

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 125205 |
| Local Authority | Surrey |
| Inspection number | 315191 |
| Inspection date | 8 October 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | David Marshall |

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.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 5–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 309 |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 45 |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years | 0 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Sally Nestor |
| Headteacher | Ms Theresa Kenefick |
| Date of previous school inspection | 7 March 2005 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Rosebank West Street Epsom KT18 7RT |

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|--------------------------|----------------|
| Age group | 5–11 |
| Inspection date | 8 October 2008 |
| Inspection number | 315191 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the quality of leadership and management and the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the pupils' achievement, particularly in writing, the quality of pupils' personal development and wellbeing, and the effectiveness of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, senior leadership teams, governors and parents, and school documentation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included in this report.

Description of the school

St Joseph's is a larger than average Catholic Primary school. The school also has an on-site independent nursery where over half the children attend before starting at St Joseph's. A below average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Around half of the pupils are White British. Slightly over a third of pupils, an above average number, have a first language other than English. Of these around 5% are at stage 1 and 2 in their language development and receive extra teaching support on a regular basis. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including seven children with a statement of educational need. These needs are principally speech, language and communication difficulties.

The school has the Investors in People Award, the ICT mark, the Activemark, Eco-Schools Green Flag, FMSIS and Healthy Schools status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Joseph's provides an outstanding education for its pupils. The school is an extremely caring environment where the excellent welfare for each pupil ensures their outstanding academic and personal development. Inspection evidence fully endorses the parents' overwhelmingly positive views of the school and, in particular, the quality of opportunities the pupils are given. One parent summed up the views of many by writing, 'This is a wonderful school. As I am in the process of putting my third child through the school, I am able to see the continually clever and thoughtful way topics are introduced and followed by teachers and how they link things together to help the children see and understand the bigger picture.'

The curriculum is a significant strength of the school and is carefully adapted to suit all pupils' needs and learning styles. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in the national assessments for seven-year-olds have been consistently well above average for many years, from a broadly average starting point. The standards in Key Stage 2 are consistently high, and pupils' achievement is outstanding. In the provisional 2008 national test results for pupils in Year 6, the number of pupils who reached the higher levels was very high in mathematics and science, but although improved, slightly lower in writing. The school has placed a particular emphasis on pupils' writing in the last year. The outstanding results are all around in the stunning displays of pupils' written work, which illustrate the excellent opportunities provided in all other subjects. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in all subjects is exceptional. The way that Year 5 pupils were constructing pod-casts in their science topic was astonishingly good.

The outstanding progress is enabled by the careful use of the excellent systems for checking on pupils' progress. It is significant that the pupils themselves know their targets and how best they can improve. Teachers assess pupils' progress exceptionally well and make excellent use of this information when planning future work. This helps them to ensure that lessons are pitched at the right levels and that all pupils can succeed. Tasks engage pupils' interest and inspire them to learn. An excellent example was the planning of a session in Year 5 devoted to exploring what 'The Flight of the Bumble Bee' meant to each group. All pupils were given the opportunity to create a dance/drama scene, write at length and create 'moving' pictures using digital cameras and computer software. The exceptional planning means that the goals of developing pupils' personal qualities of enquiry, adaptability and thoughtfulness are paramount in every lesson. It was remarkable to see Year 6 pupils discussing the essential elements for stadiums, both in Ancient Greece and for the 2012 Olympics, before embarking on refining their large, clay, models. The use of the exceptional outside areas is another significant strength of the school. The area known as 'The Meadow' affords a unique variety of possibilities for outdoor learning that many pupils acknowledge as their 'favourite thing'. The support staff make a strong contribution to this high quality of learning, whether working with individuals or small groups. They form excellent relationships, keep pupils on task and, in particular, help pupils who have difficulty concentrating. As one parent of a child with particular needs wrote, 'I really feel that St Joseph's is a shining example of how inclusion is supposed to be. My son loves going to school and has made wonderful progress there.'

The outstanding start children make in the Reception class is consistently built on throughout the school and, as a result, pupils' personal development and well-being are excellent. They develop a detailed understanding of safe and healthy choices and make an exceptional contribution to the school and wider community. The school council members are justifiably

proud of the input they have made to changes both inside and outside the school. The way that all Year 6 pupils are given responsibilities, and the purposeful way they carry them out, is an outstanding preparation for their future education. Attendance rates are high as pupils enjoy all their time at school. As one parent observed, 'My children come home excited to tell me about something they have learnt during the day. I often feel quite dizzy with the amount they have taken in!' Pupils' behaviour, and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of their development, are outstanding. These qualities, together with their high levels of skills in English, mathematics and science prepare them very well for the next stage in their learning. Relationships with parents are excellent and the staff have a strong commitment to partnership with them. This contributes very well to the outstanding pastoral care the school shows for its pupils.

Leadership and management at all levels are exceptional and this has a considerable impact on pupils' excellent progress. Teamwork is of the highest quality and everyone plays a valuable part in moving the school forward. The very experienced headteacher's leadership is outstanding. All staff follow her lead and are excellent role models in their own right. The learning leaders and subject leaders, who make an outstanding contribution to the school, all paid tribute to how the headteacher and deputy enable them to develop professionally and 'flourish as well as the children'.

The chair of governors, headteacher and deputy, show an exceptional commitment to improvement. As one parent observed when referring to the headteacher, '...never satisfied to stand still and constantly looking for ways to improve an already excellent school.' Governors have an excellent understanding of their strategic role in the school's development and have very good systems for checking on its effectiveness and holding the leaders to account. As a result, they have very clear understanding of what is working well, what can improve and how it can be achieved. It is this zealous attention to detail of what each pupil wants and needs, shared by all involved, which shows the school's outstanding capacity to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children enter the EYFS with very varied levels of skill and knowledge, although overall their capabilities are in line with those usually found. It is testament to the huge level of commitment and care shown by the EYFS manager and her staff that all children settle into the school exceptionally well. One parent wrote, 'My child goes to school with enthusiasm. He has settled in quickly with the help of the pre-school home visit. The new grounds, including the meadow, prayer garden and bridge are amazing. Great leadership. My child is privileged to have a place at St Joseph's.'

Children make rapid progress and achieve exceptionally well, especially in writing and in linking sounds and letters. As a result, they move into Key Stage 1 confident, capable learners, who largely exceed the goals expected of children at this age.

Adults have high expectations, provide very clear routines and enable children to build strong, positive relationships. The enthusiasm and enjoyment of the children as they went through their favourite books, was a joy to see, and a good indication of how successful the organisation is. The rooms available are stimulating and resources are used well as children move from one to another. The well resourced outside areas provide the same exciting level of challenge and stimulation, especially for the more capable children. A very calm and purposeful atmosphere is created. Staff have already got to know the children very well. They make a careful note of

all responses and feedback. The information collected about children is used particularly well to ensure that the least able and most vulnerable settle well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the initiatives to develop pupils' ability to use more complex skills in writing enable them to achieve the same high standards as in other subjects.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1 |
| 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? | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 1 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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|---|---|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 1 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 1 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 1 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 1 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 1 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 1 |

Achievement and standards

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

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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 1 |
| 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? | 1 |
| 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? | 1 |

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 1 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 1 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 1 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 1 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 1 |
| 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

21 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Epsom, KT18 7RT

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and would now like to tell you what we found out about your school. We agree with what many of you told us - St Joseph's is an excellent school.

We think you make outstanding progress and really try hard at all times. We were very impressed that you knew what to do to make your work even better. We saw that you know you are especially lucky to have so many different activities both during and after school. We also saw how keen you are to take part and how well you behave. Many of you told us how much you enjoy being at school, and how proud you are of what you can do. We are sure that you will continue to try hard so your school can be the fun place that you like and where you can all learn. The headteacher, deputy head, leadership teams and governors are excellent. Together with everyone who works in the different parts of the school and community around it, they take account of your interests and enthusiasms and ease your worries.

Your teachers and support staff work hard to help you to do as well as you can. Many of you achieve high standards by the time you leave school in mathematics, reading and science. We have asked the staff to make sure that their hard work, and the changes they have made, enables you to achieve just as well in writing.

Finally, we would like to thank you once again for all your help. We wish you well in the future.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

David Marshall

Lead Inspector