



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124360
Local Authority Staffordshire
Inspection number 292971
Inspection dates 5–6 March 2007
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	Newman Grove
School category	Community		Rugeley
Age range of pupils	4–11		WS15 1BN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01889 256120
Number on roll (school)	170	Fax number	01889 256123
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Peter Stonier
		Headteacher	Kath McNally
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average and serves an area of some social disadvantage. Most pupils come from White British Catholic backgrounds. The majority of children starting school in Reception attended the onsite Nursery which is managed by a private provider. There have been significant changes in staffing over the last year. A consultant headteacher appointed by the local authority in April 2006 supported the former headteacher before his resignation and that of the deputy headteacher. An acting headteacher and the consultant managed the school until January 2007, when the current headteacher was appointed. There is no permanent deputy headteacher at the present time.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is an improving and satisfactory school. Parents are appreciative of its work and are pleased their children enjoy school. There is a positive atmosphere which stems from the new headteacher and the commitment of the staff. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has accurately evaluated the school's current position. Building upon the work that was started last term, she has introduced more formal monitoring and evaluation procedures that clearly focus on improving learning. A start has been made in improving middle management, with the appointment of key subject leaders. Although improvement since the previous inspection has lacked pace and rigour, rapid improvements have been made more recently, showing that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further. By the time pupils come to leave the school, they have usually achieved the standards expected but in 2006 they left with standards higher than that. However, since 2003, standards by Year 2 have been declining and were exceptionally low in 2005. This meant it was unlikely that average standards would be maintained in Key Stage 2. Teaching was not good enough and insufficient assessment information was available for teachers. However, good support from the local authority brought improvements in assessment and planning and enabled standards by the end of Year 2 to improve overall in 2006. Although there is still some way to go, achievement is now satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Good relationships ensure pupils confidently involve themselves in lessons. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support pupils with learning difficulties. The pace of learning is good in some classes but in others, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils are capable of. Pupils are not always clear about what is expected of them and the setting of targets and teachers' marking do not consistently help them to improve their work. Provision in the Reception class is satisfactory. Children come into school with broadly average skills and by the time they enter Year 1, the majority are working within the goals expected for their age. A strength of Reception is the progress children make in their personal, social and emotional development. This continues, and pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy lessons, even the 'bad jokes' and say that learning is fun. Pupils' behaviour is good but the school council says 'Some pupils have their moments!'. Pupils are keen to eat healthily and say 'Fruit and vegetables are important and we need to eat five a day'. The curriculum is satisfactory and pupils enjoy an adequate range of enrichment activities. The school cares well for the pastoral needs of pupils but, because academic guidance is not as strong, the school's overall provision for care, guidance and support is only satisfactory. A new system has been introduced for tracking pupils' progress but as yet it does not rigorously track progress from their start at school in Reception through to Year 6.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make satisfactory teaching consistently good by raising teachers' expectations, increasing the pace of learning and involving pupils more in knowing how to improve their work.

- Embed a rigorous cycle of monitoring and evaluation which clearly focuses on pupils' learning.
- Develop the existing tracking and target setting system in order to check and ensure that progress is good enough from Reception to Year 6.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

By the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science have been broadly average although significantly above average in 2006. However, these above average standards are not evident throughout the school and pupils currently in Year 6 and those in subsequent years are unlikely to attain these results. Since 2003, standards by the end of Year 2 have been declining, being exceptionally low in 2005. The acting headteacher and consultant headteacher took action by providing more useful assessment information about pupils' learning for teachers to use. This meant work was better matched to the range of pupils' needs. Achievement throughout the school is now satisfactory but there is still some way to go to completely rectify the legacy of underachievement. By the end of Reception, children are working within the goals expected for their age, showing satisfactory progress from when they first started at school. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress, which improves when they are supported by the capable teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and speak enthusiastically about their work. Year 6 pupils, for example, say, 'Our teacher tells us bad jokes and makes us laugh!'. This makes learning fun, and pupils feel they learn a lot. Even so, attendance is only satisfactory as some parents keep their children away from school during termtime. The school is successfully improving attendance and punctuality. Behaviour in lessons and around school is mostly good. Pupils could not recall instances of bullying, and felt that playtime 'buddies' were helpful in sorting out minor incidents. Pupils know the importance of health and exercise and say they are pleased that they have opted into what Jamie Oliver is doing! They know how to keep themselves safe and the newly-established school council have lots of good ideas for making the school site even safer. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils know right from wrong and think 'golden-time' is useful to improve behaviour. Pupils' cultural awareness is satisfactory. They value the awards for poetry and art, for example, in special assemblies. However, they do not know enough about multi-cultural Britain today. Pupils develop well in confidence and initiative, and their contribution to the school and local community is good. They are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Relationships between staff and pupils are good, resulting in pupils who have the confidence to ask and answer questions. Planning is improving as teachers use assessment information more effectively to plan work to meet the range of needs within their class. However, although teachers often vary the tasks set for pupils of different abilities, they do not always make it clear what is expected of different groups and this limits achievement. In some classes, the pace of learning is good, but in others, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils are able to do. Teachers have started to involve pupils in working towards targets but this is not consistent and marking as yet does not sufficiently help pupils to improve the standard of their work. Teaching assistants are deployed well and give the right amount of help to pupils with learning difficulties.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is soundly planned to provide a broad range of learning opportunities. Improved planning is starting to adapt the curriculum to meet the range of pupils' needs. Although the indoor curriculum is satisfactory for Reception children, the outdoor curriculum is underdeveloped. Much thought is given to personal, social, emotional and health education which enables pupils to grow in maturity. Pupils' health and safety is stressed in lessons. For instance, in physical education lessons, older pupils assess the hall for hazards before the lesson begins. The arrangements for pupils with learning difficulties are satisfactory. Their individual education plans mostly contain precise targets which teaching assistants use carefully to enable the pupils to build up skills and confidence. A range of visits, visitors and clubs satisfactorily extend pupils' learning. Clubs are well attended and those such as the computer club effectively support pupils' skill development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care and support are central to the school's work. Staff are sensitive to pupils' needs and go out of their way to meet them, particularly for the most vulnerable. Good links with outside agencies effectively support the guidance given to these pupils. Throughout the school, pupils feel safe, knowing adults will listen to them if they have a concern. Procedures for ensuring pupils' wellbeing are satisfactorily in place. Academic guidance is improving. The newly-introduced tracking and target setting system is providing teachers with more secure assessment information. However, progress is not yet tracked carefully enough from Reception through to Year 6. This means the leadership does not have an in-depth understanding of the progress pupils make throughout their whole time at school. Although termly assessments are made and

recorded, this information is not held centrally and therefore limits the ways in which the headteacher and subject leaders can check regularly on whether pupils' progress is good enough.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

During an unsettled time, good support from the local authority has helped the school to improve monitoring and evaluation procedures which are now satisfactory. However, much has been informal and a clear cycle for this work has not been established. Too great a focus on checking teaching and not enough on checking learning means teachers do not know what they need to do to lift learning from satisfactory levels to good. The newly-appointed headteacher has correctly identified which classes are most successful and is beginning to provide the necessary professional guidance for staff to improve provision. Her aim 'to make all things excellent' is clearly articulated and shared by all staff who want to make things better in this school. The governors are supportive and have a realistic picture of where the school is. They are aware that they now need to take a more active role in monitoring standards and achievement more closely. The influence of subject leadership is only beginning. Although very enthusiastic, key subject leaders have only recently been appointed to their roles and have had little opportunity to influence provision.

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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?	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	3

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	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?	3

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?	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

You may remember that two inspectors visited recently to find out about how well you are learning. Thank you for being so friendly and telling us about your school. We think that your school is satisfactory. Your new headteacher, supported by the staff and governors, knows what needs to be done to make it much better. She has already started this by setting up times when she and other staff can find out about how well you are learning. We also think that careful checks now need to be made about how much progress you make from class to class. Although by Year 6 the majority of you are quite good in English, mathematics and science, in most classes your achievement is satisfactory. We think that you have not done as well as you might because teachers have not built on what you have learnt previously. This is getting better as teachers now have more useful information about what you know already and what you need to learn next. You can help your teachers to make your achievement good by working hard and not wasting time when working by yourselves. We know that some teachers are giving you targets to help you get better. We think this is a really good idea that should happen in all classrooms. Another good idea is that when your work is marked, teachers tell you exactly why it is good and how to make it better. So, please help your teachers by reading comments carefully, and then trying hard to do what they ask when you do your next piece of work. We were pleased to hear that you enjoy school despite the 'bad jokes' that some of you older pupils have to listen to! We thought that behaviour was mostly good but we agreed with the school council who say that some pupils are not always as nice as they could be. It was good to hear that you feel safe in school and that adults listen to you if you have a concern. We were very impressed about how much you knew about keeping healthy and the importance of eating five fruit or vegetables every day. Thank you again for your help. By the way, we don't know if you get chance to visit other classrooms but it is well worth going to the Year 6 classroom to see the 'Andy Warhol' portrait gallery. It is really impressive, and see if you can recognise anyone!