

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122822
Local Authority	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LA
Inspection number	314415
Inspection dates	15–16 October 2007
Reporting inspector	John Brennan

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs T Pearson
Headteacher	Mrs A Blake
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2004
School address	Main Road Boughton Newark Nottinghamshire NG22 9JE
Telephone number	01623860392
Fax number	01623860392

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	15–16 October 2007
Inspection number	314415

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: 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 the village of Boughton and the town of Ollerton. This is an area of social and economic disadvantage. Children start school with skills that are below those typically found for their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above average. The proportion of pupils who leave or join the school other than the usual time is high. Most pupils are of White British background. An increasing number of pupils are of a Traveller background. This now stands at a little over ten per cent and has more than doubled since the last inspection. The school has the Artsmark Gold award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

As one governor said, 'Every child here matters.' For the most part leadership and management make sure that this is the case. This is a good school. It has improved well since the last inspection and has good capacity to improve further. The school is well led and managed. The headteacher has successfully established an open and mutually supportive culture in which staff regularly visit other classrooms to learn from each other. Teamwork and morale are high. Governors form an effective part of this team and actively find things out for themselves. The quality of care, support and guidance is good, providing pupils with a secure and safe environment that is valued by all. The school has the full confidence of parents who are very happy with what it does for their children. This includes Traveller families, an increasing number of whom join the school or return to it. The school operates as a harmonious community and within this supportive environment pupils do well. Their personal development is good. Pupils are mature and confident in thought and speech and they are self-critical and able to talk about ways to improve their work. Younger pupils quickly learn to play and work with each other whilst older pupils are able to reflect upon their own feelings and those of others.

The headteacher is increasingly helped by other staff in taking the school forward. There have been some notable successes in leading improvements, especially in literacy and the Foundation Stage. However, members of the newly formed senior leadership team are new to their posts and are at the very beginning of monitoring their phase of the school and checking that past actions and decisions are working. Although the quality of teaching and learning is good overall it is better in literacy than in mathematics. In literacy lessons, pupils write in a range of thoughtful ways but in some classes, work in mathematics is not especially interesting. A recently introduced more creative approach towards the curriculum is working well in the Foundation Stage and in the upper juniors because activities are often imaginative, stimulate the thinking of all and make learning enjoyable. In Year 5, for example pupils lived through the sights and sounds of the Blitz whilst at the same time making notes to convey their feelings and emotions to others. However, the curriculum is satisfactory overall because this creative approach is yet to be extended to all year groups.

Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well to reach standards that are broadly average. By the end of Year 6, pupils have acquired most of the personal and academic skills to help them in their future life. The exception to this is in information communication technology, where currently there are not sufficient computers to ensure that pupils use them regularly enough.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's education gets off to a flying start. Despite some rather cramped conditions in Reception the staff have put in place a good curriculum based on a clear understanding of the needs of children. Pretend play activities, such as being workers building houses, are imaginative and appeal to all. Key language and counting skills are woven into everyday learning and many involve children working together. Support staff and class teachers form a strong team. They liaise very well with outside agencies, such as the Traveller Education Service, and with parents to ensure that children make the most of their time at school. Staff are skilled at encouraging talk from children during the activities they lead. A good balance is struck between learning indoors and out and between teacher led and child led learning. On occasion, as in the Nursery,

children working independently are left to their own devices too much. They can then move from one activity to another without getting the most from the activity or without working with other children. Because of the good provision on offer children achieve well, especially in learning to read, write, count and in their personal development. By the time they leave Reception many have caught up and attain expected standards in all areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure a greater consistency in teaching and learning and achievement in mathematics.
- Give pupils more access to computers.
- Ensure the senior leadership team monitors the impact of past actions thoroughly and extends the creative curriculum to all year groups.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. From a below average entry to school pupils leave at expected levels. Traveller pupils who attend the school for some time do well. However, many are 'seasonal' in their attendance and although on the school roll at the time of the national tests do not sit them. This, and the relatively high numbers of pupils who either leave or join the school part way through the year can distort the national test results. Although these vary from year to year, at both the end of Year 2 and Year 6, they are broadly average. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and/or other disabilities achieve well in learning to read, write and count. Pupils do especially well in the Foundation Stage and in the upper juniors where the curriculum and learning are at their best. A concentration on the teaching of reading and writing is paying dividends. By the end of Year 6, many pupils attain the national average in these and a higher than usual proportion go beyond this. This is also the case in science. Standards in mathematics are not quite as high; fewer pupils reach or go beyond the national average. Achievement here is satisfactory rather than good because of some continuing inconsistencies in teaching and learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Care is taken to celebrate the cultures of all who attend the school. Pupils show a good understanding of these. However, knowledge of other aspects of life and worship in multi cultural Britain is not as well developed. With this exception pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their school and how much they enjoy being there. However, attendance remains below the national average despite strenuous efforts to improve it. Pupils are aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Playtimes are active and social occasions. Behaviour and attitudes towards learning are good. Incidences of bullying are rare and pupils are confident that any are dealt with effectively by staff. Pupils enjoy their healthy school meals, and take up in extra-curricular sporting activities is high. Pupils have a voice through the school council whose decisions have had an impact on school life. Pupils make strong contributions to the wider community and especially the parish community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Staff establish very good relationships with pupils. Classrooms are calm, enabling staff and pupils to go about their work in peace. An encouraging atmosphere and an emphasis on using talk to encourage learning mean that pupils confidently express their thoughts and deepen their thinking. This approach is used to good effect in oral counting sessions at the beginning of mathematics lessons. Lessons have clarity of purpose so that pupils invariably know what is expected of them. Training on the teaching of writing is working well. Throughout the school, in literacy lessons, pupils have growing opportunities to plan, draft and redraft their work and they say that they enjoy the opportunity to invent. Apart from at the beginning of the lessons, mathematics work in some but not all classes is overly concerned with doing repetitive 'sums' to the detriment of investigative work and is not sufficiently linked to pupils' differing abilities. Teaching succeeds in helping pupils reflect on the success or otherwise of their work. This is helped by marking in literacy that points the way forward. In contrast, marking in mathematics lets pupils know if they are right or wrong but not what to do next.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

There is a vibrant curriculum in the Foundation Stage and in the upper juniors. Here, for example, writing in history often involves pupils putting themselves in the shoes of people from the past. Elsewhere the curriculum is not as imaginative. Writing in other subjects for instance is often of a factual nature. The contrast between a practical play based curriculum in Foundation Stage and a more formal approach in Years 1 and 2 is severe. When computers are used, it is to good effect. However, a lack of resources limits the contribution computers make to pupils' learning. There is a full programme of special events, including visits out for every year group and visitors to school, as well as themed days and weeks. These increase pupils' enjoyment of learning, particularly in the arts. There is a satisfactory range of extra activities for pupils to do outside of lessons. A thorough programme for pupils' personal development is in place, making a telling contribution to how well they behave and look after themselves.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils feel valued and listened to. This is indicative of the individual pastoral support they receive. Assessment information is used effectively to monitor pupils' progress. Individual targets for improvement are well understood by pupils and help them to move forward with their learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and effective arrangements are in place to support them and help them succeed. Links with other external agencies support this process. The support for Traveller pupils and links with the Traveller Education Service are strengths valued by pupils and parents. All the checks required to secure the safeguarding of pupils have been carried out. Risk assessments are completed where appropriate and regularly reviewed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Accurate self-evaluation helps the school to see what it does well and to identify areas for improvement which lead to the school pursuing the right priorities for change. These are encapsulated in a brief but pertinent school improvement plan that in turn directs training and future monitoring. Some areas of the school notably English and Foundation Stage are well led, leading to improvements in teaching and learning, the curriculum and ultimately pupil outcomes. However, practice is still somewhat inconsistent. Monitoring is a regular activity employing a range of strategies although agreed actions or findings from earlier monitoring are not always checked up on. The newly formed senior leadership team, for instance, is at the very beginning of quality assuring the curriculum in their phase of the school. Governance is effective. Governors bring varied expertise to school and ensure that all elements of the community, including the Traveller community, are represented and that equality of opportunity is achieved.

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.

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?	2
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	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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?	2
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

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?	2
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	2
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	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

17 October 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Main Road, Boughton, Newark, NG22 9JE

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. I thought you would like to know what we thought about it.

Your headteacher, staff and governors have worked hard to make your school a good school. It felt like we were part of one big happy family. Our visits to the playground and lessons showed us that you behave well and get on well with each other. You were all very friendly and were able to talk sensibly about your work and your school. You clearly like school and enjoy being there. It's a shame that some children don't come to school often enough and miss out on what is on offer.

You know a lot about your learning and what you are intending to do better, especially in English. We were particularly impressed with some of the writing you were doing in your English lessons. We thought there were lots of interesting things to do in the Nursery and Reception and in Years 5 and 6. There was also some good artwork on display. We have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to do some things to make your school better still. We thought you would like to know what they are and how you can help.

We noticed that some of the work in mathematics was not as interesting as the work you are asked to do in literacy. We have asked your school to give you more thoughtful work to do. We have also asked the school to make sure that there are more computers for you to use because we didn't think you were using them often enough. We asked the school to think about making sure that interesting work in the Nursery, Reception and Years 5 and 6 also happens in all other classes. You can help in all of these things by continuing to listen well and by trying hard.

The last thing we have asked the school to do is to make sure that staff check to see that these actions have been carried out and are working well.

Once again thank you very much for welcoming us and good luck in the future.

John Brennan

Lead inspector