

# St Joseph's Catholic School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126473
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	315565
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Margaret Dickinson HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Modern (non-selective)
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	361
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Hooper
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Hughes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 October 2004
<b>School address</b>	Church Road Laverstock Salisbury SP1 1QY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01722 335380
<b>Fax number</b>	01722 410741

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<b>Age group</b>	11-16
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

St Joseph's is a small secondary modern school in an area where there is selective secondary education. The school shares a site with two Church of England secondary modern schools. It serves students whose parents choose a Catholic education. Students come from a wide area and a wide range of social and economic backgrounds, but the context in which the school works is favourable overall. At around 9%, the proportion of students entitled to a free school meal is below the national average. Few students are from minority ethnic groups. A very small number are from traveller heritage. Students' attainment on entry to the school is below average and a consistently low proportion of students enter with above average levels. The proportion of students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities has fallen over the last year to just below average.

## 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 satisfactory and improving school with many good features. By the very nature of its small size, students are well known as individuals and their different and occasionally complex needs are met well through sensitive and well-targeted guidance and support. Students say that they feel safe and they enjoy school. A very large majority of their parents echo these views. Hand in hand with the good care provided is a strong Catholic ethos, which gives the school its particular character and is an important factor in students' good personal development and well-being. Standards vary to some extent from year to year but are consistently below average by Year 9 and Year 11. Senior leaders have been focusing on developing the quality of teaching and learning through a thorough programme of monitoring, supported by training. A particular theme over this year has been extending the range of strategies teachers use to help students learn, both during lessons and when providing oral and written feedback on their work. This works well in some lessons but is not yet consistently and fully embedded across the school. This means that teaching is currently satisfactory. It is improving but there is not yet enough good or better teaching, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. As a result, students' achievement is satisfactory, although clear signs of improvement are now discernable. In recent years, students have not made enough progress during Key Stage 4. Senior leaders and staff have worked hard to improve the curriculum in this key stage, having recognised that, in the past, the choice of courses has not been suitable for all students. The school is working increasingly in partnership with other schools on the same campus to widen the range of vocational and academic options for Key Stage 4 students from next year. The interesting and increasingly inspiring curriculum has helped to bring about greater motivation and improved attendance, a decrease in exclusions and, importantly, improved progress in Key Stage 4. Students currently in Year 11, for example, have made good progress over the last two years. The school's data show that the proportion of students achieving five good GCSEs, which improved significantly last year, is likely to improve further this year. Senior leaders and governors have a clear grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher and his senior team have identified accurately where they needed to concentrate their efforts. They recognise that they do not make enough use of the information the school collates from assessments and tests to monitor each student's ongoing progress. They show a determination and passion for continuing to improve students' academic progress whilst maintaining the distinctive Catholic identity and principles that underpin the school's values and work. Senior leaders have already had a strong impact on Key Stage 4 in raising standards and improving students' progress. The school has good capacity to improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the effectiveness and consistency of teachers' oral and written feedback to students, and ensure all teachers check students' learning and understanding during lessons.
- Ensure that data and assessments are used effectively by leaders at all levels to monitor the progress of each student. 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**

Students enter the school with below average attainment, and in some years it is well below average. They make satisfactory progress during Key Stage 3 and generally better progress in mathematics than in English and science. In last year's national tests, for example, a greater proportion of students reached the higher levels in mathematics than in the other two subjects. Current standards in Year 9 are well below average but this group of students have made satisfactory progress as they entered the school with much lower standards. Standards and achievement are improving rapidly in Key Stage 4 following several years of students making insufficient progress. Together with an improved curriculum, senior leaders have also allocated teaching assistants more effectively and begun to use the data the school holds on individual students more effectively to monitor their progress. In 2007, the school received a national award for the significant improvement in the percentage of students achieving five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE. The proportion who achieved five or more good grades including English and mathematics also rose slightly. Current evidence suggests that both A\* to C indicators are set to improve further this year, showing that the improvement in standards and progress is being sustained.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Students say they enjoy school and want to learn. They are considerate towards each other and supportive. Behaviour is good. Students are safety conscious both in and out of lessons. They confirm that the school takes effective steps to deal with bullying although a very small number of parents report that this is not always the case. Attendance levels are above average. Students have an informed awareness of developing healthier lifestyles. Many choose the healthier options available in the canteen. The numbers cycling to school have risen significantly and there is good participation in sports and other extra-curricular activities. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students feel that their voice is heard and they can influence decisions the school makes that affect them. They are actively involved in a wide variety of fund raising activities for charities. Many students participate voluntarily in the school Masses and in daily prayers.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teachers at this school are committed to ensuring students make better progress. Senior leaders keep teaching closely under review. As a result, they have rightly focused training for staff on improving the feedback, both written and oral, that teachers give to students. This has had some success, in that most students are aware of their end of year targets and some of them know which aspects they need to improve in order to reach their targets. However, teachers do not consistently give feedback that is linked sharply to students' learning targets or, during lessons, check their understanding with a judicious range of questions. As a result, students' learning is satisfactory overall and this is reflected in their progress. There is, nevertheless, a core of good teaching when students make good progress. Here, teachers use targeted questions to check students' understanding and reshape lessons to consolidate learning or correct students'

misconceptions. Ongoing oral and written feedback is clear and pertinent and is linked closely to students' individual learning targets.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school has sensibly refined the English scheme of work for Key Stage 3 to provide students with secure foundations for the next key stage. Senior leaders have worked assiduously on designing an interesting curriculum for students in Key Stage 4 that inspires them to do their best. They have met with considerable success. Some elements of provision are exemplary. For example, during their final year in Key Stage 3, Year 9 students meet individually with a senior leader to discuss their personal curricular pathway through the final two years at the school. Parents are also consulted and involved. In this way, the school tailors the Key Stage 4 curriculum to match students' aspirations, working in partnership with a local college to provide vocational options and a second college to create alternative provision for students who are particularly vulnerable or at risk of exclusion. The fruits of this work are threefold. The proportion of students who remain in full-time education after they leave St Joseph's is above the Wiltshire average. The proportion of students who leave the school with no planned education, employment or training has halved since 2005. The greater motivation of students is leading to better achievement at Key Stage 4.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Child protection procedures are robust. The school places strong emphasis on students' care and welfare, including the more vulnerable students and those who come to the school for a fresh start, having experienced difficulties in other settings. The school tracks students' standards and is using this information increasingly to identify and support students where additional help is needed. It is not used fully to monitor students' ongoing progress. There is good guidance for students in Years 9 and 11 to help them choose subjects and make decisions on the best route for continuing education, employment or training. Students are very well prepared for work experience and receive good encouragement and advice to prepare them for the world of work, but their below average key skills mean that the way they are prepared for their future lives is satisfactory overall.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher and senior leaders ensure students feel safe and valued within this small school. The school has a well-established reputation for its pastoral support and care. The passion and determination of the senior leadership team are beginning to be realised in the concrete improvements in students' academic performance at Key Stage 4. They are rightly proud of the successes they have brought about so far but recognise where further important work is required to improve the school's effectiveness. Leaders make accurate judgements, for example, when monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Governors play a key role in providing a degree of challenge for the school, especially in relation to students' standards. The school collects detailed data on each student's academic attainment. This is not used sharply enough by leaders at all levels to monitor students' ongoing progress from term to

term and year to year in order to pick up any students at an early stage who may be underachieving.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3
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**

12 June 2008 Dear Students Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic School, Salisbury SP1 1QY I would like to express my thanks to those of you who gave up your time to meet inspectors when we visited your school recently. We were pleased that we were able to talk to so many of you during lessons and at other times. Thank you for your contributions. They were most helpful. We found your school to be satisfactory and it has many good features. You told us you feel safe at school and enjoy being there. A large majority of the parents who sent in questionnaires also confirmed this. You are considerate and supportive of one another and the positive atmosphere and ethos in the school stem from your attitudes and values, as well as the good care, support and guidance that the school provides. The school's senior leaders have been right to focus on raising standards in Years 10 and 11. The hard work that has gone into improving the curriculum and the range of courses available to you, both through school and colleges, has reaped rewards. Your school's results are clearly improving at Key Stage 4 and those of you in Year 11 this year have made good progress over the last two years. There is more work to be done before progress is good across the school and we have asked your headteacher and senior leaders to continue working on improving teaching so that you learn well in most lessons. We found that some teachers check your understanding carefully and give you good oral and written feedback but this is not always the case. We have also asked the school to make better use of the information that it holds from your tests and assessments to monitor your progress carefully. This will help each of you to make good progress and put you in a strong position for the next stage, whether you continue your education or move into training or employment. I am sure you will continue to work hard and get the most out of your time at St Joseph's and I wish you every success in the future. With best wishes Yours sincerely  
Margaret Dickinson Her Majesty's Inspector

**Annex B**

12 June 2008

Dear Students

**Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic School, Salisbury SP1 1QY**

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I am sure you will continue to work hard and get the most out of your time at St Joseph's and I wish you every success in the future.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Margaret Dickinson  
Her Majesty's Inspector