

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120219
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	313555
Inspection date	30 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Alison Cartlidge

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	139
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike McGowan
Headteacher	Gillian Deery
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2004
School address	Coventry Road Market Harborough LE16 9BZ
Telephone number	01858 465359
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

The pupils come to this smaller than average sized primary school from the town of Market Harborough and the surrounding area. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average as is the proportion eligible for free school meals. Most pupils are from White British or other White backgrounds, with a few being Travellers of Irish background. There have been four headteachers since the last inspection, with the latest being in post since January 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This happy school welcomes pupils with a wide range of abilities and provides a satisfactory education. Standards vary but are broadly average by the end of Year 6 in most years. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, although progress is not even across the school. Children make a good start in the Reception class. Satisfactory teaching between Years 1 and 6 enables most pupils, including those with learning difficulties, to make at least steady progress. However, there are occasions when teachers do not use assessment information well enough to match work closely to the needs of all pupils in each class. When this happens, learning slows for either the more able or the less able pupils because they complete similar tasks to other pupils. Well trained teaching assistants provide valuable support for small groups of pupils, especially with reading activities at the start of the school day. The school is right to have started work on improving pupils' writing, because pupils do comparatively less well in this subject.

Good pastoral care helps pupils to become polite and kind. Pupils show their thorough enjoyment of school by attending regularly and behaving well. They typically make comments such as 'We play together and have fun.' Pupils take responsibility willingly by becoming super leaders, Eco Warriors and members of the school council. They support the school and wider community well by recycling waste products and choosing equipment for playtimes. Pupils from different backgrounds work and play together in harmony and know how to stay safe.

Throughout the school, teachers have good relationships with the pupils. Their positive management of behaviour successfully helps pupils to develop confidence and to feel free from oppressive behaviour. The satisfactory curriculum provides good additional activities such as a vast number of clubs for a school of this size. The curriculum supports pupils well in learning how to stay healthy. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to practise their writing in subjects such as science because teachers in some classes use too many simple worksheets. Academic guidance and support are satisfactory because teachers do not always ensure that all pupils know their targets or take notice of the comments they make in marking. As a result, not all pupils consistently do their best, especially in their writing. Pupils' good personal development and well-being together with their satisfactory basic skills equip them soundly for later life.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The good governing body has ensured that the school has continued to run smoothly and has made sound progress since the last inspection despite the many changes in senior leadership. The new headteacher has a clear understanding of priorities for development. She has made a good start to improving progress by reorganising assessment information to help identify any underachievement more quickly. Other leaders are hard-working and are starting to improve their impact on improving standards by becoming more involved in monitoring provision rigorously by using tracking information. It is too early for the school to have evidence of sustained improvements following recent whole school developments.

Most parents are pleased that their children come to this school. They make positive comments such as, 'The ethos at the school teaches respect and care for others' and 'My children are very happy coming to school,' reflecting the aspects that this school does really well.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress because good teaching and the provision of interesting activities promote new skills well. Consequently, standards are rising and are now slightly above average by the start of Year 1. Children make especially good progress in personal and social development because adults have high expectations for their behaviour and provide sensitive support to help them settle quickly at the start of each day. There is a happy, purposeful atmosphere in lessons, and teachers give children good opportunities to choose where they are going to work. This helps children to develop confidence and good independence. The good curriculum includes a good balance of activities that cover all areas of learning, with work imaginatively planned around a central theme such as 'Space'. The use of the large outdoor area is developing well. A few gaps in resources make it difficult to support all areas of learning fully outside. The two teachers work together closely and manage provision well. There is a good understanding of what needs developing next, including finding time for all members of the Early Years team to meet as a group to monitor provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise expectations for pupils' writing and provide more opportunities for pupils to write independently across the curriculum.
- Ensure that teachers always pitch work at the right level for all pupils in each class.
- Help all senior leaders to make greater use of tracking information to identify and rectify underachievement swiftly.

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

Most children's attainment is within the levels expected for their age when they start in the Reception Year. Children make good progress in the Reception class, and standards are rising and slightly above average when they start in Year 1.

Standards by the end of Year 6 are broadly average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' progress is satisfactory throughout Years 1 to 6, including those from the travelling community, with the best progress being made in reading. This subject has been a recent focus for whole-school development and teaching concentrates well on supporting pupils in small groups so that they can improve their skills. The school is aware that not all pupils do as well as they could in writing because teachers do not always have high enough expectations for pupils' everyday work. Members of staff support those who find learning difficult satisfactorily, including those with learning difficulties, enabling them to make similar progress to other pupils. The school sets and achieves realistic targets at the end of Year 6 and is starting to use assessment information more rigorously to set more challenging targets throughout the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are proud of their school and the way it enables them to become responsible young citizens. They thoroughly enjoy attending and are polite and friendly. Their behaviour is good most of the time. A small number of pupils are receiving support to improve their behaviour. Members of staff manage these pupils well so that they rarely disturb the learning of others. Pupils have good attitudes towards learning, although a small number do not always take enough care with their written work. Pupils are happy to talk to visitors about their work and they take great pride in their individual achievements. Attendance rates have improved significantly over the last few years and are now above average.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. From starting school in the Reception Year, pupils quickly learn to respect cultural differences. Strong links with the parish church support spiritual development especially well. Pupils are kind and respectful and take good care of each other. Pupils are keen to take responsibility and this helps them to make a good contribution to the community. Eco-Warriors ensure that pupils understand the need to look after the environment. As one pupil said, 'They soon put us right if we have done something wrong.' The successful school council gives pupils a good voice. Councillors are right to be pleased with the way they have helped to improve facilities at playtime. Pupils have a good awareness of how to stay safe and healthy. Road safety officers carry out their roles diligently and help pupils to appreciate the dangers they may face when coming to school. Pupils make healthy choices about what to eat at playtime and they keenly participate in the good range of sports clubs.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There are good features to teaching in all year groups. Throughout the school, teachers form good relationships with the pupils and they manage behaviour particularly well, ensuring that there is a good pace to learning in most lessons. Teachers use resources, such as the interactive whiteboards, to capture the pupils' interest and to hold their attention. Skilled teaching assistants provide valuable support, especially when teaching letter sounds to groups of pupils. In the Reception class, members of staff work together well as a team and meet differing needs effectively. In Years 1 to 6, teachers plan carefully but do not always pitch work at the right level for all pupils, slowing progress. There are occasions when they do not expect enough of pupils when they are writing, resulting in pupils producing untidy work. There are new procedures for marking work to help pupils understand more clearly how they can improve but these are not yet consistently good in all subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum helps pupils to build steadily on what they have already learnt. Teachers are beginning to link work in different subjects in order to make learning more purposeful. This is still in the early stages of development and pupils do not yet have enough opportunities to practise their writing skills in different subjects. Good use is made of specialist teaching

programmes to introduce letter sounds to pupils. This is having a good effect on progress, especially in reading, in the Reception class and in Years 1 and 2.

Enrichment of the curriculum is good and provides pupils with a wide range of experiences outside lessons. After-school clubs are popular and successful. A good number of visits and visitors help to bring subjects alive. Pupils and parents are particularly pleased that pupils learn French in all year groups.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Members of staff look after pupils well and give them good pastoral support. This ensures that all pupils feel safe and secure and are able to develop good personal skills. One pupil spoke for many by saying, 'We always have someone to talk to if we have a problem.' The school works closely with outside agencies, including traveller support services, to safeguard pupils' well-being. There are good procedures for encouraging good attendance including celebrating the efforts of pupils who rarely miss school.

Academic support is satisfactory. There are thorough systems for assessing pupils' progress, especially in English and mathematics. The introduction of 'learning goals' means that pupils are beginning to develop a better understanding of how to improve their work, although this is not yet consistent across the school. Pupils with learning difficulties receive sound support towards meeting their individual targets, although some of the paperwork makes it hard to check their progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are working together well and have identified correctly what needs to be improved. There is a determination to do the best for the pupils. There are good links with parents and outside agencies and these are particularly successful in supporting the pupils' good personal development.

The school's systems for self-evaluation are satisfactory. There is a shared understanding of the school's strengths and priorities, and judgments made on the school's overall effectiveness match those of the inspection team. The headteacher has extended the system for tracking the pupils' progress and other leaders are becoming more involved in using this information to monitor provision.

The school shows that it has a sound capacity to improve because improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and recent developments are starting to improve pupils' progress.

Governance is good. Governors are proactive in monitoring the work of the school and as a result have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They have clear plans to monitor the impact of recent developments.

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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	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 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	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	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?	3

¹ 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

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 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	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

Dear Children

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Market Harborough, LE16 9BZ

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for sharing your work with us. We enjoyed talking to you and we hope that your tag-rugby tournament went well. We found that your school provides you with a satisfactory education.

Here are some points about your school.

- You make satisfactory progress and reach average standards by the end of Year 6, but some of you could do better writing.
- When you start in the Reception class you settle well and learn quickly; you choose where you are going to work very sensibly.
- You behave well, help each other and know how to stay healthy.
- You make a good contribution to the community and take responsibility well by being play leaders, road safety officers and school councillors; well done to the Eco Warriors for ensuring that you take good care of the environment.
- Teaching is satisfactory and teachers help you to enjoy your work.
- You study a suitable range of interesting things in lessons; there is a very good number of clubs and these help to make school fun.
- The adults in the school care for you well and help you when you are finding your work hard.
- Your headteacher and governors know how to make your school even better.

What we have asked your school to do now.

- Expect you to do better writing and provide you with more opportunities to write your own ideas in different subjects.
- Always give you work that is neither too easy nor too hard.
- Use information on how well you are doing to check that you are all learning quickly enough and to help you straight away when you are not.

What you can do to help your teachers.

- Make sure that you always do your best writing.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you about your work and watching you learn. We are glad that you enjoy coming to this friendly school and wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alison Cartlidge Lead inspector