

St Joseph's Catholic Primary

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112929
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	311058
Inspection dates	15–16 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Kathleen Yates

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)	187
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	Mr Bob Hepburn
Headteacher	Mr Alan Dewhurst
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Chesterfield Road Matlock Derbyshire DE4 3FT
Telephone number	01629583616
Fax number	01629 760959

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average size school. Pupils come from families representing a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and the percentage receiving free school meals is below average. Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly similar to that usually seen in pupils of this age. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average and there is a higher than average proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational need. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.

The school has received the following awards: Eco Schools Green Flag, Healthy Schools Award, Activemark and Financial Management of Standards in School in recognition of its work.

A privately run Nursery, not managed by the governing body, is also on the school site. However, the inspection of the child care took place at the same time as this inspection. A separate report will be published on the Nursery.

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 Catholic Primary provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. Parents are right when they say that the school provides a happy environment where all children are valued and included, nurtured and respected. There are good links with the community, outside agencies, neighbouring schools and the on site nursery. Staffing is very stable and there is a strong partnership with parents.

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. By the end of the Reception year, most children attain the levels typically found and this represents satisfactory progress from their starting points. Standards attained vary year-on-year because there is a much higher proportion of pupils with additional needs in some cohorts than others. Overall standards are broadly average by Year 2 and Year 6 and this reflects satisfactory progress. In English, over the last two years, pupils have attained above average standards by Year 6. They exceeded both the national and the school's own challenging targets. The school is aware that the least progress is made in mathematics at both key stages. Initiatives are in place to address this, the impact of which it is as yet, too early to see. All current pupils, including those who find learning difficult, are making satisfactory progress.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance is above average and pupils are generally enthusiastic about coming to school. Behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay fit, healthy and keep themselves safe. Pupils make outstanding contributions to the community. They willingly take responsibility for many environmentally friendly initiatives, taking waste audits, recycling paper and reducing energy consumption. The Eco Green Flag award has recognised their achievements. Pupils are also most considerate of those less fortunate than themselves as illustrated by their frequent collections for charities at home and abroad.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Within the calm and caring ethos of the school, good relationships are fostered, which encourage pupils to become confident learners. On occasions, when the pace of learning slows the progress is uneven and in these lessons pupils do not achieve as well as they could. This is because day-to-day assessment procedures lack rigour. Teachers have yet to gain a better understanding of where individual pupils are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there in order to provide them all with appropriate challenges. The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. There is an extensive range and a high take up for additional activities where pupils have been successful in many areas.

Care guidance and support are satisfactory overall. They are good for pupils' pastoral development because teachers and support staff understand the personal needs of their pupils well. Pupils and their parents know that any concerns they might have are dealt with swiftly. Care, guidance and support for pupils' academic development are satisfactory. Pupils are beginning to have an awareness of the use of targets to help them to improve their skills in English. This is less evident in mathematics, where targets often lack sufficient challenge.

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory and the school's self-evaluation is mostly accurate. The governing body acknowledges it would benefit from up-to-date training to sharpen their skills in holding the school to account. While subject leaders have expertise in their areas, there is no rigorous programme of monitoring to ensure they keep a close eye on teaching and learning in order to drive up standards further. Improvement since the previous inspection and the capacity to improve further are satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Close links with the Nursery school ensure children settle happily in the Reception class where they receive a warm welcome. Staff take good care of the children and give much encouragement and praise. They quickly support those who are hesitant or shy so that children become confident and willing learners. Contact with parents is good and many express the view that their children enjoy their time in school. Children achieve satisfactorily in all aspects of their work because of satisfactory teaching. On occasions, children sit for too long on the carpet and when this happens they lose concentration and progress slows. The classroom is spacious, bright and attractive and children take part in a wide range of activities. The outdoor area provides limited space for children to participate in further learning and the resources for physical development are in need of replacement. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff frequently assess how well children are achieving, but are at an early stage of rigorously tracking the progress children make. By the time they enter Year 1, most children reach the levels typical of children of this age in all areas of learning. In personal and social development, many exceed these levels.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in mathematics throughout the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that all pupils are fully challenged to match their abilities.
- Empower the subject leaders to be more effective in their roles and implement training for governors to ensure the performance of the school is regularly and rigorously monitored.
- Ensure consistently challenging targets are set and shared with pupils to accelerate progress.

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 their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In recent years, standards reached by the end of Year 2 have on the whole been broadly average. The assessments made by teachers show that they declined in 2008 to below the national average. They were lowest in mathematics. Attainment on entry for this year group was significantly lower than in previous years. Nevertheless, pupils made satisfactory progress from their starting points. Current pupils in Year 2 are making satisfactory progress and standards are broadly average. At the end of Year 6 in 2007, standards were above average overall and well above in English where pupils attained particularly well in writing. Assessments for 2008 show that standards are broadly average overall, while above average attainment has been maintained in English. Overall progress from Key Stage 1 was satisfactory but better in reading and writing than in mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and respond well to the many opportunities offered to them to take responsibilities. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is because of the many opportunities offered by the school, through visits, sport, art, music and assemblies.

Discussions with pupils reveal a growing self-confidence and high levels of enjoyment from taking part in enterprise activities. Pupils' contribution to the community in school, in the local environment and in countries where there are few amenities, is outstanding. The school council has an active voice and is effective in bringing about improvements both to the school and to the community. Pupils' basic skills prepare them appropriately for the world of work and their future lives. Behaviour is satisfactory. Occasionally, inappropriate behaviour occurs when lessons are dull and do not fully engage pupils and capture their interests. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of a balanced diet, regular exercise and safe practices.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Relationships in lessons are positive and teachers use praise well to reward and encourage good work. As a result, pupils are usually keen to learn and try hard. Teachers are becoming more skilled in the use of assessment results to prepare lessons, but sometimes their plans still do not take sufficient account of the different needs of pupils in the class. In these lessons, progress slows because some pupils struggle with work that is too difficult while others coast because their work is too easy. In the better lessons, new learning gets off to a brisk start, where questions are challenging and engaging. In other lessons, where the pace is slower, the introductions lack a clear focus and questioning techniques do not always probe pupils' understanding sufficiently so that they are less motivated to learn. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the learning of pupils with learning difficulties.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Christian assemblies, physical education and health lessons support pupils' personal development well. Music is a feature of the school and pupils enjoy learning to play an instrument and singing in the choir. Improvements to the English curriculum that provide more opportunities for pupils to practise skills such as writing reports and letters, are accelerating progress. In mathematics, there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge of number to solve mathematical problems in subjects, such as geography, science and design technology. The school is currently implementing plans to provide pupils with more scope to choose the work they study so that they can become independent learners. There is a very good range of popular and well-attended clubs that extend pupil's horizons and add to their physical fitness and enjoyment of school. The many visitors to school and educational visits to such places as museums broaden pupils' experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides a high level of pastoral care. Pupils can readily turn to an adult if they have a concern, knowing that their worries will be quickly and effectively allayed. Pupils with learning difficulties receive sensitive support so that they make similar progress to their peers. The school works well with other schools and agencies to support pupils' welfare and learning. For example, experts have trained staff on how to manage pupils with specific behaviour difficulties. Health and safety measures and child protection procedures are satisfactory and are reviewed regularly. Academic guidance is satisfactory overall but variable. Pupils receive clear advice as

to how they can improve their work in English. This is not consistently the picture in mathematics, where marking rarely gives pupils enough information on their current standards. Insufficient emphasis is given to the setting and sharing of consistently challenging targets to enable pupils to be clear about what it is they need to do to improve their learning and thus accelerate their progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school's contribution to community cohesion is strong. Governors, staff, parents and pupils hold the headteacher in high regard. Together with the deputy headteacher, he ensures a strong sense of teamwork among all staff. This promotes pupils' personal development and well-being effectively. There is a wide range of expertise among the governors, which ensures the budget is spent wisely to the benefit of the pupils. For example, the issue from the last report to increase resources in information and communication technology has been addressed successfully. While some governors are aware of the strengths of the school and have a clear understanding of the areas for improvement, they recognise that a lack of up-to-date training is hindering them from carrying out their duties more efficiently. However, they do carry out their statutory duties adequately. Monitoring by subject leaders is inconsistent and is having too little impact on helping the school to raise standards and achievement to higher levels by presenting suitably challenging targets for all pupils. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis.

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 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	2
The behaviour of learners	3
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	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?	2
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**

17 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Matlock DE4 3FT

You may remember Mr Griffin and I came to your school recently to carry out an inspection. We really enjoyed meeting you. This letter is to thank you for helping us with our work and to let you know what we found out about your school.

You told us that you enjoy school and we agree with your parents that the school provides a happy caring environment for you. We know that you have a higher rate of attendance than many other schools. Well done! We also congratulate you on the outstanding way in which you support your local community and those who are less fortunate than you are in countries such as Zambia. You enjoy a wide range of extra activities, for example, in sports, art and music. We are pleased to see that you are reaching above average standards in English.

Your school is now going to make things even better for you. You make less progress in mathematics compared with other subjects but your teachers are going to tackle this straight away to help you reach higher standards. Lessons are going to be planned more precisely to ensure the work set for each one of you is matched more closely to help you make better progress. Teachers will also help you and your parents to have a better understanding of your targets so that you know exactly what it is you need to do to improve your work. As soon as you have achieved them, fresh targets will be set. In this way you will become more involved in your learning and make faster strides. The teachers who are in charge of subjects are going to take a more active role in helping all of you to achieve as well as you can. Governors will be updating their knowledge so that they can make better checks on how well you are doing. Everyone is going to help you to reach higher standards.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Kathleen Yates

Lead inspector