

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110094
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Berkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	310205
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30 April –1 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Malcolm Johnstone

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	197
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Graham Spellman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Alison Webster
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 May 2004
<b>School address</b>	Newport Road Newbury RG14 2AW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01635 43455
<b>Fax number</b>	01635 552859

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is about the same size as most other primary schools. Most pupils are from White British families. There are small but increasing numbers of pupils from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. A few of these are at the very early stages of English language acquisition. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education. Within this overall judgement, there are a number of important strengths. The school has embraced the 'Every Child Matters' agenda in all aspects of its work. Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Relationships and racial harmony are strong and pupils have good attitudes to learning. They enjoy coming to school and their behaviour is exemplary. Care, guidance and support are effective. There is a good curriculum with many opportunities for enrichment. The headteacher and her deputy are successfully bringing about improvements in the school's work. The vast majority of parents recognise this. As one commented, 'I am delighted with the way the school has improved over the past two years.'

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. They vary between subjects. Overall standards in English are above average and pupils make particularly good progress in reading and speaking and listening. Standards and pupils' achievements in writing, mathematics and science are satisfactory. There is good provision for pupils who have learning difficulties and the additional support they receive helps them achieve well in English and mathematics. The minority ethnic pupils who are in the early stages of English language acquisition receive effective additional bilingual support and this helps them to make good progress in learning English.

In terms of its impact on pupils' achievement over time, teaching and learning are satisfactory. The mostly good teaching seen during the inspection confirms the school's evaluation and indicates an improving picture. Planning, relationships, the use of resources and encouragement for pupils to evaluate their learning are particularly strong. However, there is still some satisfactory teaching and in these lessons, progress slows. Where the teaching is less successful, the use of classroom assessment does not always ensure that work builds successfully on what pupils already know. Teachers' expectations of how pupils present their work are not high enough and there is too much untidy work in their books.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Following the previous inspection, the school faced a number of challenges linked to staffing difficulties. These caused disruption to learning and a decline in standards. The senior managers and governors dealt with these issues well. The relatively new headteacher and her deputy lead the school well. They have provided a common sense of purpose and built a strong team ethos. Self-evaluation is good. It has highlighted the right priorities for improvement. There is good tracking of pupils' progress, effective use of performance data and regular monitoring of teaching and learning. This is beginning to have a positive impact on improvements in teaching and learning. Standards show some improvement in writing. However, in mathematics and science standards show no significant upturn at the end of Key Stage 2. Senior leaders are aware that there is still scope to embed securely the new initiatives in order to accelerate improvements. Given past difficulties, there has been good progress since the previous inspection. In the light of some tangible improvements over the past year and in the determination and commitment of the senior leaders, there is good capacity for further improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. It has improved since the previous inspection. The warm and stimulating atmosphere gives children confidence and eagerness to learn. Children

behave well and make good progress in all areas of their learning. They enter with attainment that is broadly as expected for their age. With good teaching, most attain the expectations for pupils entering Year 1. The curriculum is exciting and creative with a good balance of indoor and outdoor activities. Planning is good and provides for an appropriate balance of adult-led activities and those chosen by children. The good teaching of letter sounds and the high focus on developing speaking and listening skills provides a secure base for pupils' good progress in reading. Writing has a high profile and children are encouraged to create their own captions for a mini-beast topic. Assessment is good and helps the teaching staff to match activities successfully to the varied needs of the children. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. The need to make more use of the good range of outdoor resources has been identified as a priority and appropriate action is being taken to bring this about.

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

- Raise standards and improve pupils' achievements in writing, mathematics and science.
- Improve the overall quality of teaching with a focus upon establishing greater consistency in the use of day-to-day assessments to more effectively build on what pupils already know and upon raising expectations of how pupils present their work.
- Ensure that the initiatives to improve standards, achievement, teaching and learning are firmly embedded across the school.

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.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

In the 2007 National Curriculum assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2, standards were broadly average in reading but below average in writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 6, standards were above average in English and broadly average in mathematics and science. Standards have improved in Year 2 so that they are now broadly average. In Key Stage 2, standards are slowly improving and pupils are making better progress as new initiatives begin to feed through. However, by the end of Year 6, standards are not yet high enough in mathematics, science and writing and most pupils are capable of achieving more in these subjects. In mathematics and science, there has been a lack of continuity in the development of key skills from year to year. Pupils are not adept at applying what they know to solving problems in mathematics and science and their handwriting, spelling and grammar should be better.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy school and have very good attitudes to their learning. Attendance is good and behaviour is excellent. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong, and show courteous and thoughtful behaviour that contributes well to the very positive atmosphere in school. They gain a good appreciation of cultural diversity through religious education, music, creative arts and collective worship. Pupils have good opportunities to take on responsibilities as councillors, peer mediators, class and school captains. The relatively new school councillors are proud of their contribution to anti-bullying initiatives and supporting fundraising events. Pupils say they feel safe in school and are confident that any problems are dealt with quickly

and fairly. They understand the benefits of healthy eating and exercise and participate enthusiastically in the many sporting activities available to them. They are prepared well for the next stage of their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

An increasing amount of good teaching has led to pupils making more consistent progress over the past year. The positive ethos for learning is a consistently strong feature in the teaching. It has developed in pupils an impressive work ethic and enjoyment in learning. Good relationships throughout the school mean that pupils like and trust their teachers. Resources, including interactive whiteboards are used well to aid pupils' understanding. Classroom assistants provide good support for teachers and pupils. A particularly effective aspect of the teaching is the emphasis given to self-evaluation. This helps pupils understand how well they have done and what they need to do next. Planning is good and day-to-day assessment has improved well. It is recognised that there is scope to refine this to ensure work more consistently matches the needs of the pupils. In mathematics and science there are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in problem-solving activities. Across the school, teachers' expectations of the way in which pupils present their work are not high enough.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

Curriculum planning is good. It is now ensuring that there is continuity and consistency in the teaching of key skills from year to year. Specialist teachers, visitors and visits extend pupils' experiences well. There are good links between subjects and these make learning more meaningful and enjoyable. A good range of additional activities enhances the curriculum. These include sport and the arts. Good lessons in personal and social education make an excellent contribution to pupils' self-esteem and their positive attitudes to learning. These lessons also successfully support healthy living and staying safe. Provision for information and communication technology is good and computers support work in other subjects effectively. In subjects such as history and geography, there is scope to increase opportunities for pupils to write at length in other subjects.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a secure environment in which pupils feel valued and supported. All safeguarding requirements are met and vulnerable pupils are cared for well. Adults know their pupils well and provide them with very good personal and pastoral support. Teaching assistants provide effective additional support for pupils with learning difficulties and those at the early stages of learning English. The school works closely with a range of outside agencies to provide additional help for those pupils who need extra support. Academic guidance is good. Marking contains developmental comments and pupils have targets to aim for in literacy and numeracy. Pupils say that the individual pupil-teacher conferencing initiative is particularly helpful. These features of their academic guidance help pupils understand how well they are doing and how they can improve.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There is effective self-evaluation and a good school development plan. These act as an effective blueprint for improvement. Target setting is becoming more realistic but its impact so far has been to maintain standards at a satisfactory level. There are good systems to monitor teaching and learning which are bringing some improvements in pupils' progress. Subject leadership is satisfactory. The relatively new co-ordinators are developing their role well and having a more effective impact on developments in their subjects. They say that they feel more empowered and part of a team. They are good role models and there should be more opportunities for other teachers to learn from seeing them teach. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and highly committed to the school. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are increasingly holding the school to account for the quality of education it provides.

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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	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	2
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	2

### 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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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	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

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

15 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Newbury, RG14 2AW

Thank you for all the help you gave us when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed our visit very much, especially talking to you and seeing you work in lessons. We have said that your school is providing a satisfactory education. This means that there are many good things about your school but there are also some important things that can be improved.

We were very impressed with your behaviour, which we think is excellent. It was good to see how well you work and play together and help each other. You obviously enjoy school and take part enthusiastically in lessons as well as the interesting out of school activities. Your headteacher and all the staff care very much about you and want you to do your best. The teachers make lessons interesting and enjoyable. You tell us that there is always an adult to help if you have any worries or concerns. You know about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and have good knowledge of which foods are best for you.

We have asked the teachers to continue to work on improving your writing, mathematics and science, which we think should be even better. Although many of your lessons are good we have asked the headteacher to make sure they are all up to this standard. We think some of the work the teachers give you could be more suitable so that it is neither too easy nor too hard for you. Some of the work in your books is untidy and we have asked the teachers to help you improve this aspect of your work. We have also asked the headteacher to make sure that all the new and exciting things that are helping improve your school continue to be developed.

We know that your teachers and parents are proud of you, just as you are proud of your school. With your help, we know that you can make it even better.

Yours sincerely

Mr Malcolm Johnstone

Lead Inspector