

St Joseph's Catholic and CofE (VA) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134773
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	316278
Inspection dates	21–22 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Jane Melbourne HMI

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	148
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sheila Godley
Headteacher	Miss Jane Burke
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Calver Crescent Staveley Chesterfield Derbyshire S43 3LY
Telephone number	01246 472798
Fax number	

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school, which changed status in September 2006 when it became a joint Roman Catholic and Church of England School. There is a very low percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups and none who speak English as an additional language. There is a much lower than typical proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and, of these, a low percentage who have a statement of special educational need. Attainment on entry is 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

This continues to be a satisfactory school. Staff have worked hard to meet pupils' needs and to bring about significant changes. Whole school improvement has been slow. The school development plan has not been sharp enough. Since the creation of the new school and the new governing body, both diocese and the local authority have provided ongoing support. There is now a full governing body in place, with roles and responsibilities appropriately allocated. Recent training has better equipped the governors to understand their roles more fully and hence the governing body is now in a stronger position to provide strategic advice and hold the school to account. The Headteacher has worked tirelessly to initiate new systems and to support staff, but the school has lacked the necessary challenge and performance management, which is expected through governance. There have been positive key changes in the organisation of leaders and managers of the school as a whole and in individual curriculum areas. This is now satisfactory overall. The school is better placed to improve with the recent appointment of an Acting Deputy to support the Headteacher. All roles and responsibilities for management and subject co-ordinators are much clearer and staff have been pro-active in sharing up-to-date information relative to their specific areas.

Reasonably effective systems of assessing pupils' progress have helped staff to understand where teaching and learning should be targeted and where interventions with pupils are necessary. However, subject co-ordinators have not yet taken a sufficiently pro-active role either in monitoring in the classroom or in particular curriculum areas across the school. Close monitoring of children's work is not sufficiently methodical to ensure that all pupils are receiving their entitlement to good quality lessons or to check standards across the school. Although pupils study enough of each subject over time, staff's lack of subject knowledge in some areas and the delivery of the curriculum into blocks of lessons means that some pupils' curriculum diet is not rich enough. Expectations are too low in some classes and pupils are unable to build on what they know and can do because lessons are too disjointed. In this school, the cross-curricular way of working is not yet effective. There are an improving number of curriculum enhancement opportunities.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. There are some good features, including the really positive ways in which the school enables pupils to develop their confidence and self-esteem. It has worked hard to improve attendance, although figures remain slightly below the national average. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall, although there are too many inconsistencies and the school has not been able to secure continuous improvement in standards. Standards in some lessons are below what is expected nationally and work in books reflects this. Pupils' progress in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is at least satisfactory, but this tapers off due to inconsistencies in teaching and learning in Key Stage 2. Consequently, not enough pupils in Key Stage 2 attain the higher levels they are capable of. However, a high proportion of pupils achieve higher than the national average in Key Stage 1. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the newly formed Governing Body effectively holds the school to account and provides the necessary challenge and leadership. Ensure that a sharp, incisive school development plan drives accountabilities and is monitored frequently.
- Make sure that leaders and managers set clear direction in all of their areas of responsibility, with robust systems of monitoring and evaluating in place, accurately informing self-evaluation and leading to whole school improvement.
- Improve the quality of the curriculum by adapting work better and including activities to stimulate pupils and improve their thinking skills.
- Iron out the differences in teaching and learning across the school so that each child achieves as well as they can and makes consistent progress.

A small proportion of 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 school rightly places a high degree of emphasis on pupils' basic skills. Pupils in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 achieve well in relation to their starting points, but achievement is only satisfactory overall as many pupils in Key Stage 2 do not achieve the levels of which they are capable. In end of year tests in 2007, standards were above the national average at Key Stage 1, including the percentage of higher levels, but below the national average in Key Stage 2, although standards in mathematics were similar to those attained nationally. Not enough pupils at Key Stage 2 attained the higher levels. Girls perform very slightly better than boys overall in Key Stage 1, particularly with their writing. However, in 2007, at Key Stage 2, boys outperformed girls in all subjects. The school analysed the reasons for this, but believe it is not a general trend. There were no significant gender issues observed in lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make at least satisfactory progress. The school's improved assessment and tracking systems ensure that staff are better informed for planning for pupils' needs, but they are not using this information effectively enough to ensure that all pupils do as well as they can.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They genuinely care for each other and those less fortunate than themselves. They enthusiastically raise funds for community projects. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils are good role models for the school and discuss complex and sensitive issues articulately. They are generally well behaved and courteous, but good behaviour diminishes in a small percentage of uninspiring lessons where the class is not managed well enough. The school does all it can to raise attendance, which is just below the national average. Pupils have a good knowledge of the requirements for leading a healthy lifestyle. However, some pupils continue to bring unhealthy snacks with their packed lunches. Pupils move around the school safely. They mostly enjoy school, with positive attitudes

to their learning and their relationships with all staff. They are given responsibilities such as playground prefects and Year 6 experiences extend to practising applying for a job. The voice of the children is heard through the School's Council, and skills in conducting meetings are exemplary. Pupils have recently completed a paper-recycling project and make a positive contribution towards conserving world resources. Their future economic well-being is currently hindered through their weak skills in literacy, numeracy and science which, at the end of Year 6, are below the national average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning varies significantly across the year groups and subjects. Staff have agreed good practice within the lesson structure and informal monitoring by the headteacher has highlighted some of the staff's strengths and weaknesses. Subject leadership in core subjects has improved, but staff still have some way to go in the monitoring of their subject areas and in driving up standards. Improved data ensures that lessons are broadly matched to the majority of pupils' needs, but planning is often too general, with too few variations in activities. As a result, the level of challenge for the more able pupils is not always adequately planned for. Additional support for pupils who need it is mostly targeted adequately, with the pre-tutoring sessions by the teaching assistants being particularly helpful to aiding pupils' understanding and progress.

There are too few good lessons. During the inspection, most of the lessons were only satisfactory because the pace was sometimes too slow and the questioning of pupils was inconsistent. Active learning, where pupils were not required to sit for too long and used their thinking skills more, was a feature of the best lessons. Staff do not have high enough expectations in all of the lessons, although pupils are very clear about the lesson objectives. Pupils are also clear on their learning target, although for some pupils these are not sufficiently precise to be helpful, and pupils do not have targets for all curriculum areas. Teaching is particularly patchy in science and information and communication technology (ICT), where sometimes staff's subject knowledge is less secure. Input from external teachers is aiding the quality of teaching in science in some year groups.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory basic curriculum. Planning by whole school teams ensures an appropriate focus on core skills. The major emphasis on pupils' writing has led to greater consistency across the school. However, staff do not make the most of the development of writing in other areas of the curriculum, so standards diminish and work is often poorly presented. Staff have increased opportunities to develop investigative and problem-solving skills in science, and in Year 6 mathematics, with the more able pupils. However, the teaching of science in blocks means that the subject is disjointed and, in some classes, expectations are too low, so pupils make minimal progress. Pupils now learn French and there is much enthusiasm for this. The lack of formal monitoring of the curriculum means that the balance of time allocated to different subjects is not accurately checked. Themes with broader study have potentially enriched the curriculum, but staff have not consistently checked the quality of learning and standards are too low. There are too few extra curricular activities overall, although this is

increasing. The lunchtime board games club is popular. A small number of pupils take music lessons with visiting teachers, but there is insufficient nurturing of musical talents generally. The pupils are enjoying a more varied and interesting physical education programme of late.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

In this caring school, pupils feel safe and grow in self-confidence. Their self-esteem is enhanced by positive encouragement from staff, awards and special assemblies. Policies to ensure pupils' safety are in place, although risk assessments are not carried out for all school based activities. Staff vigilantly check on pupils' well-being and provide appropriate support when it is needed. The prefect system very effectively supports pupils during playtimes as they organise activities, sort out minor squabbles and ensure lone children are involved. Systems to check pupils' progress are improving. The quality of teachers' marking varies and so pupils' understanding of how to improve their work is inconsistent. Pupils who find learning difficult are given extra support, but they are not all appropriately identified and monitored according to the Special Needs Code of Practice. A range of recent initiatives such as paired reading, word walls and work conferencing is working well to support children's learning. Community links with a parent and toddler group, which meets weekly in the school hall, builds positive relationships with the community and the school's future pupils. Parents say: 'It gets our children ready for when they start school, so that they know the teachers before they start.' Parents also approve of the school facilitating a session where they come into school to hear their children read. This is received well by the children too, who are developing a love of books and reading.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Governance at the school has not been strong enough. It has taken some time for the governing body to become fully constituted. The school now has a full complement of governors. Recent training has equipped the new governors for their responsibilities. They understand the necessity to share the roles and as good practice, to work with subject areas, helping to monitor performance alongside the co-ordinators. However, this is all at an early stage and the school has been responsible, until now, for driving ahead with support and advice, but without effective leadership, from governors. The Headteacher has kept the governors informed but there has been insufficient challenge and accountability across the school.

The school development plan is complex but does not always make clear the responsibilities. It has over-long timescales. Subject co-ordinators have been given too little time to lead their subject area and drive up standards. They have also not had time to monitor the quality of learning or the curriculum across the school. The school now provides more planning and preparation hours for each co-ordinator. The school's view of itself is mostly accurate and it ensures that the outcomes for pupils are promoted and that there are equal opportunities for all pupils. However, staff and governors are not sufficiently involved in measuring the impact of the provision and initiatives.

Staff are mostly dedicated and have worked hard to improve the school as a team, although their time and energies have not always been utilised to maximum effect and changes have not always been easy. The Headteacher is working closely with the new Acting Deputy to analyse assessment information and to develop target-setting processes. However, the school

still has some way to go with its curriculum overview and to ensure the momentum of progress continues for pupils across both key stages. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet government requirements and most pupils feel safe in school.

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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?	3
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	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?	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	4
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 RC and C of E (VA) Primary School, Staveley, Chesterfield S43 3LY

Thank you for the friendly welcome that you gave Mr Wiggins and I when we visited your school this week. There are many good things happening in your school.

- We liked the new system of older pupils sharing books with the younger ones and that some of you get to read to your mums and dads in the hall on Wednesday afternoons.
- The School Council is a credit to the school - members conducted themselves fantastically and spoke in a most mature manner, giving us lots of very useful information.
- We were really impressed by the cooperation that you showed to each other in classes and in the playground - it was good that you want to help each other and be kind. The Prefects do a good job, too.
- I really enjoyed having lunch with some of you and watching the French session in Class 2.
- It is helpful that so many of your parents come to the class assemblies and to the Toddlers' session on Thursday mornings.

However, we think that you could all do much better with your work.

- The school now has a full governing body. We want the new Governing Body to get up to speed quickly and take a role in how you are all doing.
- How well your teachers are teaching and how well you are learning has not been very well checked and staff are not sufficiently clear about whether you are all learning enough. We have asked your teachers to check this better.
- Some of your work in books is untidy because teachers do not always make it clear that they expect more from you. We want you to try as hard when you write things down in other subjects as when you are working in English.
- Those of you who find work easy do not always do work that is hard enough. We want your teachers to plan more for better progress, especially in Classes 3 to 6.
- We think it is good to talk about your targets with your teachers and have the conference sessions, but we want you to have more targets and to remember them.

We wish you all the best for your futures.

Yours sincerely

Jane Melbourne HMI