

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115132
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	311850
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ruth Frith

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>	114
School	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Angela East
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Theresa MacLeod
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 June 2005
<b>School address</b>	The Drive Dovercourt Harwich Essex CO12 3SU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01255 503493
<b>Fax number</b>	01255 508958

---

<b>Age group</b>	4-11
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 April 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	311850

---

© Crown copyright 2008

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 one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the rate of progress in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, the quality of pupils' personal development and well-being and the key features of pastoral care and support, including improvements to pupils' academic guidance. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form, lesson observations, discussions with staff, governors and pupils, pupils' work, information that the school keeps on how well pupils are doing, the school development plan and an analysis of the parents' questionnaire responses. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This is a small, four-class school with many pupils coming from homes in an area identified as experiencing considerable social and economic disadvantage. More pupils apply for places than can be admitted. Overall attainment on entry is below that frequently seen in children of this age. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Most pupils are of White British background and a small minority come from several other ethnic backgrounds. Very few speak English as an additional language.

The school has received the National Healthy Schools Award and the sports Activemark in recognition of its work.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

The success of this outstanding school stems from the excellent leadership of the headteacher which focuses clearly on promoting pupils' personal development and well-being and raising standards. The headteacher shows outstanding commitment to the children and their futures as can be seen in her desire for them 'to leave with happy memories of the school, an enthusiasm for learning, high expectations of what they can do and the confidence to go for it.' Together with staff and governors, she has successfully created a school with an all-encompassing compassionate and stimulating ethos where pupils develop into successful, happy learners. Pupils state, 'We are a happiness school,' and it is impossible to disagree with them. Parents, too, have high regard for the school as reflected in the following comment: 'We feel the school is like an extended family, everyone is welcomed with warm open arms and all are treated individually and with respect.'

Pupils achieve exceptionally well because they are keen to learn and teaching is frequently excellent. During their first year, children's learning and development is impressive in relation to their starting points and they reach the standards expected for their age by the end of Reception. The teaching in Key Stage 1 successfully builds on this excellent start so that by the time pupils enter Key Stage 2, they have received an excellent foundation for learning and their achievement accelerates considerably. By the time they leave school, standards are usually significantly above average and sometimes exceptionally high. Evidence provided by the school, work in lessons and in pupils' books shows that pupils are progressing very well, and are on course to meet the challenging targets set.

Staff are very effective at creating a relaxed but thought-provoking environment where pupils are expected to do their best. The curriculum is stimulating, with a very good range of clubs, visits, visitors and other activities that enrich pupils' learning. Through careful planning and excellent understanding of what pupils can achieve, teachers provide challenging work for all ages and abilities. Those pupils who find learning difficult are supported very effectively. Teaching assistants make a very positive contribution by giving additional support in lessons or working with pupils on specific activities to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils who find learning easier, or have a specific talent, are also supported particularly well. Pupils say they know what to do to improve their work and achieve well. The objective of the lesson is clear, teachers make useful comments during lessons and when marking their work, and targets show pupils what to aim for. Academic guidance is excellent and helps to prepare pupils well for the next stage of education and beyond.

High levels of care, guidance and support result in pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. Pupils develop very good attitudes to school and thoroughly enjoy their learning. Their attendance is good and they arrive in the morning keen to start another day. Excellent relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils themselves, help to create a harmonious community where all are valued and respected. Staff also make a very positive contribution to community cohesion by creating a school with a shared vision and giving pupils a sense of belonging. Pupils have a very strong awareness of their rights and responsibilities, know what everyone expects of them and what they can expect in return. Their behaviour is exemplary and they have a particularly good understanding of the effect of their actions on others.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to adopt a healthy lifestyle through regular exercise and eating a good balanced diet. This is beginning to affect what they do, for example, by trying unfamiliar foods. Pupils keep themselves safe through a very good awareness of how to behave on the roads and in water and through developing personal safety awareness. They know their ideas are taken seriously and are constantly suggesting ways to improve the school or help others. Their strong sense of community is extended to the area in which they live and is confirmed by their sensitive and moving comments in their work on 'What Harwich means to me.' Excellent links have also been made with local schools and their partner school in Ghana. Through the latter, pupils develop a deep understanding and appreciation of others with beliefs and ways of living different from their own. They regularly find ways of raising contributions for charities that confirm their views of the importance of doing things for others. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of a particularly high standard.

Leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher has a strong sense of purpose and gives an exceptional lead to colleagues who, in turn, work as a strong team sharing her vision for the school. Subject leadership and management are good but staff are not yet fully involved in the regular use of data to identify areas for improvement. There are good systems for checking how well the school is doing and identifying what it could do better which reflects the consistent drive for improvement. Partly because of this, school self-evaluation is rather modest. Governors are aware of the need to continue to increase their involvement in monitoring and evaluating the school's work. Excellent improvement since the last inspection, the enthusiasm and commitment of staff, pupils, parents and governors, indicates that the school has excellent capacity to continue its good work and improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Reception children settle extremely well because of the very good relationships between home and school and the helpful routines. Children quickly absorb the school's culture, and this becomes evident in their own sensitive and caring attitudes to others. The way staff expand the children's personal, social and emotional development is exceptional. Staff expertise is used very effectively so that Reception children are taught very well alongside Year 1 pupils, experiencing a good variety of interesting and challenging activities. Children frequently make excellent progress so that by the time they start in Year 1 they have been skilfully prepared for their future learning. Provision reflects excellent leadership and management and high expectations of what children can achieve.

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

- Increase the subject leaders' use of information gained from monitoring pupils' standards and progress thereby expanding their role in identifying areas for improvement.

**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?	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<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>	1
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	1
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	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

25 April 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Dovercourt CO12 3SU

You may remember that I recently visited your school to talk to you about what you do and what you learn. Thank you for making me feel so welcome. You and your parents said that you go to a very good school and I agree with you. I think St Joseph's is excellent. I really enjoyed my visit and if you read on further you will see some of the things I found out.

- You all try very hard and make excellent progress. In Year 6, you reach standards that are frequently well above those I often see in children of the same age. This will help you to make a good start in secondary school.
- You thoroughly enjoy school. Your comments reflect this, and the pride you have in going to St Joseph's. As one of you summed up, 'I love it here'.
- Nearly all of you attend regularly and arrive on time. Well done!
- You behave exceptionally well, get on with each other and make good friends. It really is a very happy school and I agree that you should aim towards receiving 'Happiness School' recognition.
- You contribute a great deal to the school and wider community. Thank you to those of you who met with me just before lunchtime. You represented the views of others very well. Also, a big thank you to the pupils who spoke to me, sang or played a musical instrument during lunchtime. It was very special.
- Staff are all very keen to do the best they can for you. Teaching is exceptionally good and, just as they look after you very well, you are polite and considerate to others.

Mrs MacLeod manages and leads the school exceptionally well and staff and governors give her lots of help. They have agreed as subject leaders that they will focus more on using the information gained from checking your work and achievements to see what more they can do to improve the school and the standards you achieve. I know you will respond well to their efforts by continuing to try hard and do your best. I left your school with many fond memories and wish you all well, particularly those of you in Year 6 who will be going to new schools in September.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Frith

Lead inspector