

# St Joseph's RC Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103849
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dudley
<b>Inspection number</b>	323914
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Terry Elston

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)	214
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>	Patrick McKinney
<b>Headteacher</b>	Norah Painter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 October 2005
<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>	Lea Vale Road Norton Stourbridge DY8 2DT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01384 818325
<b>Fax number</b>	01384 818328

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 October 2008
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school admits pupils from mainly White British backgrounds and none is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to most schools. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with knowledge and skills that are generally higher than is typical of their ages. A new headteacher has been in position since September 2008. The privately run pre-school group adjacent to the school was inspected during the same week and a separate report is available on this provision.

## 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 where pupils flourish in all areas of their development. The high quality of pastoral care helps to explain why pupils feel so secure and happy to come to school. Parents think the world of the school, and particularly how 'the teachers' duties go way beyond the classroom'. The highest expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour are evident as early as in the Reception class, so children quickly learn right from wrong and see the need to always do their best work. These principles stay with them throughout the school. They listen carefully to the teachers and their behaviour is impeccable. They show a deep concern for others less fortunate than themselves and raise funds enthusiastically for local and global charities. They take responsibility readily, work well in groups and leave as mature individuals well prepared for the future.

Pupils are rightly proud of their achievements. They make good progress and attain standards that are well above those found nationally in English, mathematics and science in the national tests at both Year 2 and Year 6. Reading is a real strength because teachers give them a love of books and many opportunities to read in all subjects. Pupils also do well in information and communication technology (ICT) and delight in showing off their skills in the ICT suite. Their singing is outstanding.

Pupils speak highly of their 'kind' and 'helpful' teachers, who do everything to make lessons fun by doing things like taking a skeleton to bits, using the interactive whiteboards imaginatively and teaching them in the outside classroom. In nearly all lessons teachers expect a lot from pupils, who respond with great enthusiasm to the challenges set. Occasionally however, teachers ask too little of more able pupils and this restricts their progress.

Teachers have helped design a rich curriculum that combines rigorous work in basic literacy and numeracy skills with exciting opportunities to develop pupils' artistic and musical talents. New initiatives to link subjects together are working well and the Second World War topic completed by Year 6 pupils is a stunning example of how history, art and design, numeracy and literacy can be combined to bring a subject to life. The curriculum also provides exciting opportunities for gifted and talented pupils to hone their skills in sport, science and ICT at local schools and colleges.

The many strengths of the school are made possible by good leadership and management. The headteacher shows a good awareness of how to move the school forwards and has quickly gained the respect of pupils, staff and parents. The priorities for improvement have a good focus on raising standards while maintaining the school's high spiritual and moral values. Leaders recognise that to ensure the consistency of good teaching they must ensure that teachers benefit from more regular and rigorous evaluations of their teaching and receive clear guidance on how to improve further. The school has done well since the last inspection and shows good capacity to do even better.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision is good. Children get off to a good start when they join Reception because of the extensive transition arrangements with the adjacent pre-school group. They make good progress and leave the Reception class with skill levels significantly higher than those expected of their ages. The exceptional care and support they are given helps them to develop their personal

and social skills particularly well. Their behaviour is excellent. Parents are full of praise for the good teaching that 'makes children want to come to school every day'. Teachers are very good at making learning fun, which is why children do so well. For example, the teacher used a humorous computer programme to teach children to listen to instructions and control a computer mouse. The children squealed with delight as they made a cartoon dustbin 'burp'. Staff observe and record children's progress carefully and use this information well to plan the next steps in learning.

The curriculum is planned well to provide children with a good balance of work and play. The classroom is bright and stimulating, with lots of examples of children's work to remind them of their learning. However, the outdoor area is inadequate and provides too few opportunities for pupils to build on the skills learned in the classroom. Leadership and management are good. The staff work very closely as a team to evaluate the provision and seek ways to make improvements. The transition from Reception is managed well and ensures that children are fully prepared to enter Year 1.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that the evaluation of teaching and learning provides teachers with a clear picture of how they can improve, particularly in keeping up the challenge for more able pupils in lessons.
- Provide children in the Reception class with an outdoor area that will build on their progress in all areas of learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils make good progress and achieve well. In Key Stage 1, children build well on the good start they make in the Reception class and attain standards that are significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2, and standards are rising year by year. By Year 6, pupils have maintained this rapid rate of progress and standards by the current group of pupils are well above average in English, mathematics and science. These standards have been sustained for some years. While these are not as high as the exceptional standards in the 2008 national tests, they represent good progress for this cohort. The school provides good support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and they achieve well.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. They think deeply about issues and have the confidence to express their feelings on topics such as emotions and the futility of war. They care passionately about the environment, and the Eco Warriors lead the way by raising other pupils' awareness of the need to recycle waste, and checking on how much fuel the school uses. Pupils have a good awareness of different cultures of the world and those represented in the local area. They develop a very clear sense of right and wrong and behave exceptionally. As one pupil said, on the few occasions when they squabble, they 'just sort it out'. Pupils enjoy school and attendance rates are above average. They feel safe and have the confidence to talk to adults about their problems. They explain knowledgeably about how to live healthy lifestyles and say how much they enjoy the nutritious food prepared at lunchtime. They are involved extensively in the local community and love singing and raising funds for charities. Pupils feel well prepared for the future by taking full advantage of the

opportunities to plan budgets, working together on projects and developing good literacy, numeracy and computer skills.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

In nearly all cases, teachers' high expectations mean that pupils work hard towards challenging targets. Occasionally, however, teachers set work that is too easy for the most able pupils and they just coast along. Lessons are typically lively and fun, with exciting resources and a wide range of teaching methods that keep pupils interested. Teachers give pupils many opportunities to discuss things with each other as 'talking partners' and this helps them benefit from each other's expertise. Teachers use their interactive whiteboards skilfully to motivate pupils and speed up learning of equivalent fractions and punctuation. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to support pupils who need extra help and this ensures they take a full part in lessons. Teachers make detailed assessments of pupils' progress and use them very effectively to improve the quality of their work. For example, in one lesson the teacher used examples of work that pupils had handed in to show them how they made unnecessary mistakes. You could see the penny drop. Teachers are very good at involving the pupils in the assessment of their own work and this gives them a clear picture of how well they are doing.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school has done much work to provide a curriculum that is interesting and relevant to the needs of all pupils. The detailed planning helps pupils build well on the skills they have learned before and is a key factor in their good progress through the school. The curriculum has a strong focus on basic literacy, numeracy and ICT, but also provides extensive opportunities to develop pupils' musical and artistic skills. There are good examples of history and geography topics that are also very effective at improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. This is not universal, however, which is one reason why progress in these key subjects is faster in some classes than in others. A wide range of visitors enrich the curriculum, as was seen to good effect when some pupils' grandparents came in to give them first-hand accounts of life during the Second World War. The very well planned personal, social, health and citizenship programme plays an important part in helping pupils understand the need to live healthy lives and learn about different faiths and cultures. There is a wide range of popular activities at lunchtime and after school that enrich the curriculum.

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

#### **Grade: 1**

The exemplary quality of care, guidance and support has a strong impact on the personal development and academic achievements of pupils. Adults know the pupils very well and are guided by robust systems to ensure pupils' health, safety and well-being. Parents speak very highly of the arrangements for their children starting in Reception and the way they enable them to settle quickly and enjoy school. Academic guidance is good, but the new systems to track pupils' progress are still bedding-in and are not yet used fully to identify which groups are making faster progress than others. The school provides good support and guidance for

pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities that ensure their individual needs are well met.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The new headteacher has made a good start and has quickly gained an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The priorities of the senior leadership team are clear with a good focus on raising standards while maintaining the highest level of pastoral care. Self-evaluation is good and the school's track record shows its success in identifying weaknesses and introducing measures to rectify them. For example, when the leaders saw that standards in writing were not as high as they should be, they introduced initiatives to make writing more fun. They worked and standards have improved significantly. Systems to evaluate the quality of teaching lack the rigour necessary to ensure that teaching builds on its strengths throughout the school. In particular, teachers are given extensive feedback on what they do well but very little about how they can improve. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. In particular, it has nurtured productive links with other schools and establishments that do much to enhance pupils' skills in sport, ICT and science as well as developing their awareness of other faiths and cultures. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable governors support the school well and are not afraid to hold it to account.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2
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	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2
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?	1

## 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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's RC Primary School, Stourbridge, DY8 2DT

Thank you for your valuable help in our recent inspection of your school. We were very impressed with the way you spoke so confidently to us. One highlight for me was your brilliant singing and I will remember your version of 'I can see clearly now' for a long time. You are clearly very proud of your good school and you are right to be.

What we found out about your school.

- You make good progress and the standard of your work is much higher than is found in most schools.
- You have a really good knowledge of how to keep safe and live healthy lives.
- You think the world of your teachers. They make lessons fun so that you enjoy learning.
- You enjoy the activities planned for you and the wide range of clubs at lunchtime and after school for things like music and sport.
- Your behaviour is outstanding, and you take very good care of each other.
- You enjoy taking responsibility, and the school council and Eco Warriors are a credit to your school.
- Your school's leaders run the school well and know how to improve it further.
- All the adults take very good care of you and are always there if you need help.

What we would like the school to do now.

- Make sure that the school's leaders help your teachers to teach even better, particularly in ensuring that those pupils who learn fastest have enough to challenge them in lessons.
- Improve the outside area for the children in the Reception so they can learn just as well outside as inside.

Best wishes for the future!

Yours sincerely

Terry Elston

Lead inspector