

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107327
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	309375
Inspection dates	5–6 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Susan Walsh

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	380
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Farley
Headteacher	Mrs Catherine Markham
Date of previous school inspection	18 January 2007
School address	Park Lane Bradford West Yorkshire BD5 0RB
Telephone number	01274 727970
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Introduction

When St Joseph's Primary School was inspected in January 2007, it was given a Notice to Improve and asked to address issues related to pupils' standards and achievement. It was subsequently visited in October 2007, when it was judged to be making outstanding progress.

This inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school serves a very diverse community of people who have been brought together by their Catholic faith. Pupils are from a very wide range of minority ethnic groups with an increasing proportion from Eastern Europe. Many pupils do not speak English at home and some are at the very early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average as is the proportion of pupils who join the school later than at the usual time. The school has achieved the Healthy School award and Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In accordance with Section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

This is a good school that provides outstanding care and support for all its pupils.

The school has worked well with the local authority and other partners to secure swift improvement since the previous inspection. The headteacher, school leaders and governors have worked together effectively and rapidly moved the school on by setting very rigorous targets and firmly holding teachers to account for pupils' progress. Regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning have successfully identified where teaching needed to improve. The hard working staff have taken advice on board and developed their practice. As a result, overall, teaching is now good and this results in pupils' good achievement by the time they leave in Year 6. Many parents say they are very 'proud' of the school. They recognise that staff have a 'genuine interest' in the pupils and 'always try their best'.

Attainment on entry is declining year on year and many children start school with poorly developed social skills and limited speech. Children enjoy their learning and they make good progress in the Foundation Stage. By the end of Year 6 pupils reach standards that are broadly average and they have achieved well overall. Pupils make rapid progress in Key Stage 2 because of very effective teaching but progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, by comparison, as the work set is not always well matched to pupils' different abilities. Furthermore, many boys enter Year 1 with low levels of concentration and weak skills in communication, language and literacy. The curriculum and current styles of learning do not always suit some of the pupils' needs in Key Stage 1; this is particularly the case in respect of the boys. These pupils especially find concentrating for long periods very difficult.

There are outstanding arrangements for supporting vulnerable pupils including pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language and those who join the school late. As a result, these pupils make good progress, gradually overcoming considerable challenges. School leaders have high expectations for all pupils and this is reflected in the way they vigilantly monitor pupils' progress. Sensitive mentoring provides very effective help for pupils with emotional difficulties. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to learning.

The good attention paid to personal, social and health education ensures that pupils are well informed about how to stay healthy and safe. Pupils enjoy keeping fit and eagerly join in the varied sporting activities that are successfully extended through links with the local secondary school. They appreciate the wide range of school clubs, from football to lace making, and the trips, especially the residential visit in Year 6. These activities help to make learning interesting, relevant and fun. Pupils really enjoy coming to school and their behaviour is good. They learn to get on well together and develop into confident individuals. Relationships are good and pupils from very diverse backgrounds get on well together.

The school's good capacity to improve is illustrated in the way staff have worked very effectively as a team, robustly tackling past underachievement, improving standards in Key Stage 2 and developing outstanding support for vulnerable pupils.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the school with very low standards. Many do not speak English and some have poorly developed social skills. Their speech is often limited. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. When they enter Year 1 their skills, particularly their social and emotional development, reading and writing skills remain well below the levels expected of children of their age. Boys' skills are generally not as well developed as the girls and they are further behind their peers nationally. The Foundation Stage offers a safe and secure environment where children can blossom and start to learn as a result of good teaching. Good relationships help the children to develop confidence. The curriculum for these young children is satisfactory. Activities usually attract children's interest but are not always carefully linked to the six areas of learning. Although the outdoor environment is adequate it cannot be used when it is raining and so this limits its use. Staff are deployed well and offer particularly effective help to those at the very early stages of speaking English. The staff make determined efforts to improve children's speaking skills and those children in the Reception really enjoy their phonics work.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1, particularly in respect of ensuring that work is well matched to pupils' different abilities.
- Develop the curriculum in Key Stage 1 so that it better meets the needs of all pupils, particularly boys.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall achievement is good. It is, however, uneven throughout the school. In Key Stage 1 it is satisfactory and in Key Stage 2 consistently good. Standards on entry to Year 1 are declining and are well below average reflecting the decline in pupils' skills on entry to the Nursery class. Progress through Key Stage 1 is satisfactory which reflects the satisfactory teaching and learning seen in this key stage. Pupils' skills in reading and writing are well below average and are the weaker aspects of their learning, while standards in mathematics are broadly average. Pupils' standards have improved significantly in Key Stage 2 to broadly average and are better in mathematics than in English and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the extra help they have with their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school is particularly good at encouraging pupils' social and moral development and this results in pupils behaving well and increasingly taking into account the needs of others. The school is aware that some pupils are occasionally not always pleasant to others. However, pupils say that their problems are quickly sorted out because staff are quick to tackle any problems. Many older pupils work very hard in lessons but some younger pupils become restless when work is too difficult for them. Attendance rates are satisfactory. Pupils are keen to make a good contribution to the school community. They like to help others and this is reflected in the way that Year 6 assist the younger pupils. The school is very involved in the church community and the wider local community, and pupils enjoy raising funds for charity and helping local people. Links with the

Islamic community are helping to develop pupils' understanding of other religious beliefs and further enhance racial harmony. Pupils are welcoming to new pupils whatever their ethnic heritage, saying, 'We get lots of new people that we all look after.' Visits to local universities have raised aspirations and many pupils talk enthusiastically about becoming doctors, lawyers and teachers. Good achievement combined with active mentoring and encouragement from the school gives pupils a real potential to help them to achieve their dreams.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers are committed, enthusiastic and keen to improve their practice continuously. Teaching is generally of better quality in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. Lessons are very well planned in Key Stage 2 and effectively delivered. Work is consistently well matched to pupils' needs. However, in Key Stage 1, although teaching and learning are satisfactory, teachers sometimes provide work that is too hard for lower ability pupils and not challenging enough for the more able pupils so that the pupils do not always make the progress they are capable of. Interactive whiteboards are being used well, throughout the school, to illustrate lessons and to help develop understanding. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Teachers in Key Stage 2 are particularly skilled at managing pupils' behaviour.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A clear focus on developing basic skills including reading, writing and the use of number is helping to drive improvements to achievement, particularly in Key Stage 2. The school is committed to making the curriculum more interesting by developing links between subjects. For example, history and geography across the school and art, design and technology and music in Year 3 are beginning to be taught successfully under the same umbrella. In addition, the use of information and communication technology is being extended in all subjects across the school. The teaching of French is greatly adding to pupils' enjoyment of school because they find the lively, active approach a lot of fun. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities including study support groups that help pupils to learn. By contrast, the curriculum in Key Stage 1 is not always as well matched to pupils' needs. The lower ability pupils, particularly the boys, are not always enthused because of the lack of practical activities in some lessons and the formal approach that is sometimes adopted.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Outstanding pastoral care contributes significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school and their personal development. The school is a very caring community where relationships between adults and pupils are very good indeed. Pupils feel safe and well cared for. Measures that safeguard pupils, including child protection, are robust. Vulnerable pupils, as well as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at the early stages of speaking English, are extremely well supported. Very effective links with other agencies further enhance this high quality support. The school is working hard to improve attendance by making parents fully aware of the importance of regular attendance at school. The checking of pupils' progress is very thorough, particularly in Key Stage 2 where it has been instrumental in accelerating pupils'

progress. Academic guidance is generally good. Teachers' marking clearly tells pupils how to improve their work but the use of learning targets is not yet fully consistent. The small steps that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities need to take to improve their learning are now very clearly identified.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management have secured significant improvement to achievement since the previous inspection while enhancing many positive features of the school including pupils' good personal development and high standards of pastoral care. The majority of improvement has taken place in Key Stage 2 and the provision for vulnerable pupils is now outstanding but the school is aware that there is still some work to do in Key Stage 1. The school has rigorously analysed its data for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 but has not looked closely enough at the information about the standards reached by pupils leaving the Foundation Stage. Leaders realise that children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is declining and they have an understanding of how this compares with like schools, but they are not sufficiently aware of the progressively widening gap between children's standards on entry to Year 1 and the national expectations for these standards. Consequently, the school has not ensured that the curriculum in Key Stage 1 fully meets all pupils' needs.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	1

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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for being so friendly and polite when we came to inspect your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and listened very carefully to what you had to say. I am writing to tell you what we found out. It is understandable that you are proud of your school and we know that you will help your teachers to make your school even better.

You go to a good school with lots of good things to celebrate, such as the way you are looked after and the way you behave so well. You do a good job supporting new pupils. Keep up the good work! You told us that you enjoy school, and especially the extra activities. We thought that you were very lucky to have such a wonderful range of clubs from rugby to homework clubs. We liked hearing about the exciting outward bound trip in Year 6; it was clear that you had a great time. We know you enjoy exercise and keeping fit and try to make healthy choices of food.

Younger children are getting off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Most of you are making good progress compared to pupils in other schools and usually reach similar standards to other children by the end of Year 6. You do really well in Years 3 to 6 because you work very hard and teaching is good. We have asked the teachers in Years 1 and 2 to make sure that they set work that's not too easy or too hard for pupils and to make sure that the activities are more exciting and interesting for you. We were very pleased that you enjoyed the trip to the university so much and it's great to hear that many of you are aiming to do really well in life.

The people who run your school make sure it is a happy place where you are very well cared for. Your teachers have worked very hard indeed to make sure your school gets better and better.