

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Broadstairs

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131126
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	315728
Inspection dates	2–3 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Graeme Bassett

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	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Caine
Headteacher	Diane Holland
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2004
School address	St Peters Park Road Broadstairs CT10 2BA
Telephone number	01843 861738
Fax number	01843 861738

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average size primary school, with 7 classes, draws its pupils from a wide area across several local towns. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds but there are a small number whose first language is not English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The percentage known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. Children currently enter the Foundation Stage of the school slightly below the level of skills, knowledge and understanding expected for their age, especially in writing and calculating. The school has been awarded the Healthy Schools Award, Basic Skills quality Mark 3, a Travel Plan Platinum Award and an ActiveMark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. The Christian way of life upheld by staff, parents and governors fosters the outstanding development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness that is a strength of their good personal development and well-being.

The headteacher makes a strong contribution to the good leadership and management of the school. She provides a very clear direction for the work of the school and, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, establishes high expectations to raise standards and improve achievement. Responsibilities are delegated effectively and challenging targets raise the aspirations of staff and pupils very well. As a result, actions taken have established a purposeful atmosphere where pupils enjoy their work and are prepared well for their next school and their economic well-being. The governing body has demonstrated determination and tenacity to improve the governance of the school since the last inspection. It now undertakes its responsibilities well. The successes so far and the actions planned for further development show that the school has good capacity for future improvement. Children currently enter the Foundation Stage with skills, understanding and knowledge slightly below the expected levels for their age. Because of the good provision made for these children, they make good progress. By the time they enter Year 1 most reach the goals set but skills in writing and calculation are still slightly below the expected levels. Pupils' good progress continues throughout the school and, because of consistently good and often better teaching, it accelerates particularly in Years 5 and 6. Standards in Year 6 are well above average and pupils' achievement is good. Throughout the school, good support from many people, including skilful volunteers, is also ensuring that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress in line with their peers. Pupils for whom English is not their first language make particularly good progress in acquiring spoken English. The provision made for gifted and talented pupils is very good.

Care, guidance and support provided by staff are good and the pastoral care given to all pupils is excellent. All pupils are included in all that the school does and pupils contribute well to the school community. As a result, they develop a very caring attitude towards each other. The majority of parents support the school with enthusiasm and effectively. One parent reflected the views of many when she said, 'St Joseph's is a kind loving school. It enables each child to be an individual yet still to feel part of a community.'

Although teaching is nearly always at least good, in some classes there are inconsistencies in the quality of marking. Teachers' discussions that give academic guidance are invariably good but there is a lack of guidance through written comments to help pupils understand exactly what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum is satisfactory and is developing steadily to incorporate links across subjects. However, it is not yet developed sufficiently to ensure that pupils have enough opportunities to apply the true level of their English and mathematics skills in other subjects. This, and the over use of worksheets and templates, limits the development of pupils' writing and numeracy skills to help them to achieve even more highly. Pupils' learning is enhanced well through visits, residential trips, links with other schools and by out of lesson activities.

Most pupils have a good understanding of how to remain safe and healthy. Respect for others is at the heart of pupils' spiritual life and they express this in their everyday courtesies and good behaviour.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage because the teaching is good and often better. The teacher and the teaching assistant have a good knowledge of the needs of young children. By the time children enter Year 1, they have progressed well and reached the levels expected in all areas except writing and calculating. A few children exceed these goals. Extensive assessment records to plot each child's progress are maintained effectively and are used well to identify children who need additional support. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good, resulting in the development of an excellent curriculum where children enjoy imaginative and stimulating activities. There is a good balance of directed tasks and opportunities for children to follow their own interests that ensures that all children do well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Establish a consistent approach to marking throughout the school so that written comments help pupils to understand how they can improve their work.
- Ensure that pupils can apply and practise the true level of their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum without an over reliance on worksheets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are well above average by the end of Year 6. Good progress in the Foundation Stage continues throughout Years 1 and 2 so that by the end of Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average, with an above average proportion reaching the higher levels for their age. Pupils currently at the end of Year 6 entered the Foundation Stage with skills above average and now their standards in English and mathematics are well above the national average, representing good progress from the time of their entry to the school. Some pupils in Year 6 make excellent progress. Standards are now the best recorded for the end of Year 6 for several years and this substantial improvement is due to good and often excellent teaching. Standards in science although they are not as high as those for English and mathematics are steadily improving.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They have very good attitudes to their work and they take pride in what they do. They care for each other extremely well and ensure that everyone in the school community is treated with equal consideration. For example, the Key Stage 2 members of the school council asked for extended play space for younger children, causing some disadvantage for themselves. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the customs and traditions of other people, and pupils in Year 6 are prepared well to live in a multicultural society.

Pupils willingly accept responsibility as monitors, contribute well to the school community and eagerly fund raise for charities. Many serve on the school council and are proud of their influence because the school listens to and acts on their views. Attendance is satisfactory despite considerable efforts by the school to persuade families to avoid holidays during term time. Pupils' standards in literacy and numeracy as well as responsibility for organising projects and charity work equip them well for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall with some lessons showing aspects of excellent teaching. Tasks are planned in detail for the full range of pupils' abilities. Teachers create lessons where pupils enjoy their learning and there is often much humour in the way that teachers relate to the pupils. All teachers maintain outstanding assessment records of each pupil's progress and involve the pupils in assessing how well they have succeeded at the end of each lesson. Nevertheless, the quality of marking in pupils' books is inconsistent and most marking does not give pupils enough help.

The support from teachers and teaching assistants for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. There is also good teaching and support for those for whom English is not their first language and these pupils quickly begin to understand and speak English.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets requirements and steady improvements are being made to create links across different subjects to make learning more meaningful. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively to promote learning in other subjects. Themed weeks such as 'Art week' and 'Science week' raise pupils' interests effectively. However, curricular links are not developed robustly enough to develop pupils' writing and numeracy skills. This, together with too much use of worksheets and templates, prevents pupils from being challenged to do even better in English and mathematics.

A good range of out of school activities, such as visits and visitors to the school, enhances pupils' learning and in particular fosters their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. After school clubs are enthusiastically enjoyed by many pupils and the breakfast club is steadily growing. These extra opportunities add to pupils' social development very well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is a caring school where the pastoral care is excellent. All safeguarding procedures are securely in place. Teachers know pupils well and foster respect for one another. They help pupils to understand how their actions may affect others. The school fosters pupils' eagerness to be healthy through good exercise and helping them to grow vegetables. The school council is encouraged effectively to make a valued contribution to the school's development.

The school has extensive systems in place to track pupils' progress and these are used effectively to identify and support pupils who are judged to not be doing as well as they should. Pupils know their own targets but although verbal feedback about a piece of work is often good, there are inconsistencies in the way marking is executed to show pupils how to reach their targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school's future and sensitively promotes improvements that are raising standards and achievement. All staff and the governing body work very effectively with the headteacher to accurately evaluate the effectiveness of the school's work to provide a strong foundation for suitably challenging whole-school targets. As a result, concerns raised at the last inspection have been successfully dealt with. Many teachers and non-teaching staff accept responsibilities willingly and conscientiously plan actions that bring about improvements. There is a depth of good leadership and management skills throughout the school and in particular in the leadership and management of the Foundation Stage. The governing body is well organised and carries out its statutory responsibilities well. This well organised and cohesive team, with the effective support and guidance of the headteacher, is extremely well involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and takes an active role in deciding priorities for development.

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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?	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	2
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	1
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	2

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

3 July 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Broadstairs, CT10 2BA Thank you for helping us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and finding out about your school. We found that your school provides you with a good education and that you do some exciting things.

These are the things that are particularly strong in your school.

- Your headteacher provides good leadership and management.
- All the staff, and especially those who lead and manage your school, have very clear ideas of how to bring about improvements and, as a result, your school is getting even better.
- The teaching is good and occasionally excellent and it is clear that you enjoy school because your lessons are fun.
- You make good progress in your work and some pupils in Year 6 make outstanding progress.
- The standards reached by the end of Year 6 are well above average overall.
- The staff care for and support you well.
- You have good attitudes towards your work and each other.
- You know a lot about keeping safe and you understand how to remain healthy.
- Your personal development is good and this is especially so for your spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness which is outstanding.

There are still some ways in which your school could be better. We have asked your headteacher and governors to do these things.

- Ensure that your teachers write comments in your books that help you to understand how you can improve your work.
- Give you more opportunities to use your true skills in literacy and numeracy in other subjects without lots of worksheets.

Once again, thank you for your cooperation. You can help even more by asking your teachers how you can make your work better.

Yours sincerely

Graeme Bassett Lead inspector