

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Carterton

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123191
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314534
Inspection dates	14–15 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Mary Sinclair

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	111
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sister Pauline Waldron
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Tomkys
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2003
School address	Lawton Avenue Carterton OX18 3JY
Telephone number	01993 841240
Fax number	01993 844522

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is much smaller than average. Four out of every ten pupils are drawn from service families based at RAF Brize Norton. Most pupils have White British heritage. A few pupils are travellers with Irish heritage. Pupil mobility is high. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is high.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St. Joseph's is a friendly and welcoming school. It has an ethos that promotes and celebrates achievement. As a result, most pupils have positive attitudes to school, enjoy lessons and behave sensibly.

The school places a high priority on promoting the personal well-being of its pupils. The staff know their pupils well and make time to listen to them. This helps them to feel valued members of the school community. The headteacher quickly identified the need to improve pupils' behaviour. She ensured that the school's sanctions and rewards were understood and pupils confirm that behaviour has improved. Whilst most pupils arrive promptly and attend school regularly, a few do not and this slows their learning. The school is working closely with parents and outside agencies to improve attendance. Academic guidance for pupils is improving and, as a result of better marking, pupils now have a clear idea of how well they are doing.

Although satisfactory overall, 2007 Year 6 pupils did not make as much progress in Key Stage 2 as previous cohorts. These pupils underachieved in Years 3 and 4, when the school experienced staff changes. Current pupils' standards are average and achievement is satisfactory throughout the school. To improve progress, the headteacher has recently introduced a number of initiatives. These include the collection of data to track pupils' progress. This is important because the monitoring of pupils' progress has not been sufficiently rigorous. As a result, some pupils have not received the support they need. The school is now tracking the progress of individual pupils but does not analyse the data for different ethnic, gender, ability and teaching groups to identify whether the school is meeting the needs of all groups of pupils.

Teachers relate well to their pupils. Teachers strive to make lessons interesting by using a good range of teaching strategies. However, teachers are not always clear about what pupils need to do to meet the learning objective for the lesson. Consequently, when they plan lessons, they do not identify precisely enough what they need to teach. Curriculum coordinators take an active role in developing a more creative curriculum to engage pupils. However, the monitoring aspect of their role is underdeveloped. This limits their ability to identify and address weaknesses in the curriculum. The school has taken appropriate action to bring about improvement since the last inspection. Its track record shows that it has satisfactory capacity for improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children are quickly integrated into school routines so that they feel confident and enjoy school from the start. Planning addresses all areas of learning through a range of structured activities and places appropriate emphasis upon developing children's skills in speaking, listening and personal development. A new adventure playground promotes their physical development. Interesting resources stimulate children to initiate their own activities. However, children's choices of play activities are not monitored closely to assess their contribution to all areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the role of curriculum coordinators so that they identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- Monitor the progress of all groups of pupils to identify their specific needs.

- Ensure that teachers' planning identifies precisely what needs to be taught to enable pupils to achieve the intended learning for each lesson.

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

The small number of pupils in each cohort means that standards vary from year to year. Children enter the school with skills similar to or below those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage, although fewer than usual reach the goals expected by the end of Reception. From these starting points, achievement throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory. In 2007, overall standards at the end of Year 2 were average. Results in mathematics were significantly better than in previous years because the introduction of a new scheme of work has raised teachers' expectations. In 2007, standards were average at the end of Year 6. Although satisfactory overall, pupils did not make as much progress in Key Stage 2 as in previous years, because of the legacy of previous underachievement. Pupils made less progress in science where curriculum weaknesses had not been detected. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive well-focused support and make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils and their parents say they enjoy school. They like 'doing things' and particularly enjoy role play in literacy and the art club. They are keen to participate in sporting activities and show a good understanding of healthy living. Those attending the breakfast club enjoy a nourishing breakfast. Despite the school's diligent efforts, a very small minority of pupils do not attend regularly enough, and their progress suffers. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Year 6 pupils look after younger children at playtime. Pupils are socially confident and are ready to engage in conversation with adults. Behaviour is satisfactory but occasionally pupils' actions adversely affect the learning of others. Pupils say that behaviour has improved and bullying has reduced. This is because adults make clear the behaviour expected of them and they have accepted their responsibility by signing up to the school's code of behaviour. They know to talk to an adult if they have concerns and are confident that adults will help to sort out everyday disagreements quickly. Pupils say they now 'have a voice' and know that their ideas are valued. During the school's bid for playground funding, all pupils contributed ideas and representatives from each class were involved in making decisions, taking account of financial constraints. Such projects also enhance their economic awareness. Pupils contribute to the wider community through visiting senior citizens every month. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning are underdeveloped.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers work hard to create interesting lessons using a variety of teaching methods and a good range of resources. They devise tasks and ways of recording that engage pupils, and pupils respond by trying hard to learn. However, planning is not always incisive enough in

identifying what needs to be taught to ensure a rapid pace to learning. Occasionally, teachers expect pupils to sit on the carpet for too long and then their concentration wanes. Pupils from ethnic minorities and those with learning difficulties and disabilities receive well-focused support for their specific needs and this helps them to make satisfactory progress. Pupils' positive attitudes to work and their satisfactory skills in literacy and numeracy ensure that they are adequately prepared for the next stages of their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school is working to provide a richer curriculum. However, in most subjects, modifications have not been informed by thorough monitoring and evaluation of the current curriculum to gain insights into its strengths and weaknesses. Themed weeks were introduced two years ago to promote cross-curricular links and awareness of other cultures. Recently, the school has started to develop a more creative curriculum, providing stronger links between subjects, to help pupils to see the relevance of their learning. In one lesson, pupils were taught how to draw a line graph to present their results following a scientific experiment. Because the data was meaningful, this helped pupils to interpret the graph. Such initiatives are very recent and have yet to be incorporated into a coherent plan. Extra-curricular activities cater for a wide range of interests and support pupils' enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Health, safety and child protection arrangements are robust. The school ensures the early identification of learning needs by assessing pupils when they arrive at the school. Effective use is made of tracking information to target support where it is most needed, through small teaching groups and individual support. Pupils from traveller families receive good support. This helps them to settle quickly after absences. A recently introduced nurture group addresses a range of emotional and behavioural needs. Although teachers set learning targets for all pupils, this has not had much impact on their learning. Consequently, the school is trialling a fresh approach, showing pupils what they are expected to do to achieve their targets. The teachers' marking helps these pupils to know how well they are doing and what else they need to do to reach their targets. Pupils are encouraged to self-assess their learning at the end of lessons to gauge how well they are doing. Teachers do not challenge pupils to identify for themselves how they might improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, with her staff and governors, has secured some good improvements, including the development of an outdoor play area for the Foundation Stage pupils. Having evaluated many aspects of the school's work, she has a sound understanding of its strengths and areas for development. She has introduced some effective measures. The monitoring of teaching has led to improved learning. Weaknesses in the science curriculum have been identified and addressed. A range of initiatives has improved pupils' behaviour and new initiatives such as the nurture group have been introduced to build on this improvement. Pupils' progress is tracked. This is used to set challenging targets to raise standards. Clear procedures have been established for the early identification, referral and monitoring of pupils with learning difficulties

and disabilities. This has helped to secure equality of opportunity for all. Nonetheless, more remains to be done. Systems are not fully established to track how well different groups are doing over time. Curriculum coordinators are not adequately involved in evaluating the curriculum or its impact on pupils' progress. Governors are very committed and supportive but do not yet provide sufficient challenge.

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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	3
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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	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

23 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Carterton, Carterton, OX18 3JY

This letter is to tell you about the recent inspection and to thank those of you who gave up your time to talk to me.

You enjoy your lessons and find them interesting. At the moment the school is giving you a satisfactory education but your headteacher has plans to make it even better.

Your headteacher and teachers already check how much progress you are making. I have asked them to check whether there are any differences in the progress of different groups of pupils, such as boys and girls. This will help them to know whether the curriculum or the way that it is taught needs to be altered to help a group of pupils make better progress. Over the past year, your headteacher and teachers have tried different ways to involve you in lessons. These have helped to make your lessons more interesting. I have asked the teachers to plan their lessons so that they are sure that they teach you everything that you need to know to achieve well in each lesson. You can help by doing your best in every lesson. Your headteacher manages and leads the school. I have asked the staff who lead subjects to help her by checking that the curriculum is as good as it can be to make sure that you progress as well as you can.

I enjoyed visiting your school and hope that these actions will help you to make your school and even better place to learn.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Sinclair

Lead Inspector