

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103436
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	323825
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Usha Devi HMI

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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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	192
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	30
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dirk Hermans
<b>Headteacher</b>	Linda Howell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 June 2003
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Rocky Lane Nechells Birmingham B7 5HA

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 March 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	323825

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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is a smaller than average primary school situated in a residential area. Almost a quarter of pupils are White British and the remainder are from other groups, including Black or Black British Caribbean, and Black or Black British African. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is high and above the national average, as is the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided for children in the Reception class. The school is part of the Birmingham Nechells Education Action Zone. There is a breakfast club on the school premises. The school has been awarded the Activemark.

The school was inspected in February 2008 and was given a Notice to Improve because it was performing less well than could reasonably be expected. The current acting headteacher has been in post since April 2007. Since the previous inspection there have been a number of staff changes. In September 2008, governors appointed a teacher to coordinate literacy and a teacher to coordinate mathematics. Both teachers are members of the school management team. The acting deputy headteacher left in December 2008. A seconded assistant headteacher has joined the school for the spring term. The governors have appointed a substantive deputy headteacher who is expected to join the school in April 2009.

## 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 Catholic Primary School is now a satisfactory school which is improving under the good leadership of the acting headteacher. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. The school is a caring community where staff provide pupils with a good level of care and support. This contributes well to pupils' good personal development. Parents appreciate the high quality care their children receive. One parent wrote a comment that was typical of several: 'The staff and headteacher are very caring and help the children in every way they can.'

Children start Reception with skills and knowledge levels that are below those normally expected. They make satisfactory progress, although still begin Year 1 with levels of attainment that are below those expected for their age. Achievement in Years 1 to 6 is now satisfactory. Some pupils make good progress, particularly in reading and science. Current work and the school's latest assessment information show uneven rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics as pupils move through the school. As a result, standards in reading, writing and mathematics range from broadly in line with to well below average in some classes. This is because the school has not yet fully recovered from the legacy of underachievement caused by previous inadequate provision. Raising standards from the exceptionally low levels of the past is taking time, mainly in writing and mathematics, which remain below average. Standards throughout the school are rising and are now higher, but because of the extent of previous underachievement are below average overall. The acting headteacher is meeting regularly with teachers to identify those who are at risk of underachieving and those who may be capable of reaching higher standards so that appropriate interventions can be put in place to support them.

Since the previous inspection the school has made some important changes to the curriculum, which is now satisfactory with good features. One pupil, reflecting the views of many, said, 'Learning is fun now!' The advantages of investigative and practical learning can be seen in science, where there has been a marked improvement in progress made by pupils. As a consequence, standards in this subject are now similar to national expectations.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and some aspects of teaching are good. Effective features of teaching include teachers making good use of resources and visual aids to explain tasks, and teachers giving pupils the opportunity to talk about the strategies that will enable them to complete tasks successfully. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Teachers do not always make best use of the assessment information they have to meet pupils' individual learning needs. As a result, pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress by the time they leave the school.

While the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory, the leadership of the headteacher is good. With effective support from teachers, support staff, governors and local authority advisors and consultants, she has worked with determination to improve provision and accelerate progress. The newly appointed middle leaders are taking greater responsibility for leading their subjects and key stages, although they are still developing their capacity to monitor their areas. Governors have become far more involved in monitoring the work of the school and are just beginning to acquire the skills required to evaluate the work of the school. The acting headteacher is aware that although they are beginning to contribute towards school improvement, the roles of middle leaders and governors are still underdeveloped. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skill levels that are lower than those typical for their age in all areas of learning. The strongest areas are knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development, with aspects of communication, language and literacy and problem solving, reasoning and numeracy being the weakest. Children make satisfactory progress from their individual starting points in Reception, but they have not reached the expected attainment levels when they transfer to Year 1. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Adults ensure that children learn the required social skills that enable them to settle quickly into school routines and as a result personal and social development is good. Children enjoy a satisfactory range of activities and role play, such as acting as doctors or fire fighters. Adults do not always challenge children sufficiently and activities are sometimes too easy and require little effort.

Links with other Early Years Foundation Stage providers are good and this leads to an easy transition from previous settings to Reception. Initial contact with parents and induction procedures are satisfactory, but there are missed opportunities to involve parents in their child's learning once they have started at school. The outside area is being used increasingly, but the school has acknowledged that this needs further development to have a full impact on children's learning. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school is in the process of updating its policy document and procedures to reflect good practice following recent changes in legislation.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and accelerate progress further, particularly in writing and mathematics, through strengthening opportunities for pupils to practise their skills across the curriculum.
- Ensure teachers make more effective use of assessment information to set activities that provide all pupils with a suitable level of challenge.
- Strengthen further the role played by senior teachers and governors in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school so that they can make a greater contribution to school improvement. 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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and improving. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because of the effective support they receive. A whole-school approach to the teaching of phonics and improvements to the way staff teach science have been particularly successful. As a result, standards in reading and science are close to the national average. Standards in writing and mathematics, although improved, range from average to well below average between classes. The school is taking appropriate action, by providing additional support for pupils who need to catch up with their writing and mathematics. Current work shows that progress in these subjects is accelerating and a higher proportion of pupils than previously are reaching the standards expected for their age. The increased focus on setting activities to meet the different learning needs and learning styles of pupils is helping to narrow the gap between standards achieved by pupils in the school and those nationally.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are at the heart of the school's character. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Pupils very much enjoy school, and one parent commented, 'My children love school.' Attendance is average. Despite the best efforts of the school, a small minority of pupils arrive late. Pupils are good at adopting safe practices both in lessons and around the school. While the vast majority of pupils behave very well, a small minority find conforming to expected levels of behaviour all the time difficult. This was raised rightly by a minority of parents in the inspection questionnaire. The school is working hard to eliminate these isolated incidents. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy eating and the importance of keeping fit. They make a good contribution to the school through the work of the school council and the wider community by raising money for national charities such as Red Nose Day. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage in their learning.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching is improving across the school. Staff share learning outcomes with pupils consistently in lessons so that they know what they are learning and why. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and behaviour is well managed. This leads to a calm and productive working atmosphere during lessons. Progress accelerates when teachers use strategies that engage the pupils in their learning. Pupils respond particularly well when lessons have good pace, tasks are interesting and they can talk about their work with a partner. The pace of learning slows when teachers spend too long on lesson introductions. This reduces the time pupils have to work independently. Although teachers plan for the different abilities in their class, the tasks are sometimes too easy or too difficult for the pupils. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning during group activities as they are well deployed.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is broad and balanced with an appropriate emphasis on English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. This is helping to raise standards in the school. Teachers are beginning to give pupils the chance to apply their literacy and numeracy skills by using them in different subjects. However, opportunities for pupils to extend their literacy and numeracy skills are missed because activities do not always build on pupils' previous skills and knowledge. The curriculum is enriched effectively with a good range of educational visits and visiting speakers and performers. Visits to places such as the Imperial War Museum, the Space Centre and Hatton Country World add to pupils' enjoyment of learning and enable pupils to learn through first-hand experiences.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Pastoral and social care is strong. Pupils say that they feel safe because they can turn to staff if they have a problem. The school's learning mentor provides valuable support to parents and pupils who have concerns. Partnerships with other agencies are good and contribute positively

to the provision for all pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same progress as their classmates because their needs are identified early and they are supported well both in school and by a good range of outside agencies. Safeguarding and child protection procedures are rigorous. Parents are becoming more involved in the work of the school. Positive comments from parents show how much they valued the recent meetings about the national tests. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils know their targets but are not always aware of what they need to do to improve further. Teachers' marking, while usually positive, does not always give pupils information on how well they are progressing towards their targets or the guidance they need to move forward in their learning.

Children talk eagerly about the good support they receive at the breakfast club. As one pupil said, 'It's good at Breakfast Club because you can do interesting activities like reading and drawing and you get a healthy breakfast.'

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

While the collective leadership and management of the school is satisfactory, the leadership of the acting headteacher is good. Staff and governors have responded positively to the changes she has introduced since the previous inspection. The acting headteacher is supported ably by the seconded assistant headteacher. They are both focused clearly on raising standards and improving provision. Senior teachers and governors have a secure understanding of the school's current performance. The raising attainment plan identifies the school's key priorities for improvement accurately. The acting headteacher meets regularly with staff to review the progress of pupils towards their challenging targets. However, teachers do not make best use of this information to plan their lessons. With good support from local authority advisors and consultants, senior staff, teachers and support staff have tackled weaknesses identified at the last inspection and are making a difference to standards in writing and mathematics. The two recently appointed senior teachers are developing their roles satisfactorily. With support from the acting headteacher they are beginning to monitor and evaluate the subjects and keys stages for which they are responsible. Governors are supportive and have benefited from the local authority training. They are increasing their involvement in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school gradually. The school's contribution to the community is satisfactory. The school has recently reviewed the current strategies in place to promote community cohesion and has rightly identified the need to further extend links with parents and the global community.



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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	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### 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/or disabilities make progress	3

<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	3
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**

13 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Birmingham, B7 5HA

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We would like to thank you for sharing with us your experiences and views about the school. We enjoyed talking to you about your work and visiting your lessons. We would like to say a special thank you to the children in the school council and the group of children who came to talk to us about their work. Thank you also for inviting us to the Indian dance performance. We could see how much you were enjoying learning about Indian dancing.

Many of you told us that St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has improved and learning is now fun. We agree! We decided that the school is satisfactory and it has some good features. Here is what we found.

- You are enthusiastic, have good attitudes to learning and are polite and well behaved.
- All the adults who work with you take good care of you and help you to feel safe.
- In lessons, you like it when teachers give you the opportunity to carry out practical tasks and give you the chance to talk to each other about your work.
- Mrs Howell, the staff and governors are working hard to make your school even better.
- You particularly enjoy visiting different places. Many of you told us that the visits help you learn lots of new things.

We have asked Mrs Howell, the staff and governors to help you make even faster progress, particularly in writing and mathematics, so that you can reach even higher standards. The adults that work with you agree and have already made some changes in the school to help you make better progress in these subjects. We have also asked the teachers to give you activities that will help you to do your very best. Finally, we have asked the teachers who have responsibilities, and governors, to use the information they collect about the school to help you do even better. You can help by always trying your hardest.

We enjoyed our time at your school. Thank you once again to all the adults that work with you, the governors and you for making us feel so welcome. We wish you the very best for the future.

Usha Devi

Her Majesty's Inspector