

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109247
Local Authority	Bristol, City of
Inspection number	309940
Inspection dates	15–16 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Judith Goodchild

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	269
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shelagh M Williams
Headteacher	Matthew Condon
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Chatsworth Road Fishponds Bristol BS16 3QR

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	15–16 October 2008
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Telephone number
Fax number

01173 772160
01173 772161

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Introduction

Three additional inspectors carried out the inspection.

Description of the school

St Joseph's is a larger than average primary school. The number of pupils joining the school over the school year is above the national average. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average but the percentage of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is below average. There has been an increase in the percentage of pupils joining the school who speak English as an additional language (EAL). The number of pupils on roll has fallen since the last inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Joseph's is a satisfactory school. Its Christian ethos provides a firm foundation for the strengths in the personal development of pupils. The values the school promotes are evident in the exemplary behaviour of pupils and in the courtesy, care and support they show towards each other and adults throughout the school day. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for monitoring the progress they make in their learning. There is a developing culture of celebrating success through display in classrooms and assemblies and pupils are beginning to take pride in their achievements. The leadership team are successfully creating an exciting learning environment and there is good evidence that this is beginning to have a satisfactory effect, particularly on the achievement of boys.

The school has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. Mathematics has improved significantly and there is good evidence that there is an improving trend in other areas of its work. Achievement is satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress from their starting points. Standards are average and higher now than they were in 2007. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) also make satisfactory progress. The pastoral care that pupils receive is good. One parent described the school as 'tremendous' and valued the support given to them and their child. Many others reflected this view. Support is given to parents and carers through workshops and progress meetings to help them work in partnership with the school in the education of their children. Though academic targets are set, and discussed at these meetings, the monitoring of pupils' progress against these targets in school is not always sufficiently thorough and pupils are not always sure of the next steps to take in their learning. The curriculum is satisfactory and provides good enrichment opportunities in the form of after school clubs, and day and residential visits. However, the information produced by assessment is not used consistently to set work that is challenging enough for each ability group. Teachers are now providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in different subjects. Pupils' scientific investigation skills need further development.

Teaching overall is satisfactory with some strengths. The range of teaching strategies used is not always broad enough to ensure that pupils' needs are fully met. Lessons often follow a similar pattern and are not always amended effectively enough to support the learning of pupils. The school recognises that the cycle of monitoring teaching and learning needs to be more frequent and that it should analyse assessment data more thoroughly in order to ensure that provision fully meets pupils' needs. The school has a satisfactory understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. It has recognised that it needs to broaden the range of teaching strategies and curriculum opportunities for writing and scientific investigation.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enter school with attainment that is broadly in line with expectations for their age. Children make good progress in their personal development. They make satisfactory progress in all other areas of learning and by the end of the EYFS, their attainment is average. Induction processes are good and encourage the development of a partnership with parents and carers, resulting in children settling quickly. Children enjoy all their activities and there is a good balance between adult led and child initiated activities. Independence is encouraged and behaviour is good. Even from this early stage, children are effectively encouraged to become successful learners. Children are nurtured well in a safe and secure environment and their

welfare is paramount. Children with LDD are given the appropriate care and support through effective links with specialist agencies, as are those learning EAL. The external environment has greatly improved since the last inspection. The very limited space in the classroom environment is not used to its full potential. Leadership and management are satisfactory. In the past tracking systems were not based on accurate enough starting point information and the recording of the progress children were making was unreliable. Senior leaders have recognised this and systems to assess and track progress have improved.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use assessment data more effectively to inform planning and academic guidance, to ensure that the learning needs of all pupils are being met.
- Increase the frequency of monitoring teaching and learning and encourage the use of a broader range of teaching strategies to meet the learning needs of all pupils effectively.
- Enhance curriculum opportunities for writing and for scientific investigation.
- Improve the accuracy of assessment used in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average and pupils make satisfactory progress over their time in school, relative to their various starting points. In 2007, pupils achieved standards slightly below average, with science and writing being the weaker areas. Standards are now average. Inspection evidence, including provisional test results and school assessment data, supports the school's assessment that both writing and science have now improved. The school acknowledges that both areas require further improvement. The progress pupils make is uneven across the school because assessment data are not used consistently well to fully identify learning needs. Strategies to provide greater challenge for more able pupils have been more effective in producing faster progress in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2. The school has been increasingly successful in engaging boys in their learning. Pupils with LDD make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils are caring, courteous and supportive of each other and adults throughout the school day. Pupils are happy and feel safe in such a supportive environment. They really enjoy coming to school and what they say are 'interesting' lessons. Pupils display a good understanding of the importance of eating well and staying active in order to develop a healthy lifestyle and many attend the after school sports activities. The school works hard to ensure pupils come to school regularly and attendance is satisfactory. Older pupils make a good contribution to the school community through the school council, acting as buddies and volunteering to run the library. Opportunities for younger pupils to play an active role in the school are more limited. There are strong links with the local community, parishes and other schools, and pupils take part in a range of activities such as singing to senior citizens. Through their fund raising activities they are developing an increasing awareness of life in the wider community, although their knowledge

of multicultural Britain in particular, is more limited. Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. They also develop other skills relevant for their future lives through collaborative working in lessons and by taking ownership of their own learning. Older pupils are involved with a construction company in a design and construction activity, providing them with a good insight into the use of information technology in the workplace.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory. There are good features in some lessons, for example, well chosen strategies provide a good stimulus for learning. Pupils are encouraged to use their knowledge and understanding by applying it to practical tasks. Such activities also promote pupils' self-confidence as learners and help them in the development of independent learning skills. Teachers relate well to their pupils and all classrooms have a clear focus on learning. At the start of lessons, there is a good emphasis on ensuring that pupils understand what they are going to learn. Assessment data are not always used sufficiently well to inform planning and, too often, the relatively narrow range of strategies used does not fully meet pupils' needs. The support provided by teaching assistants, particularly in literacy and for pupils learning EAL, is effective and pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

There are strengths in this area of the school's provision. The enrichment opportunities for pupils are good and support both their learning and personal development well. This term a topic-based approach has been introduced to help engage boys effectively in the learning process and assist the development of writing across the curriculum, however, it is too early to evaluate its effectiveness. The guided writing and reading programmes recently introduced are also beginning to enhance pupils' skills. The introduction of a topic-based curriculum has provided more opportunities to develop writing skills across the curriculum. Planned opportunities for pupils to develop scientific investigation skills are limited. There are good links with the local community and other schools that help pupils transfer to the next stage of education. Parents value the recently introduced workshops that help them to understand how to support their children's learning at home.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Though care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall, the pastoral care pupils receive is good and this, in turn, encourages pupils' good personal development. Staff work hard to ensure that pupils feel safe and secure and their welfare needs are met. As a result, they enjoy school and successfully develop positive relationships with each other and with staff. Good links with external agencies support the school and pupils well. Safeguarding procedures are robust. Induction processes for children in the EYFS are good and encourage the development of a partnership with parents and carers, resulting in children settling quickly. Parents are increasingly involved in monitoring the progress their children make through termly meetings where targets are reviewed and reset. However, the monitoring of pupils' progress in school in

relation to targets is more thorough in some subjects than in others. Pupils are not always sure of what they need to do next to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides strong, caring leadership. The newly formed senior leadership team work well together, share the same vision, and are enthusiastic about moving the school forward to meet its identified priorities. The school's self-evaluation demonstrates that it has a satisfactory understanding of its strengths and areas requiring improvement. Following the last inspection there was a period of instability in staffing, but this has been resolved and the school now has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. Standards have improved since the previous inspection, particularly in mathematics, and the promotion of personal development is effective. The improving use of target tracking data by senior leaders is contributing towards the better progress pupils are now making. The school acknowledges that it needs to strengthen further its monitoring procedures with more frequent checks on teaching and learning and a more thorough scrutiny of assessment data. The leadership and management of subject coordinators and in the EYFS are satisfactory. Middle leaders perform a satisfactory role in monitoring provision and outcomes, although the school acknowledges that they should have greater involvement. The governing body support the school well and has a growing understanding of its work. However, at present they do not provide a consistent challenge to school leaders to ensure the school performs as well as it could. The school works appropriately to develop a sense of belonging within the school and wider communities, strengthened by close links within the local community, parishes and industry.

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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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	2
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 learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

18 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic School, Chatsworth Rd, Fishponds, Bristol BS16 3QR

We really enjoyed coming to your school and talking to you. Thank you for making us welcome and telling us what you really enjoyed about your school. We feel that St Joseph's is a satisfactory and improving school. You all felt that you were making progress in your learning and we agree with you. You told us that, at times, you were given extra help with your work and you found this helpful. You were particularly pleased with all the extra activities that you took part in, such as the residential visit for older children and singing in the choir.

The key things we found out about your school are that the standards you reach are average and the progress you make in your work is satisfactory. Your behaviour is excellent. You are taught satisfactorily and you are provided with a rich range of after school activities. The senior leadership team are committed to making your school a more exciting learning environment for you.

To make your school even better we think that information on the progress you are making in lessons could be better used to help plan future lessons and activities that always match your needs and guide you in how to improve your work. Lessons could be checked more regularly to make sure that the ways in which you are taught always meet your needs. We also feel that you should continue to be provided with more opportunities for writing in different subjects and for doing practical work in science. Finally, we think that the progress of the very youngest children needs to be measured more carefully.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you. We know that you will do your best to help everyone make your school even better.

Yours sincerely

Judith Goodchild Lead inspector