

Our Lady and St Joseph Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116378
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312282
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Graham Stephens

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)	112
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 Alastair Wilson
Headteacher	Mrs Irene Cradick
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Ramley Road Pennington Lymington SO41 8GY
Telephone number	01590 672711

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2008
Inspection number	312282

Fax number

01590 671934

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Pupils in this smaller than average primary school come from a variety of backgrounds but with a higher than average number from higher economic and social backgrounds. The school has provision for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is below average. In this school, the LDD pupils are largely those who find aspects of English and mathematics challenging. There are fewer pupils with English as an additional language than in most schools. There has recently been much disruption to staffing. The third deputy head since the last inspection, has just taken up post. The school has been awarded enhanced Healthy Schools status, the Activemark and Investors in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Our Lady and St Joseph Catholic Primary is a satisfactory school. Pupils make satisfactory progress from their starting points and attain standards that are above average in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave Year 6. Although the progress that some pupils make is too slow, particularly in writing, the staff recognise the legacy of underachievement and are now taking urgent action to accelerate achievement and raise standards further. This unsatisfactory progress has also been caused by weaknesses in teaching in the past, and a failure to organise the information gained from tracking pupils' progress to target work and ensure that pupils are appropriately challenged. Recent attempts to address this underachievement have also been hampered by severe disruption to staffing and senior management because of high turnover and levels of sickness. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are now stronger and more reliable and a climate more conducive to learning is securely established. Consequently, some pupils are now beginning to make better progress.

Although satisfactory, teaching is improving. The staff know that in order to have a positive impact on the progress that pupils make, teaching needs to become consistently good throughout the school. Too often, more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged, they do not know what to do in order to improve and the pace of lessons does not encourage pupils to concentrate. The few pupils who find aspects of language and mathematics difficult, make good progress because their needs are clearly identified, work is well planned and a very close check is made of progress between assessments. The very small minority with English as an additional language also make good progress because of the well-focused support they receive. Thanks to the changes already implemented the school is now in a stronger position to accelerate progress and raise standards throughout. Its capacity to improve is satisfactory.

Last year improving pupils' behaviour was a high priority for the school. Taking the views of older pupils into account the Behaviour Policy was reviewed, expectations were raised and systems to support pupils improved. Behaviour is now good. Very good systems exist to withdraw and support pupils who are occasionally disruptive and who need time to reflect on the impact of their behaviour. Good links with external agencies enable the school to draw on advice and support when it is needed.

The school is a caring community and provision for the support of pupils is a top priority. This results in good personal development and well-being. Pupils feel secure and know what they need to do to stay safe. They play and work together well. They enjoy school and this is reflected in their good attendance. Although learning objectives are set at the beginning of lessons, individual targets for learning are not well known by the pupils and are not used effectively as a tool to accelerate progress. The curriculum is beginning to improve as teachers take more and more opportunities to link subjects together and provide more opportunities for pupils to apply the skills they are taught.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has led the school through a period of change when it has been difficult to maintain consistency and progression in teaching. Systems to monitor the impact of teaching on learning are being applied more rigorously. This is beginning to give the headteacher and her deputy a clearer overview of the impact of teaching on achievement and standards and is helping to ensure that consistently challenging targets are set. Governors are proactive and have a good overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's starting points vary but are generally above expectations for their age. Writing skills are lower compared to all other starting points, and dispositions and attitudes are higher. Children make good progress and when they enter Year 1 the majority are working securely within the expected levels in all areas of learning and several exceed them. Activities are planned well to interest and motivate the children. Consequently, children enjoy the activities and work together well. They are confident speakers and are very keen to share activities with adults. When a boy was asked if he had created a star, the visitor was informed, 'Well actually, it's an octopus!' When a girl was asked where a missing doll was, she searched and later returned to explain 'that he was in the middle of the field and would have to stay there!' Pupils move between activities confidently and adults ensure that they frequently make themselves available to guide, support and encourage. The partnership with parents is good and they appreciate the level of care that the children receive. Induction procedures are secure and entry to school full time is flexible so that individual needs can be met in consultation with parents. Leadership and management are good. Assessment procedures are more secure and used by all staff. This has been an area of development that is now becoming successfully embedded. Information is transferred with the child at the end of the Reception year, but the rate at which pupils have progressed is not always made clear. There is generous space for outdoor play. It is well equipped but children have few opportunities to grow plants and extend their knowledge and understanding of the world.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate progress and raise standards in English, mathematics and science. In particular, improve the quality of writing throughout the school.
- Improve the consistency of teaching so that it is at least good throughout the school.
- Ensure that information gained from the monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress is widely understood by staff and used to set challenging targets that are understood by the pupils.

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

A whole school focus on improving the quality of writing and giving pupils more opportunities to write in subjects across the curriculum has seen standards improve in 2008 at the end of Year 6 compared to 2007 results. This represents satisfactory achievement from their starting points. However, reading standards are still high at the end of Year 6 compared to writing. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 have declined since 2005 when they were above average. Results in 2008 indicate that standards remain broadly average for these pupils. Evidence confirms that standards in Key Stage 1 are now beginning to rise and the rate of progress increase. This is because the quality of teaching is improving as teachers use their knowledge and understanding of what pupils know and can do to ensure that work is better matched to their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are friendly and welcoming and talk confidently to visitors. They feel secure and know exactly what they need to do to stay safe, one asking a visitor, 'Are you sure you know what to do if the fire alarm goes off?' Pupils know who to approach for help. Behaviour is managed well and pupils behave appropriately around the school. When asked about incidents of bullying, pupils said 'there isn't any now'. Pupils talk confidently about the importance of healthy eating and exercise. A small 'World War 2' vegetable garden gives some the opportunity to experience growing their own food. The School Council, the Sports Council and the Year 6 Forum all contribute much to the school community through fund raising for charities, helping to select play equipment and contributing suggestions when some policies are reviewed, such as the Behaviour Policy. Every class organises monthly cake sales, raising funds for equipment that they help select for their classes. Activities such as this enable pupils to display mature social and academic skills prepare them well for future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is inconsistent and varies from satisfactory to good, with most being satisfactory. The good lessons proceeded briskly, work was well matched to pupils' needs, teachers had high expectations and pupils were enthusiastic and eager to learn. Where teaching was less successful progress slowed because work was repeated, it lacked challenge and pupils were not clear about what they need to do to complete tasks successfully. In lessons observed, learning objectives were made clear and planning indicated that time would be allowed to evaluate pupils' progress before the end of the lesson. However, there is less evidence to suggest that teachers use information about pupils' knowledge and understanding effectively by consistently building well on what they know and can do. More-able pupils are not consistently challenged and this inhibits opportunities for them to make good progress. The small minority of pupils who find aspects of English and mathematics challenging make good progress because their needs are clearly identified. They receive good support from skilled learning support assistants and their progress is closely monitored.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is under review. Until recently, national guidelines were used almost exclusively to support planning. Teachers are now exploring links between subjects and creating more opportunities for pupils to apply the skills they learn in different situations and contexts. Consequently, one Year 6 pupil was proud to show her multimedia presentation on the solar system. The school recognizes the need to review planning to ensure that skills are taught more systematically as pupils move through the school. Also intensive support from the Local Authority has improved teachers' knowledge and understanding of how best to use guidance relating to the teaching of mathematics and literacy, when planning work for both the medium and short term. The curriculum presents insufficient challenge for more able pupils. Recent efforts to improve the quality of pupils writing have been successful with older pupils. A two-year cycle of planning helps prevent repetition in the mixed-age classes. The school has a good range of

enrichment activities, including clubs, sports and music. These are popular and well supported. Spanish is taught to all classes. Pupils enjoy these lessons and make good progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The happiness and well-being of pupils is a priority for all staff. Systems to protect pupils and ensure that they are taught within a safe and secure environment are good. All adults understand these procedures and implement them rigorously. Pupils with learning difficulties and /or disabilities are well supported by learning support assistants who are sensitive to their needs and help ensure that they are included well in lessons. The implementation of the recently reviewed behaviour policy has been very effective. Marking is inconsistent and rarely informs learning. Many pupils are not familiar with their English and mathematics targets and these are rarely referred to in pupils' books. Pupils are not always clear as to what they need to do to raise the standard of their work. Systems to monitor and track progress are in place and work to analyse the information in greater depth has begun. Consequently, work is beginning to be better matched to pupils' needs. Systems that rigorously monitor the impact of this work to ensure that progress is accelerating are at an early stage of development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and her newly appointed deputy are determined to raise standards and accelerate progress throughout the school. They acknowledge that information about the progress pupils make is not used systematically to set targets that will meet pupils' needs and help them progress at a faster rate. The headteacher has presided over a very high turnover of staff that has hampered progress in recent years. Staffing is now more stable and, with the good support of the local authority, the headteacher is overseeing an improvement in teaching that helped pupils in Year 6 gain higher standards in the 2008 national assessments. Although teachers have several subjects to coordinate and most are new to their roles, they have a determination to succeed. The coordination of English is better established and the coordinator has gained in confidence from external support. Consequently, the coordinator now has clear priorities for improvement and regularly monitors pupils' books to confirm the progress that they make. Governance is good. Governors understand the schools strengths and weaknesses and value the ethos created by staff and pupils. Through well-established links, the school ensures that pupils gain a good understanding of both the local and wider community.

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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 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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	2

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	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	2

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	2
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	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

02 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady and St Joseph Catholic Primary School, Lymington, SO41 8GY

Thank you for being so polite, friendly and helpful when I came to visit your school. I enjoyed meeting you, looking at your work and hearing about all the interesting things that you do.

You go to a satisfactory school, but I think there are many things that happen in your school that are good and here are some of them.

- Your teachers care for you very well.
- They plan many exciting and interesting things for you to do.
- You play well together and your behaviour is good.
- Your teachers provide many interesting clubs, out-of-school activities and visitors.
- You listen and follow instructions well.

Every school, even yours, has things that could be improved.

- Standards in English, mathematics and science need to improve further. Especially, you all need to try even harder to improve your writing.
- We have asked your teachers to make sure that all your lessons really help you to improve all aspects of your work so that standards continue to improve. Make sure you understand what you need to do to improve - is often made clear in your learning targets.
- Your teachers carefully monitor how well you are doing. Now they need to make sure that all the work they set really helps you to make progress and that all of you attain the highest standards you can.

Yours sincerely

Graham Stephens

Lead Inspector