

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125204
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	315190
Inspection dates	23–24 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Sarah McDermott

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)	182
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	24
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Patrick Casey
Headteacher	Miss Carolyn Scrutton
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Norfolk Road Dorking RH4 3JA
Telephone number	01306 883 934

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	23–24 October 2008
Inspection number	315190

Fax number

01306 500 286

Age group	4-11
Inspection dates	23-24 October 2008
Inspection number	315190

© Crown copyright 2008

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

St Josephs is a small voluntary aided school situated in the centre of Dorking. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school has a small proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. Few pupils speak languages other than English at home. The percentage of pupils that need extra help with their learning is below the national average. The school has gained Investors in People status. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) consists of one Reception class.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Joseph's is a good school. Pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 6 they reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are above the national average. Pupils who find learning difficult and those who are more able make equally good progress. Reading standards are very high. The school's current attention on raising standards in writing is starting to prove successful, but is not applied consistently by teachers in every class. The headteacher is determined and focused. She is successfully steering the school towards challenging goals, despite several recent changes in teaching staff. The new acting deputy headteacher is taking on her new role with enthusiasm. Subject leaders are supportive and committed, but they are not yet all playing a sufficiently effective part in sharing leadership responsibilities with the headteacher. The school has shown that it is quick to tackle any dips in achievement. Consequently, the school has good capacity to improve further.

A very strong Catholic ethos underpins the excellent relationships. The personal development of the pupils is outstanding. Pupils are articulate, thoughtful and proud of their school. Silly behaviour hardly ever disrupts learning. Pupils definitely know how to keep themselves healthy and safe. The headteacher and her governors are extremely successful in raising pupils' awareness of the valuable contribution they can make in the local community and beyond. Parents appreciate all the school does for their children. They know that their children are very safe, secure and particularly well cared for. One mother noted, 'St Joseph's is a very welcoming, friendly and inclusive school.' Pupils are more than ready for life beyond primary school.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning, because the curriculum is exciting, relevant and gives them plenty of 'hands on' experiences. The school has put much thought into linking subjects together to bring learning to life. In a good mathematics lesson, pupils were particularly productive in transposing the results of their science experiments on temperature into line graphs on their computers. The quality of teaching is good. Pupils want to do their best for their teachers. Most teachers are adept at making sure they match activities to different abilities. However, some lessons lack sufficient structure to ensure all pupils progress at a fast enough rate. The school has made a very good start in encouraging pupils to take a lead in their own learning. For example, teachers give good pointers for improvement when marking books. Pupils know about what they should have learnt by the end of the lesson. However, once left to their own devices, some pupils are still not clear what they need to do to better their work over the longer term.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start the Reception with skills and abilities that are broadly in line with expectations. They make good progress. By the time they move on to Year 1 the majority are working securely within the Early Learning Goals and a few of them exceed expectations. Children achieve particularly well in communication, language and literacy, but their skills in calculation are less well developed. Reception staff look after the children extremely well, so children settle in very quickly. Very soon, children engage in lively conversations and happily play together. They are sociable, sensible and very well behaved. The exciting range of activities captures the children's imagination and helps them to build up their knowledge and skills well. Children make enthusiastic use of the spacious outdoor environment for creative and imaginative play. However, indoors the number of adult directed activities tends to squeeze out time for children to choose

and organise their own activities independently. The capable EYFS leader tracks the progress of each child methodically and is already devising activities to improve the children's understanding of numbers.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the quality of teaching is consistently good to raise standards in writing and to ensure pupils know what they need to do next to improve their work.
- Ensure all subject leaders improve in their accountability for standards and achievement to give the headteacher effective leadership support.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress from their starting points to reach standards above national averages in English, mathematics and science. In 2007, pupils in Year 2 performed well in their national assessments, attaining levels above the national average for reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in Year 6 were above the national average in English, but in line with averages for mathematics and science. These pupils made satisfactory progress. Standards had dipped from previous years but the school took successful action to ensure they returned to high levels in 2008.

Achievement is now good. Unvalidated results from the 2008 tests show that above average standards were sustained in Year 2. In Year 6, standards in mathematics and science improved to be above those found in most other primary schools. English standards also improved and were exceptionally high, particularly in reading. The school's tracking of current pupils indicates that standards continue to be above average and achievement good. However, in some classes, standards in writing still have ground to make up to meet the challenging targets the school has set itself. Already the school is providing extra support to help pupils reach their goals but there is still some way to go. Pupils who learn slowly and those who do not speak English at home make similar progress to their classmates. The school is particularly adept at ensuring the more able pupils reach their potential.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils arrive at school with a spring in their step. They thoroughly enjoy all that is on offer and talk about their activities and outings with great animation. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Relationships are very strong and pupils look after each other very well. Behaviour is impeccable. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and bullying is extremely rare. They are polite, courteous and very keen to tell visitors what a good school they attend. Attendance levels are average. The school works very hard to encourage good attendance and pupils are very keen to attend. However, it is sometimes difficult to dissuade parents from arranging family holidays in term time. Plenty of physical activity and sensible eating habits clearly show that pupils know how to lead healthy lives. Involvement in the Golden Boot project is raising pupils' awareness of the benefits of walking. Pupils look forward to their contacts with the Dorking community, when they sing carols or provide harvest gifts. They are very willing to do jobs around the school. The older pupils take their Playground Squad roles very seriously and appreciate the confidence adults have in them. One Year 6 girl commented, 'We like the way we are trusted to use the computer suite on our own.' Pupils often have chances to handle their own budgets. Of particular note is the Farmers' Market, when pupils grow their

own vegetables and then raise funds for charities of their choice by selling the produce to their parents.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Strong relationships between the pupils and their teachers set a very positive atmosphere for learning. Teachers organise their classrooms well, check resources are to hand and deploy teaching assistants effectively for the best possible learning experience for all pupils. They make good use of the interactive white boards to capture the pupils' interest. Pupils know what they should achieve by the end of the lesson because teachers are careful to ensure the objective is clear. Most teachers ensure all pupils are thoroughly involved in their learning. However, occasionally when teachers do not plan methodically for different abilities, some pupils become bored and others struggle to understand. As a result, the pace of learning slows and opportunities for writing are missed. Teachers vary their teaching methods well to keep the pupils' attention. Sometimes they question the pupils directly and other times they encourage pupils to spark learning through paired and group discussions.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is very stimulating and varied. It is proving extremely successful in turning out good citizens who take a real interest in all around them. Teachers put much thought into how they can link subjects in different ways to bring learning to life. Already the school has organised many exciting projects to encourage pupils to put pen to paper to raise standards in writing. The Year 2 class returned from a trip to the BBC animation department buzzing with ideas on how they were going to write their instructions for short films. Pupils often go out into the beautiful local area to learn about natural features and different environments. Art, drama and music extend their creative streak and do much to foster spiritual and cultural development. Specialist visitors give pupils a taste of adventure. For example, a mountaineer spoke of how tackling challenges and assessing risk can be just as important for a primary school pupil as for a rock climber.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school looks after its pupils well. In particular, pastoral support is very strong. Staff communicate well with parents to ensure home and school are working together effectively to support each pupil. One mother commented, 'St Joseph's is a very caring school - the atmosphere engendered by staff, children and parents alike would be very difficult to match.' Pupils are happy to confide in adults should they have any worries. The school liaises very closely with external agencies for specialist advice and support to address the needs of vulnerable pupils. Staff work very well together to ensure pupils who find learning difficult come on in leaps and bounds. Very robust systems ensure pupils are always safe and secure whilst in the school's care. Academic guidance is good. Teachers are making a successful start in encouraging pupils to become independent learners. Pupils know what they need to have learnt by the end of the lesson. However, they are not always clear how to improve their work over the longer term. For example, teachers are not consistently referring to writing targets in lessons outside English.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear focus on maintaining high standards and ensuring all pupils have equal opportunities to achieve their best. She is very successful in highlighting the pupils' important roles as responsible and tolerant citizens not only in the school community but also locally and globally. The school development plan provides a good working tool to help the school to move forward to its agreed goals. The headteacher is very accurate in evaluating how the school is progressing. Subject leaders know the main strengths and weaknesses, but because many are new to their roles are not all yet able to pinpoint exactly how to make improvements. The headteacher puts great store on professional development. Already subject leaders are growing in confidence in their accountability for standards and achievement. Regular and methodical checking of pupils' progress against challenging targets, means the school is quick to change deployment of staff or set up special support groups to ensure pupils make the right progress. The governors bring useful expertise and support the headteacher well. They are growing in their role of 'critical friend'.

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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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?	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
The extent to which 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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
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?	2

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

07 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Dorking, RH4 3JA

Thank you very much for helping us on the inspection by talking to us and showing us what you can do. Your parents are pleased with your school because they believe you learn well and are in safe hands. We definitely agree.

You go to a good school. We think you are making good progress because your teachers and helpers make sure each one of you has work that is not too easy and not too hard. Standards in English, mathematics and science are higher than other schools. You have excellent opportunities to visit interesting places and do experiments to help your learning. We are particularly impressed with the clever way that teachers link different subjects to make learning lively. We can see that your teachers mark your work regularly and let you know how you are doing. Miss Scrutton and her team of senior teachers lead the school well. They set challenging goals for your national tests and do all they can to help you achieve them.

You told us that you like coming to school and we are not surprised. Behaviour is outstanding and you get on extremely well with your teachers and friends. We are pleased that you know how to lead healthy and safe lives. We especially like the way you are developing as responsible young people and building up your knowledge of how to manage money. It is not every day that we hear about pupils who grow their own vegetables and then sell them to their parents!

To make your learning even better, we have asked your school to do two things.

- Make sure all your teachers are consistent in helping you to improve your writing and to be independent in your learning.
- Make sure your new senior teachers quickly grow in confidence in their jobs so they can help Miss Scrutton lead the school.

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your school. We know that your teachers make your school a special place for you. You can do your bit by continuing to be very positive and by making the most of your time at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School.

Yours sincerely

Sarah McDermott

Lead Inspector