

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102233
<b>Local Authority</b>	Harrow
<b>Inspection number</b>	307941
<b>Inspection date</b>	11 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jane Wotherspoon HMI

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	411
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr E Kennelly
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr P Sutton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 May 2003
<b>School address</b>	Dobbin Close Belmont Circle Harrow HA3 7LP
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8863 8531
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8863 3341

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how well pupils achieve from their starting points in Reception to the end of Key Stage 1; how well assessment information and target setting leads to teaching that challenges pupils, especially higher attainers; and the impact of the leadership and management team's use of targets on raising achievement across the school. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form, assessment records and performance data, planning documentation, observation of staff and pupils at work, and analysis of 129 parents' questionnaires. Discussions were held with staff, a governor, and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

St Joseph's is larger than most primary schools. Just over half of its pupils are from White British backgrounds with a further 14% of White Irish heritage. The remaining pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. An average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. A smaller than average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. An average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Few pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual times. The school does not have nursery provision and children start Reception classes from 24 different early years settings. The school is due to open a children's centre on the site which will provide nursery places from September.

The school has gained a number of awards: Arts Mark, Healthy Schools, Active Mark, Financial Management Standard and is working towards ICT Mark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Joseph's Catholic Primary is a good school. Its strong ethos and shared Catholic values underpin the high level of care and support that contribute so much to pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. Parents recognise this aspect of the school's work as a strength. They appreciate how much the care and support of staff, 'help shape pupils' behaviour to be caring, thoughtful and helpful, especially to each other'. Parents are 'proud' and 'privileged' to be part of the school community. The vast majority of parents are highly satisfied with the school's work. They appreciate the approachability of staff, the caring environment and the outstanding range of additional clubs and activities that their children enjoy. Parents' confidence in the school as a happy, safe environment for learning is rightly justified. The school's strong links with external agencies support the progress and well-being of vulnerable pupils and those in need of additional help. A range of well-considered policies and strong procedures for safeguarding pupils helps them to feel safe and secure in school.

Pupils are polite, friendly, and welcoming to visitors. They are a credit to the school that they love, and to their families. Pupils recognise that their teachers have high expectations of their behaviour and work. They are highly motivated and want to do well. The warmth with which pupils speak about their teachers reflects the high level of mutual respect found at St Joseph's. 'Teachers expect you to do your best, want you to be what you want to be, and give you confidence,' said one pupil. Pupils do not consider bullying to be a problem but they are confident that there is always an adult or a friend to turn to should they need help. Consequently, they feel safe in school and their self-esteem and confidence is high. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding; they enjoy strong and harmonious relationships with one another. Pupils help to make decisions about school life, contribute ideas to the 'ideas box' and take responsibility for small tasks around the school. They use their initiative, for example, to develop a 'friendship stop' to support others who may have difficulty at playtime. School council members discuss ways to improve the school at their weekly meetings. Fundraising, both for the school and for charities at home and abroad, are a regular feature of school life. Pupils have a strong awareness of how to keep themselves healthy and are developing skills and qualities that will serve them well in later life.

Academic standards are good. Results in national tests in Year 6 are typically above average in English, mathematics and science. In 2007, a high proportion of pupils met the expected levels and a good proportion exceeded them. This particular group of pupils made outstanding progress during their time in Key Stage 2. The school has set challenging targets for the current group of Year 6 pupils who are on course to reach high standards. In Year 2, pupils' assessments are more mixed with stronger results in reading and writing than in mathematics, where higher attaining pupils do not always reach the standard of which they are capable. Overall, pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve well during their time in the school. However, their progress is more variable in Key Stage 1 and generally accelerates as they go through the school, mirroring the quality of teaching which is good overall.

Typically, lessons are well prepared and planned to draw on a wide range of learning activities that pupils consider are 'fun'. Teachers make especially good use of interactive whiteboards in presenting ideas in lessons. Teaching assistants are well deployed to make a valuable contribution to the learning of the groups of pupils they support. Teachers set targets for pupils in writing and mathematics, and review them regularly to ensure that progress is as expected. At its most effective, teaching draws closely on these targets during lessons and when marking pupils'

work. At times, however, activities are not modified sufficiently to meet pupils' different needs and in particular are not challenging enough for more able pupils, particularly at Key Stage 1. Pupils' progress is tracked regularly to identify where they may be falling behind so that appropriate programmes of support and challenging intervention can be put in place to meet their needs and to tackle underperformance.

The leadership and management team work together effectively under the strong direction of the headteacher who empowers them to take responsibility for key elements of the school's work. Together, this strong team seeks constantly to improve this school. Their good capacity to do so is reflected in the success, last year, of strategies to raise pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2. The challenge now is to repeat this success with pupils in Key Stage 1. The school's thorough approach to monitoring and evaluating aspects of its work identify clear strengths and areas for improvement and include the views of parents and pupils. Governors' links with key staff and their involvement in self-evaluation and planning for school improvement give them a good overview of the quality of provision. They give the school good support and challenge through the steering committee. This is not a school content to stand still. The development of the children's centre on the site, following a successful bid for capital funding, is just one example of how the school seeks to meet the changing needs of the local community.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

Most children make the progress that is expected of them in Reception classes. This is the starting point for the confidence and positive attitudes to learning that stand children in good stead in the future; progress in personal, social and emotional development is good. Parents are pleased that their children have settled well into school life. Children have plenty of opportunities to choose from a broad range of activities and to follow them independently. However, teachers do not monitor closely enough what children are choosing to do and the learning that they gain. Daily plans are not always clear about what children are intended to learn from the general activities on offer. Activities led by adults have a clear focus and so, here, children's learning is more secure. Until recently, the space for outdoor learning has been curtailed by building work but now there is scope to develop the outdoor area as an integral part of provision.

Systems for assessing children's skills and knowledge when they join the school are not providing sufficient detailed information about their starting points to enable the school to check accurately the progress they make during the year. Observations of what children do and understand are not frequent enough to support teachers' assessments of children at the end of the year. By the end of Reception, the majority of children are assessed as working within expectations for their age with a small proportion exceeding expectations in some aspects. There is scope to analyse this information in more detail to better support and challenge children as they begin Year 1.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Sharpen the planning and monitoring of provision, including the use of outdoor learning, in the Foundation Stage.
- Improve systems for assessing children as they start in Reception and for monitoring their progress during the year.
- Sustain the focus on raising pupils' achievement, particularly those pupils who are capable of achieving more in Key Stage 1.

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## Annex A

## 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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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

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?	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>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

25 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Harrow, HA3 7LP

It was a real pleasure to meet you when I came to inspect your school. A big 'thank you' to those of you who came to speak to me about the school. I was interested in your views. I think yours is a good school. The majority of your parents think so too.

I was especially pleased to see how exceptionally well you behave and the strong friendships you all share. You told me that teachers are 'kind, but strict if they need to be', and I could see that this helps you to be kind to each other. All the staff care for you very well and you care for each other. You told me you are happy at school, enjoy all the different things you do, and feel safe. I am pleased that you feel confident to go to a friend or an adult if you have any concerns.

You are polite, friendly, and made me feel very welcome. You are proud of your school and a credit to it. You work hard, not just because your teachers expect you to but because you want to. The way that you contribute to school life is impressive. You all help to make decisions about the school and take the initiative to help things change by suggesting your ideas to school council members. You have many important qualities that will stand you in good stead as you move on to secondary school and in later life.

You achieve well and reach good standards in your work. However, I think that some of you could do even better and I have asked your teachers to keep challenging you to do even more. I have also suggested some improvements to the Reception classes, including how well teachers check what children are doing and make notes on what they are learning. Now that the building work is almost complete, Reception children should be able to have more chance to learn in the outdoor area.

Continue to work hard and do well. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Wotherspoon

Her Majesty's Inspector