

## St Joseph's RC Primary School, Todmorden

### Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107560
<b>Local Authority</b>	Calderdale
<b>Inspection number</b>	309432
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Harrison

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>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	105
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Miss Celia McNicholas
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Maria Cooper
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 May 2003
<b>School address</b>	Wellington Road Todmorden Lancashire OL14 5HP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01706 812948
<b>Fax number</b>	01706 811870

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards; the quality of teaching and learning; and pupils' personal development and well-being. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form (SEF), national published assessment data, the school's own assessment records, relevant policies, observations of the school at work, including visits to lessons, and analysis of parents' questionnaires. Discussions with staff, pupils and a governor were held. 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 SEF, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This small school serves the market town of Todmorden and the surrounding area. Most pupils are of White British heritage but around one in ten comes from a Polish background and speaks English as their second language. The number of pupils eligible for a free school meal is average and pupils' social circumstances, although varied, are average overall. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the proportion with statements of special educational need are both average. The number of pupils on roll has fallen significantly since the previous inspection, but numbers in the Nursery are now rising again. The school suffered badly from flooding in July 2006 and has been undergoing building work in recent months. The school holds the Healthy Schools and Active Mark Awards.

## 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 a satisfactory school with several good features. Parents and pupils especially value the friendly atmosphere and the strong pastoral care that the school provides, particularly for those who are vulnerable. Pupils' good personal development is another important strength of the school. Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their good attendance. They behave well in lessons, in the playground and around school. As parents said, 'The children are taught to be kind and tolerant to each other and to give help to those who need it.' The Healthy Schools and Active Mark Awards indicate pupils' keen understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The school council gives pupils some opportunity to influence decisions in school.

Children arrive in the Nursery with skills that are generally below those expected for their age, particularly in their language development. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage so that their skills are broadly average by the beginning of Year 1. Pupils then make satisfactory progress as they move through school and reach average standards in English and science in Year 6 so that, overall, standards are average and achievement is satisfactory. Standards in mathematics, however, are below average and pupils do not do as well in this subject as they do in English and science.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make slightly better progress than other pupils in school, largely because work is well matched to their needs and they receive effective support in class. The school has had to adjust quickly to the needs of its Polish pupils, who have arrived over the last two years. The school, well supported by the local authority and both qualified and volunteer assistants, has worked hard to gain the necessary expertise to provide appropriately for these pupils. Nevertheless, the budget is tight and support is limited so there are occasions when these pupils find lessons difficult to understand and do not make as much progress as they should.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers manage pupils well to ensure their good behaviour. In the best lessons, there is an atmosphere of eager anticipation as pupils move quickly from one interesting and challenging activity to the next. In other lessons, although teachers plan carefully, they do not always choose exactly the right tasks to enable all pupils to make good progress. This is a particular problem for pupils of higher ability in mathematics, where work is sometimes too easy or, occasionally, so difficult that they do not all know how to begin. The curriculum provides well for pupils and enables them to achieve satisfactory standards and to develop good personal qualities. Parents and pupils appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities including the 'Wild Things' club and a very popular chess club, alongside many sporting activities. Opportunities to develop musical talents are a particular strength, notably the chance for every pupil to learn to play the violin.

The school provides good care, guidance and support for pupils. Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that there is always someone to help if they have a problem. Teachers monitor pupils' progress carefully and provide well planned extra help where necessary. These arrangements, to use information about pupils' progress to ensure that intervention is effective are new, however, and have not yet had time to be fully effective in raising standards.

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher has been in post for just over two years and has successfully dealt with several challenges. During this time and through considerable changes in staff, the school's work has continued steadily and standards have been maintained. The school has a broadly accurate understanding of its main strengths

and weaknesses but does not make enough use of lesson observations to identify ways in which teaching and learning could be improved. Teamwork is improving, with governors and staff working together to move the school forward. This shared determination, together with the new arrangements for supporting any pupils who are at risk of underachieving, indicates that the school is well placed for further improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. The Nursery and Reception class offers a warm welcome to both children and their parents so that children make friends and settle quickly. Children arrive in the Nursery with skills that are generally below those expected for their age, notably in their language development. They make good progress through Nursery and Reception. By the time they leave Reception, most children have reached the levels expected in most areas of their learning. The quality of teaching and learning is good and adults provide plenty of encouragement for children to develop speaking, literacy and numeracy skills as well as opportunities for role play and to be creative. Children who are in the early stages of learning English receive much individual attention and benefit from conversations with adults who speak carefully and clearly. Children work in a safe, caring and stimulating learning environment. They do much of their learning and play outside, benefiting from fresh air and exercise. Adults are particularly successful in exciting children's interest and imagination. A recent project, involving a web camera watching nesting birds, provoked interest and delight throughout the school as well as among the children for whom it was intended. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed with improved provision since the previous inspection. In particular, children now have more opportunities to learn through independent play.

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

- Raise standards in mathematics by making sure that all tasks are precisely matched to pupils' needs, particularly for pupils of higher ability.
- Increase the support provided for pupils who speak English as an additional language so they make good progress in all lessons.
- Make better use of lesson observations to identify areas for improvement and to share good practice in order that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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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?	3
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?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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 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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<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>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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



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

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school yesterday. As you know, the purpose of the visit was to check how well the school is doing. I am particularly grateful to those of you who talked to me about your experiences in school. The information and opinions you provided were very important in helping to make judgements.

I have judged that yours is a satisfactory school with some good features. As you told me, and I agree, one of the main strengths is the friendly atmosphere and how kind people are to each other. I was very impressed by the way children from Poland have been welcomed into the school and quickly made to feel at home. You all obviously enjoy coming to school and feel confident that there is always someone to turn to if you have a problem. I know how much you appreciate the wide range of opportunities that the school provides for you, especially all the sporting and musical activities.

In any school there are some things that could be improved. In particular, you do not do as well in mathematics as you do in English and science. I have asked teachers to make sure that the numeracy work that is set for you is always as difficult as it needs to be, particularly for those of you who are good at mathematics. I hope you will play your part and make even more effort in those lessons. The school works hard to help those of you who have not been speaking English for very long but I know that some of you find lessons difficult to follow. Therefore I have asked the school to try to provide more support to make things easier for you in class. I have also suggested that teachers look more carefully at each other's lessons so that they can share any good ideas for helping everyone to learn more quickly.

Thank you again for a most enjoyable day in your school. I certainly won't forget your lovely singing and clapping of 'We are the children of St Joseph's School'. My ears are still ringing from the enthusiastic 'everyone' at the end!

I wish you and your school all the very best for the future.