

# St Josephs Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106348
<b>Local Authority</b>	Trafford
<b>Inspection number</b>	324376
<b>Inspection date</b>	23 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kevin Johnson

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)	389
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Paul Vallely
<b>Headteacher</b>	Professor Barbara Harrold
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 May 2006
<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>	Marlborough Road Sale Cheshire M33 3AF

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date</b>	23 March 2009
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**Telephone number**  
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage; standards achieved by pupils and the progress they make; the quality of teaching and learning; aspects of care, guidance and support; and the leadership and management of the school. Evidence was collected from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, policies and minutes, observation of the school at work, discussions with senior members of staff, pupils and governors, and the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in the self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

## Description of the school

This is a bigger than average sized school. The large majority of pupils are White British. An increasing number of pupils from minority ethnic groups are at an early stage of speaking English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is exceptionally low. The number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage comprises part-time pre-school on site and full-time Reception classes. The pre-school is inspected separately and receives a separate report. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status and Activemark and is currently working towards achieving Artsmark Gold.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

St Joseph's is an outstanding school. Highly effective leadership and management have steered the school from strength to strength since the last inspection. The quality of teaching and, consequently, standards and achievement, have continued to rise.

Parents typically comment on the welcoming and caring ethos of the school and many say that they could not imagine a better place for their children to be. The school provides exceptional care, guidance and support for all of its pupils. As a result, their academic and personal development thrives. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Attendance is well above average and their behaviour is exemplary at all times. Pupils enjoy school immensely because of the richness of the curriculum and the challenging opportunities they have to develop their talents in a variety of ways across all subjects. Pupils are fully aware of what it means to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They display extremely sensible attitudes towards diet and exercise, and know how to keep themselves safe. The very active school council ensures that all pupils have a voice in school affairs. Others take on equally important responsibilities as members of the eco-council or helping to raise funds for the many charities they support.

Standards have been maintained over time at well above average levels and show a continuous rising trend since the last inspection. Standards currently in Year 2 and Year 6 are well above expectations for the age of the pupils. The school's assessments and inspection evidence indicate that there are likely to be further improvements in Year 2, particularly in the number of pupils who reach the higher Level 3 in reading and mathematics. Standards in Year 6 are also set to improve overall, most notably in writing because of the successful measures put in place to boost writing across the whole school. Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Children start in Reception with skills typical for their age and leave Year 6 having reached standards that are well above average. National data consistently indicate that the school is in the top 10% of all schools in respect of pupils' progress from Year 2 to Year 6. Those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress because their learning is very carefully mapped out. Their progress is checked continually, and from lower starting points many achieve the levels expected for their age by the end of Year 6. The school welcomes increasing numbers of pupils for whom English is an additional language. They make good progress in acquiring the skills needed to speak, read and write English but school leaders acknowledge that more needs to be done to help them make even faster progress.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. It has improved since the previous inspection and accounts for pupils' excellent achievement. Inspectors could find no evidence to support the view held by a few parents that teaching quality had declined. Lessons are lively and active because teachers' enthusiasm for their subjects rubs off on the pupils. For example, a teacher's skilful and exciting reading of a passage from a fantasy story inspired some highly imaginative ideas for writing from the whole class. Planning is excellent and fully takes account of pupils' varying abilities by making sure that individual lesson plans are prepared for those who require additional support. Learning is meaningful because ideas and skills are linked across subjects. In a mathematics lesson, for example, pupils studied the artistic mosaics of the Alhambra Palace to learn about lines of symmetry. Electronic whiteboards are used to great effect to add pace and interest to lessons. Teachers question pupils skilfully to assess and extend their learning. Teaching assistants make an outstanding contribution to pupils' learning. They are highly skilled

members of the teaching team. They know pupils well and are very sensitive to their particular needs.

The headteacher's leadership is inspirational. Her vision and determination to take standards to the highest level have led to the improvements which have raised this to an outstanding school. She is very ably supported by senior leaders and staff whose expertise is a crucial factor in monitoring and providing a fully accurate view of the school's performance. Leaders set, and consistently achieve, challenging targets for attainment based on their accurate knowledge of pupils' abilities. Inclusion is central to the school's caring ethos, and all safeguarding procedures are in place. The promotion of community cohesion is outstanding. This is exemplified in pupils' extremely positive attitudes towards racial harmony and diversity which are fostered, for example, through the excellent parish and other community links, joint activities with pupils from a school in Bolton where there are pupils from many different cultures, and the understanding and support they share with pupils from schools overseas. Governors provide excellent support for the school and play a major part in its direction and development. They are strong critical partners, know the school well and evaluate the impact of their decisions carefully. Finances are managed expertly to ensure outstanding value for money. Leaders continue to demonstrate the excellent capacity for improvement identified in the last report.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

The exceptional leadership of the recently appointed Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator has resulted in outstanding provision. Children make excellent progress. From typical starting points for their age, children progress to almost all meeting their early learning goals, and a significant number exceeding them, by the time they enter Year 1. An exciting range of activities, including visits out of school, stimulates learning and promotes children's outstanding personal skills. Excellent use is made of the outside classroom to challenge and extend children's learning and development. The confidence they gain from learning to link letters and sounds makes them eager to write and record what they do. In a rewarding outdoor gardening session, activities were punctuated by teachers' questions such as: 'Do they all have the same number of petals?' and 'Why do we dig a hole to plant the potato?' which made children observe more closely and think about what they had learned. Provision for children's welfare is outstanding. There is excellent partnership and consultation between parents and staff. All staff members are fully involved in assessing progress and planning the next steps in learning. Children are made to feel secure so that they make rapid gains in confidence and the ability to work as independent learners.

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

- Extend support for pupils who learn English as an additional language.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

**Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

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

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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<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	1
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	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Sale, M33 3AF

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. Even though our stay was quite short we enjoyed it tremendously because of your outstanding politeness, good manners and your all-round friendliness. Your attendance and behaviour are excellent.

You have an outstanding school and it is easy to see why you enjoy it so much. Your achievement is excellent, not just in literacy, mathematics and science, but in other subjects too. There is some very impressive art to be seen and I was bowled over by Year 5's singing of Side by Side! Your teachers and headteacher are outstanding too in the way they all work to make sure you have the best possible education. The grown-ups in school take extremely good care of you.

Your parents, teachers and school governors are just as proud of St Joseph's as you are and would like to continue to provide the very best for everyone. To help them to do that I have asked school leaders to make sure those pupils, whom you welcome into your school but do not speak English, always get the exact help they need so that they make the same excellent progress as the rest of you. I am sure you can think of ways of helping them too.