are rigorous procedures to check on pupils' progress, and information is usually used well to plan lessons and this is contributing to the good gains the pupils make. The use of too many worksheets in a few classes, however, can sometimes limit the written response of more able pupils. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to capture pupils' interest and involve them in their learning. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties, so they make good gains in their learning. Marking is frequent and of consistently good quality throughout the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

An interesting curriculum ensures that pupils enjoy their learning. Curriculum planning is detailed and usually well matched to pupils' abilities. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who speak English as a second language are successfully met by well deployed staff. Pupils use computers to enrich learning in other subjects, and opportunities for writing in lessons other than English are well developed. Opportunities to link learning with subjects such as science, art, design and technology, music, history, geography and physical education are, however, limited. Curriculum enrichment is good and covers a broad range of interests. Visits and visitors enrich learning. Pupils clearly stated that they appreciate the trips and visits such as the recent Year 5 trip to Lichfield Library and enthusiastically talked about the prospect of the summer trip to Llandudno. Personal, social and health education is generally well planned and ensures pupils know how to stay safe and be healthy. Clubs are popular and well attended.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff know and care for their pupils well and consequently pupils are happy and safe in school. Child protection procedures are in place and checks on staff are being updated to comply with the most recent guidance. Pupils with learning difficulties receive effective support because their individual education plans are well matched to their needs. The school also works well with external agencies to support the needs of these pupils.

Support for academic development is good. Pupils are set challenging class and group targets and they know these well. A good tracking system identifies pupils who may need additional support and appropriate measures are put in place to help them

improve. The 'traffic light system' works effectively and helps pupils know what they have done well and what could be better. Opportunities for pupils to contribute to their own targets are limited.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is a calm, well organised environment because the headteacher, who is very experienced, ensures the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. He is very well supported by his equally experienced and skilful deputy. The school has been too modest in its own judgements. Inspection evidence indicates good, rather than satisfactory, judgement because senior leaders are strongly committed. They focus on raising standards through good self-evaluation processes and effective monitoring and evaluation of school improvement priorities. As a result, pupils achieve well and attain above average standards, the majority reach their challenging targets.

Subject leaders are very clear about their roles. They know what needs to be done in order to monitor and evaluate their subjects to ensure improvements continue. They are all given time to do this, and they make good use of the time using pupil interviews, book trawls and lesson observations to inform their plans for development. The impact of subject leaders' work was evident in the recovery in standards in 2006, following a dip in 2005.

Governors are well organised and have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and offer appropriate challenge and support to ensure further improvement. Procedures to safeguard learners meet current government requirements, but need to be applied more robustly.

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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	2
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

Thank you very much for welcoming us into your school. We enjoyed talking to you and your teachers, coming to your assembly and listening to your beautiful singing.

These are the things we liked most about your school:

- you make a flying start to your education when you first come to school in Reception
- all adults work very hard to make sure you achieve good standards in your work
- your behaviour is good and you are all growing up into mature and responsible young people
- your school cares for you very well and teaches you to keep safe, be healthy and care for others
- your headteacher is very experienced and works hard to make sure you experience a good education.

But to make things even better we have suggested something we think will help:

- you should have more opportunities to make learning links in subjects such as art, design and technology, music, history, geography and physical education.

We wish you well for the future