

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114542
<b>Local Authority</b>	Brighton and Hove
<b>Inspection number</b>	311640
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Janet Sinclair

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

---

<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	160
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Turner
<b>Headteacher</b>	M A McDermott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 June 2002
<b>School address</b>	Davey Drive Hollingdean Brighton BN1 7BF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01273 556607
<b>Fax number</b>	01273 504007

---

<b>Age group</b>	4-11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 October 2007
<b>Inspection number</b>	311640

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school serves families from a wide range of backgrounds, some of whom face particular social and economic challenges. There is an above average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, and entitlement to free school meals is much higher than average. About one third of pupils come from minority ethnic groups, a minority of whom are at an early stage of learning English. Many more pupils join or leave the school at times other than the main entry and leaving times. There have been many staff changes recently, including the appointments of a new headteacher, two deputy headteachers and several teachers.

## 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 and improving school. The headteacher provides good leadership to ensure a strong, caring ethos where pupils become confident, happy learners. Parents are pleased with what the school provides. As one parent said, 'There is definitely an atmosphere which is caring and conducive to learning'.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children start school with skills that are below average overall and low in literacy and numeracy. Although they make good progress across the areas of learning, they do not always meet the goals expected of them in literacy and numeracy on entry to Year 1.

Overall standards are below average and pupils make satisfactory, if sometimes uneven, progress across the school. Their achievement is adequate. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Much of current teaching is good, with present progress being better than test results indicate it has been in recent years. Lessons are well planned and organised, teaching, including that of teaching assistants, is skilful and relationships are good. As a result, pupils behave well and are keen to learn. However, occasionally, activities go on too long and pupils lose interest. Additionally, marking is not always used effectively enough to help pupils improve.

Pupils' personal development and well-being is good. Pupils enjoy school, have good attitudes to work and, through the school council, feel they have a good say in improving the school environment. They are particularly pleased with the improvements they have made to the school grounds. The curriculum is satisfactory. It is planned to ensure continuity in pupils' learning and is enriched by a sound range of visits, visitors and after-school clubs. Care, guidance and support are good. Good procedures for pupils' health, safety and welfare ensure they feel well cared for and are confident of adult support if they have any worries. Attendance has improved greatly due to the school's efforts, and is now satisfactory. Pupils are clear about their learning targets and work hard to achieve them. A good range of assessments are used to identify those needing help and to ensure they get it. However, although detailed tracking is in place, some weaknesses in monitoring progress mean small pockets of underachievement go unnoticed. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher, with the support of the local authority, has brought about many improvements in the school, including improved achievement for pupils. Now, with a well-balanced senior leadership team in place, clear action plans for subject leaders and improved teaching, the school has a sound capacity to improve further.

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.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. It is well organised and managed and ensures children's needs are met well through a good balance of child-chosen and teacher-directed activities. However, occasionally, child-chosen activities are not challenging enough and children lose interest. Good use of stories such as 'Handa's Surprise' provides effective cross-curricular links, which help children's learning. Frequent accurate assessments enable pupils' to make good progress across the areas of learning.

## What the school should do to improve further

- ensure all lessons have a good level of challenging activities, and that marking is used consistently to bring about improvement
- ensure that rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress against their annual curricular targets enables them to make the good progress the school has set by identifying any underachievement so that it can be tackled.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Very small year groups, which include a wide spread of capability amongst the pupils, result in variations in performance in national tests. However, pupils' achievement is improving because of the school's efforts to raise standards.

Standards are below average across the school. Overall progress is satisfactory. The school, with the help of the local authority, has worked hard and effectively improved standards and provision in English, mathematics and science wherever weaknesses have been identified.

Provisional results for the 2007 Year 2 assessments show average standards in reading and mathematics, indicating good progress. However, low standards in writing show some underachievement. The school has already begun to deal with this successfully by introducing a phonics programme and creative writing sessions. These innovations are beginning to have a positive impact. Standards at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated, but pupils' achievement over the last few years has remained broadly satisfactory. The provisional test results for 2007 also indicate satisfactory achievement. The pupils with learning difficulties and those for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress overall and good progress against the targets set for them when they receive focused individual or group support. The school has set challenging targets for all its pupils and, with the rigorous procedures now in place and improved teaching, this is beginning to accelerate pupils' rates of progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils, including the youngest, enjoy coming to school because they feel safe and well cared for. They are welcoming and courteous to visitors, and behave well in lessons and around the school. Improved attendance reflects pupils' enjoyment of school and the school's rigorous efforts to tackle the poorer attendance of a small number of pupils.

Pupils say that bullying is rare and that when it does occur, staff deal with it effectively. They understand the need for a healthy lifestyle, quickly noting, for example, the importance of drinking water, eating fruit and vegetables and taking part in physical activities such as sport and dance. They are also fully aware of the need to keep safe, particularly when using the adventure playground and physical education apparatus. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They make good use of their opportunities to reflect about spiritual and moral questions, and participate thoughtfully and enthusiastically in assemblies. Although all pupils relate well to each other, they do not have enough opportunities to learn about or celebrate their cultural diversity. Pupils have a clear voice through the school council, and many of them make a good contribution to the community through acting as prefects or playground 'buddies'. They also represent their school well through drama and music performances, and in local festivals such as the recent 'Squeezy Bottles' event, in which they

thoroughly enjoyed dressing up and taking part in a street parade. Pupils are self-confident and motivated learners and this, coupled with their improving literacy and numeracy skills, is preparing them satisfactorily for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Pupils enjoy their lessons because teachers plan a good range of activities, including opportunities for group and paired work, with the result that pupils are inquisitive and keen to learn. The pace of teaching overall is good, although in some lessons pupils have too long to complete tasks, resulting in their losing interest. Teachers use a variety of methods and resources, including interactive whiteboards, which succeed in engaging and retaining pupils' interest. Teaching assistants give good support to children with learning difficulties and those for whom English is an additional language, so that these pupils are fully engaged in their learning. Effective questioning and a good match of work to pupils' needs are ensuring they make good progress in lessons. For example, in a mathematics lesson on percentages in Year 6, challenging questioning by all staff enabled pupils to solve problems and gain a much clearer understanding of percentages. Teachers successfully use praise and rewards such as house points to encourage pupils to do their best. Some marking is good and helps pupils to improve their work but marking is not consistently good across the school.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum, including the Foundation Stage curriculum, ensures coverage and continuity in pupils' learning, with good planning for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, at Key Stages 1 and 2, cross-curricular links are not yet being used well enough to enrich the curriculum. Pupils have good access to information and communication technology (ICT) facilities, and enjoy using them. The school has successfully introduced French into the curriculum and pupils are developing their confidence through their enjoyment of communicating in French. Pupils' personal development is promoted well through good attention to health and safety. Examples include 'Child pedestrian' training for pupils in Key Stage 1 and whole-school involvement in a 'Healthy Eating' initiative.

The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities in the form of clubs for sporting and cultural activities, including those initiated by the pupils themselves such as the proposed book club. Visits and visitors further enhance the provision. The school is developing good links with local schools, and with other organisations such as the local professional football club, who provide football training.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

The school knows its pupils and cares for them well. Staff show a clear commitment to pupils' well-being, and most parents agree that the school supports their children well. Arrangements for safeguarding children are secure, as are health and safety procedures. Good links with outside agencies ensures that pupils such as those with English as an additional language receive the specialist help they need. Pupils with emotional problems get very good support from the learning mentor, school counsellor and welfare officer, which very effectively helps

them to cope. There is a good range of assessments to monitor pupils' learning and effective interventions to help those at risk of underachieving, especially the less able. The use of target setting is developing well. As one girl said: 'I like the targets in the classroom because they help us to know what we need to focus on'. However, the tracking of pupils' progress over time is not always systematic enough to detect small pockets of underachievement among middle and higher attaining pupils.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher provides good leadership and a clear direction for the work of the school. However, all other leaders are fairly new to their roles and their impact has yet to be fully felt. After a difficult time due to many staff changes, the school is now settling down with a good staff team totally committed to raising the standards of pupils. They are fully aware of the need to improve pupils' achievement further and monitor progress rigorously. The school has benefited from being part of the local authority's intensive support programme to help set a clear agenda for improvement. Self-evaluation is satisfactory and improving. Senior staff are developing a clearer awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and know where improvements are needed. The detailed school improvement plan is a useful tool but some success criteria are not concise enough to clearly measure their impact. There is effective monitoring of teaching and learning through a variety of strategies such as lesson observations, scrutiny of work and learning walks and this has led to good improvements in teaching. Teaching assistants have also had effective support and training, enabling them to make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Governors are enthusiastic and fully committed to the school's vision for its pupils. They are developing a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through, for example, working with staff on curriculum committees. This is enabling them to check the school's performance in a critical but supportive way.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

### 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	3

### 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	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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 the 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?	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

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

12 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Brighton BN1 7BF

I am writing to tell you how much we enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming and helping us with the inspection. We enjoyed chatting to the school council and Year 6 pupils and were delighted to learn how much you enjoy school and all the opportunities it offers. We wish Year 6 great success in the book club they are planning.

We think that St Joseph's is a satisfactory and improving school.

Here are the things we like about your school:

- you get a good start in the Reception class
- teachers work hard to plan interesting lessons so that you are keen to learn
- you thoroughly enjoy school, especially as teachers make learning fun
- you are well cared for and have clear targets for your learning.

These are the things we think school could do better:

- we have asked your teachers to make sure all activities challenge you and that all marking helps you to improve your work
- your school needs to monitor your progress carefully to ensure you all do well. You can help by making sure you work hard and do your best.

Carry on with learning your tables, Year 6!

Yours Sincerely

Janet Sinclair Lead inspector

**Annex B**

12 October 2007

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Brighton BN1 7BF**

I am writing to tell you how much we enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming and helping us with the inspection. We enjoyed chatting to the school council and Year 6 pupils and were delighted to learn how much you enjoy school and all the opportunities it offers. We wish Year 6 great success in the book club they are planning.

We think that St Joseph's is a satisfactory and improving school.

**Here are the things we like about your school:**

- you get a good start in the Reception class
- teachers work hard to plan interesting lessons so that you are keen to learn
- you thoroughly enjoy school, especially as teachers make learning fun
- you are well cared for and have clear targets for your learning.

**These are the things we think school could do better:**

- we have asked your teachers to make sure all activities challenge you and that all marking helps you to improve your work
- your school needs to monitor your progress carefully to ensure you all do well.

You can help by making sure you work hard and do your best.

Carry on with learning your tables, Year 6!

Yours Sincerely

Janet Sinclair  
Lead inspector