

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Hunslet

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108028
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leeds
<b>Inspection number</b>	309575
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Clive Petts

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	124
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Fr A McGeough
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Elizabeth Snelling
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 May 2004
<b>School address</b>	Joseph Street Leeds West Yorkshire LS10 2AD
<b>Telephone number</b>	0113 2712093
<b>Fax number</b>	0113 2712093

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

St Joseph's is a small primary school serving an area of social and economic disadvantage south of Leeds city centre. The large majority of pupils are from a White British background with around a quarter of the pupils from a range of minority ethnic groups including Travellers of Irish Heritage and Gypsy/Roma. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is over twice the national average. Although very few pupils have a statement of special educational need, double the average number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including a small group of pupils with physical disabilities. Falling rolls have led to mixed-age teaching in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.

## 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 is a good and improving school that provides good value for money. Its success in tackling previous underachievement is due to the excellent vision, drive and determination of the headteacher, who is extremely well supported by staff and governors. The school has a very strong caring, community ethos rooted in the Christian faith and parents are especially appreciative of the quality of the school's work. The comment, 'The staff are nice and friendly and are more than supportive to children' is a typical view.

Pupils achieve well as they progress through school and reach close to average standards by the end of Year 6. The achievement of all groups is similar including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Standards do fluctuate from year to year as the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities varies and a small number of pupils move in and out of school at short notice. The good curriculum is strengthened through a wide range of enrichment and themed activities. Excellent partnerships provide the basis for many interesting and challenging activities, including sport development, visits and a residential experience. This ensures that pupils' personal, academic, creative and physical skills are nurtured in a balanced way. Pupils are given opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility. This all adds to the strong sense of community and pride in the school. It prepares them well for their future lives. Despite effective collaborative work by staff, absence remains too high. The unsatisfactory attendance for a small minority is the result of absence for holidays and a number of families regularly moving in and out of the local community.

Teaching is good. There is much talent among teachers to help pupils overcome any barriers to their learning. Challenging expectations of what can be achieved are set with prompt intervention if progress slips. This is highly effective in English. As a result, learning is enhanced and this underpins their good achievement in reading and writing. Similar methods are being successfully introduced in mathematics and science, but they have not yet had a marked influence on pupils' learning. Care and support for all pupils, regardless of their ability and interests, are fundamental to everything the school attempts to do. All staff do their utmost to provide effective care and support for pupils whether the pupils are talented, find learning difficult or are considered vulnerable. Systems are in place to provide good guidance to help pupils improve the quality of their work, although these are not fully developed or applied consistently in mathematics and science.

Leadership and management are good. The governors, headteacher and subject leaders work tirelessly to ensure that the school is always moving forward. This has led to good improvement since the last inspection. Much of the existing improvement is the result of the drive of the headteacher, who has established an inclusive ethos bolstered by a commitment to hard work and achievement. A recent redistribution of responsibilities among staff has begun to accelerate the pace of progress. Some members of the leadership team have not been in post long enough to have made a significant impact. Nevertheless, systems and strategies are now in place to bring about sustained improvement. All this provides the school with a good capacity to continue to move forward.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Provision for the Foundation Stage is good. This is the consequence of staff identifying learning needs before children's transfer from Nursery, making certain all children settle quickly in calm, friendly surroundings and making sure they all achieve well. On children's arrival their attainment is well below that expected for their age with weaknesses in writing, reading and number. However, they show a great enthusiasm for learning and staff successfully build confidence to tackle all tasks. Progress is carefully checked to pinpoint learning needs which require a boost or more support. Good teaching and well targeted, effective support successfully ensure that children make good progress. This includes children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. An early focus on listening and speaking skills prepares children well for reading and writing. All staff display high expectations of behaviour. Children respond really well to guidance and speedily develop considerate and helpful behaviour towards each other and staff. By the time they leave Reception, although standards are below average, many children are working at levels expected of them for their age and are well prepared for their next stage of learning.

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

- Ensure that all pupils are given clear guidance as to how to improve the quality of their work in mathematics and science.
- Work with targeted families to improve attendance

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' achievement is good because teaching and classroom support are effective. When pupils enter Year 1 their skills are below average for their age. A significant proportion have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a small number speak English as an additional language. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Currently, Year 2 pupils are attaining broadly average standards with considerable improvements in reading and mathematics. Boys are now making faster progress improving their writing as a result of more 'fun' approaches. Standards at the end of Year 6 in 2007 were well below average overall with exceptionally low standards in mathematics and science. These results were the outcome of a higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a small number who were absent for the tests. Yet the progress made in English equalled that of the top 10% of schools nationally. Currently, standards in Year 6 are much improved than previously and are close to average. Considerable improvement has been made in mathematics and science through using more imaginative approaches, though some inconsistencies remain in the quality of guidance pupils receive to improve their work. More pupils are now reaching higher levels.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development and well-being including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils display obvious enjoyment when working and their behaviour is excellent. Considerate, polite and helpful attitudes are evident in all that pupils do. They take responsibility seriously, for example acting as playground mediators and promoting safe play. Pupils are in no doubt that they feel safe and know that staff are always on hand to listen if help or advice

is needed. Pupils have many opportunities to lead a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy a wide range of sport including swimming and are very conscious of the benefits of a healthy diet. The attendance of the majority of pupils is satisfactory, but it is persistently below average for a minority. The problem arises as a small number of families do not cooperate fully with school and is no reflection of pupils' attitudes, which are very good. Pupils take enormous pride in their membership of the school council and the decisions they make. They are keen to play a part helping to improve school. All this, together with improved achievement, prepares them well for the next stage of education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are thoughtfully prepared to cater for the range of pupils' needs. Questioning is probing and explanations clear. Whiteboard technology is increasingly used to assist demonstrations, although not all opportunities are taken to allow pupils to use this technology. Teaching support staff are well informed and demonstrate an excellent range of skills to support pupils who finding learning difficult. Praise and encouragement are used to inspire pupils to rise to challenges and, when necessary, catch up and booster sessions are used successfully. Teachers assess progress systematically and in the best practice use the information to plan thoroughly the next steps in pupils' learning. However, the guidance given to pupils to improve their work is not so effective in some classes, particularly in mathematics and science.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The good curriculum enriches learning in a number of ways. Regular themed weeks and more first-hand experiences are providing a good match to pupils' needs, especially in English. In mathematics and science opportunities to use practical approaches are limited. Sport, music and art are very popular and all clubs are well attended. The school places a strong emphasis on meeting the needs of individuals including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English. Provision for literacy is excellent with good and improving provision for mathematics. Information and communication technology skills are developed to a high level with effective use made of the nearby City Learning Centre. Opportunities for learning outside the classroom help broaden pupils' horizons. The annual residential visit gives pupils a chance to explore the local community more widely and achieve success outside the classroom.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good overall with excellent pastoral care, though academic guidance is satisfactory. The emotional well-being of pupils lies at the heart of all that the school does. Thought provoking assemblies contribute to the high quality spiritual and cultural development. All staff know pupils and families extremely well. The school makes sure that the expertise from a range of agency links is effectively used to support families. The safeguarding of pupils meets government requirements. Pupils respond exceptionally well to the procedures that ensure their safety. Excellent induction and transition arrangements promote confidence to cope with new situations. Assessment procedures and systems for checking progress are in

place. In English all pupils are regularly presented with challenging targets that they can use to improve the quality of their work. Criteria are given so that pupils can check how well they have done. Together, this has led to impressive gains in achievement in English. Nevertheless, this kind of practice in mathematics and science is less well established.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The excellent vision of the headteacher has led to a rich climate for learning. There is an atmosphere of calm and happiness in which achievement, care and personal well-being of all pupils are evident in all aspects of work. All features of the school's performance are monitored and accurately evaluated. Recent appointments have strengthened the leadership team and are starting to add to the quality of monitoring of teaching and learning, but it is too soon to see the full effect of this new team. The established cycle of performance review is self-critical and reflective. The governing body adds challenge and support to this process in equal measure. The gains in achievement and the rise in standards reflects the success of a whole-school approach to the identification of school priorities and the implementation of effective improvement strategies. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive and particularly value the welcoming, nurturing atmosphere and the close links with staff. This has all contributed to the school being a much valued parish and community resource.

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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	2
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	3
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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	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?	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>	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**

Thank you for the very friendly welcome to your school and for being so considerate and helpful when I met with you. I thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work, speaking with your headteacher, staff, governors and parents and joining you in your lessons, in the dining hall and in assembly. You go to a good school in which there are many things that are better than I usually see in schools.

When I spoke to you, you told me that you really enjoy coming to school, joining in the many activities and being with your friends. Your enthusiasm and keenness to learn in lessons and excellent behaviour shows that you enjoy school life. I was very pleased to see you getting on really well with each other and staff. Your parents and carers also told me how pleased they are with the way the school cares for you and makes sure any concerns or worries you have are dealt with promptly.

The most recent checks on progress show that pupils in St Joseph's are doing much better than last year. In particular, your mathematics and science are improving quickly. Boys are doing much better especially in their writing. This is good news and, of course, everyone is very pleased. Some of you are occasionally unsure as to how you can improve your work in mathematics and science even more. For this reason, I have asked the school to try to make sure that all of you know exactly how well you are doing and what you have to do to improve your work. Most of you attend school regularly but a few do not and miss opportunities to learn and improve their skills. I have asked the school and welfare staff to think of more ways of encouraging everyone to attend regularly.

You have a very important part to play improving your school. You can help by listening carefully to the advice of your teachers and support staff and by trying extra hard to produce the best work that you possibly can in all lessons.

I hope the school will continue to build on its successes and I wish you well for the future.