

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 131112         |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Surrey         |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 293708         |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 19 March 2007  |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | David Marshall |

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>                | 4–11                                       |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed                                      |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |  |
| School                                    | 419  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                         |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mr Hugh Coakley                            |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Mr Stephen Phillips                        |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 10 March 2003                              |
| <b>School address</b>                     | 155 Aldershot Road<br>Guildford<br>GU2 8YH |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01483 888401                               |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01483 888402                               |

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|--------------------------|---------------|
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

St. Joseph's is a larger than average school with an attached nursery funded through the Nursery Education Grant which provides wrap around care for 65 children. The school's popularity means that most year groups are full. The school is in an area of relative deprivation for Surrey. The school opened in 1997 because of the amalgamation of St Mary's Infant school and St Joseph's Junior on the junior school site. A local school has closed this year and a significant number of pupils have joined St Joseph's from this school. Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly average. The school has a higher than average number of pupils with English as an additional language and higher than average number with learning difficulties and disabilities. Currently around a third of the pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

St Joseph's is an outstanding school. One parent succinctly summed up the school's ethos by saying, 'St Joseph's cares about the development not just of the mind, but also the heart and the soul'. The zealous and high performing staff team, led by an outstanding headteacher, are responsible for the school's consistent success in providing high quality education. Each year the national test results show the pupils to be attaining high standards and achieving outstandingly well. Behind these impressive results are excellent teaching and the outstanding care and guidance that enable pupils of all abilities and backgrounds to make substantial gains in their learning.

Pupils are cared for exceptionally well and all of them, including the most vulnerable, feel safe and secure. Pupils' personal development and well being are outstanding. Those pupils who find learning difficult are given high quality support. By the time they leave the school, all pupils have developed into well-rounded individuals because of their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural qualities. Behaviour is exemplary, and pupils show pride in everything they do. They are excellently equipped for the future to cope with academic and social challenges.

Right from the start, the children in the Foundation Stage are encouraged to become enthusiastic learners who thrive and enjoy all the school provides. As a parent wrote, 'We have never seen our child as happy as she was after her first day at school'. Children make brisk progress and are secure in all of the areas of learning by the time they start in Year 1. The pace does not slacken in the rest of the school and pupils are such effective learners because staff's assessment pinpoints their next steps in learning. As one boy said, 'Teachers encourage you a lot'.

The rich curriculum covers all subjects very well and is enhanced by a very good range of additional activities. Although opportunities for individual pupils to shine are plentiful, the school recognises that the development of the particular gifts or talents that some pupils have would be enhanced if they were provided with appropriate targets for improvement.

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher provides first-rate leadership and he is exceptionally well supported by all staff. Issues raised in the previous inspection have been robustly tackled resulting in the much enhanced provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and excellent outdoor facilities. Strengths and weaknesses are speedily identified because the school has excellent systems for monitoring its work. Based on the excellent teamwork and the staff's determination not to rest on their laurels, the school has an excellent capacity to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Provide appropriate levels of challenge for those pupils with particular gifts and talents, to enable them to achieve their full potential.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

Although the school, too modestly, graded achievement and standards as good, pupils attain high standards in English, mathematics and science in national tests at the end of Year 6. Other data which tracks the pupils' performance since they started in the infants, or when they were in Year 2, shows that they achieve outstandingly well throughout their time in the school.

From a secure start in the Foundation Stage pupils in Years 1 and 2 grow in confidence and maturity. By the end of Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above average. Throughout the school pupils have excellent skills in using computers and make good use of them for research. Standards in music, art, design technology and physical education improve well as the outstanding curriculum gives many opportunities for pupils to develop their creative, sporting and musical talents.

Pupils with learning difficulties benefit from excellent support. Almost all of these pupils attain at least average standards by the time they leave the school, due in no small measure to the skill of the support staff. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds also excel. They contribute much in lessons, showing an increasingly secure grasp of English.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils love coming to school and their attendance is above average. They enjoy every aspect of school life and participate eagerly in all it has to offer. Their positive attitudes make lessons a delight and pupils willingly contribute ideas, knowing that they will be valued. Behaviour is exemplary and is underpinned by a deep concern for others. Bullying or rough play are rare and the pupils say that if they have a problem they feel that the adults working with them will sort it out. As one boy said, one of the things he likes most about the school is, 'We are all friends with each other. People are not left out'. Pupils' contribution to the community is outstanding. In addition to fund raising for different charities, the school council has been instrumental in putting forward ideas that are making a real difference to the quality of their own school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They follow the school's clear moral code, and relate exceptionally well to each other and adults. Pupils participate in a wide range of activities that help them to understand about the beliefs and lives of people from different cultures. Clubs are well attended and pupils speak fondly of their teachers, who willingly give up their time. Pupils are well informed about healthy lifestyles and many participate in the wide range of sporting opportunities on offer. Pupils' highly developed academic skills prepare them very effectively for secondary school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teachers' expectations are high and pupils live up to them. Lessons are planned thoroughly and the work is matched carefully to pupils' abilities. Staff in the Foundation Stage create a very good balance between formal and creative work and encourage the children to be independent. Throughout the school, staff are very good at guiding pupils on how to improve. A particularly good factor in raising achievement is the use of success criteria in lessons so that pupils can judge how well they have done.

Every pupil spoken to commented that, 'Teachers make learning fun'. In an outstanding mathematics lesson in Year 5, the teacher used pupils' responses exceptionally well. The pupils did not realise that the demanding, but enjoyable, tasks were their own choices. Learning is fun. Lessons move forward at a very good pace and pupils' attention is held throughout. The use of resources, such as the interactive whiteboards, inspires pupils to try their hardest. Another

characteristic of the successful teaching is the way that staff question pupils, get them thinking and expect well reasoned responses. These techniques work especially well for the excellent support staff working alongside those pupils with learning difficulties.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The rich and varied curriculum makes learning exciting and enjoyable for all pupils. Pupils love the extra-curricular activities and opportunities to take part in visits and special events. They are proud of their good success in sporting competitions, and the large number learning musical instruments show obvious pride in their achievements. There has been a strong focus on developing pupils' creative skills and the opportunities for dance, art and music have done much to extend learning. The excellent provision for personal, social, health and emotional development underpinned through the SEAL project (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) equips pupils to deal with sensitive and personal issues. Many of these aspects are supported through the excellent links with the church and connections with other schools.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Care, guidance and support are outstanding and contribute much to pupils' academic and personal development. Pupils' safety and well being are paramount at all times, ensuring that the school is a very safe and supportive place to be. The school provides a very high level of care for its pupils, and related procedures, including child protection, are very good. Health and safety routines and risk assessments are firmly in place and carried out thoroughly and regularly. The partnership with parents is exemplary. They are well involved and aware of what is happening in school. One parent wrote, 'They [the staff] seek the support of parents/carers and the whole community which is why they are so successful in running their school'.

Pastoral care is of high quality and linked to this exceptional practice is the robust assessment of academic progress. Pupils' strengths and weaknesses are accurately identified and support or extra challenges are provided. Special attention is given to those with learning difficulties. As one mother said, 'An excellent, wonderful school. My child has disabilities and they are always very, very supportive and understanding'.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The impact of the outstanding leadership at all levels is seen in the excellent progress made by the pupils. The headteacher and senior managers work exceptionally well in partnership with each other. As one parent wrote, 'The leadership is excellent - the team at the top are innovative, and we have every confidence in them'. The foundations of the school's success lie in the staff's commitment to following this exemplary lead in meeting the needs of all.

The school has an excellent track record of achieving high standards which has been maintained through constantly seeking to improve, revamping the curriculum, guiding teachers through effective monitoring and restructuring the senior leadership team. Management at all levels is very efficient and staff respond eagerly to new initiatives and responsibility.

The school development plan provides very clear guidance on relevant issues for raising standards and takes into consideration support and initiatives from all sources. The excellent governing body is fully involved in this process and they bring a wide range of skills to bear as they act as critical friends, challenging decisions and requesting explanations where this is judged to be necessary.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

|   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | <b>School Overall</b> |
|---|-----------------------|

### 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> | 1   |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?  | 1   |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage  | 1   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 1   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements  | 1   |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection   | Yes |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 1 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 1 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 1 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress                              | 1 |

### Personal development and well-being

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                           | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 1 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 1 |
| The attendance of learners  | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 1 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community                                    | 1 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 1 |

### The quality of provision

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>          | 1 |
| <b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b> | 1 |
| <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>                                       | 1   |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1   |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets   | 1   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can                     | 1   |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money  | 1   |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 1   |
| 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 making me so welcome in your school and talking to me about your feelings, ambitions and thoughts. It was a delight to meet you and I really enjoyed looking at your work and joining in your lessons.

I am glad to tell you that I think your school is outstanding and provides you with a really good start to your education. I was particularly pleased with these things.

- Your headteacher and staff do a super job in organising the school and looking after you.
- You all really enjoy being in school.
- You are all making excellent progress with your work.
- You behave very well, work hard and listen carefully to your teachers - all of this helps you to succeed.
- All the adults in the school look after you very carefully. They always make sure that you get help if you need it.

Your teachers and support staff work hard to help you to do as well as you can. I have asked them to make sure that those of you who have a particular talent at something are really challenged so that you can shine and accomplish all that you are capable of achieving.

I wish you well in the future and hope that you will always be as happy as you are at St Joseph's.

David Marshall

Lead Inspector