

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Otley

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108014
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	324688
Inspection date	3 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Rosemary Eaton

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	196
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs D Gaskin
Headteacher	Mrs J Smith
Date of previous school inspection	12 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Manor Square Otley West Yorkshire LS21 3AP
Telephone number	01943 463840
Fax number	01943 464191

Age group	4–11
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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: how well teaching promotes pupils' progress and achievement; pupils' personal development and well-being; and the impact of leadership on standards. Evidence was collected from: the school's self-evaluation; its assessment records; observations of the school at work; discussions with pupils, the headteacher and representatives of parents, staff and the governing body; a scrutiny of school documents and 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 its self-evaluation form were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

St Joseph's mainly serves the market town of Otley. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. Most pupils are White British. A higher than average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although there are none with a statement of special educational needs. A comparatively high number of pupils join the school at other than the usual time of first admission. There are currently 26 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, taught in a Reception class. The school has gained the Inclusion Chartermark, Activemark and Healthy Schools awards. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed since the previous inspection.

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. It has some outstanding features, one of which is pupils' personal development. That they enjoy school enormously is quite evident from pupils' above average attendance, enthusiasm for all manner of activities, and from comments such as, 'We've got lots of friends and nice teachers'. Parents often highlight the school's caring ethos as a feature they value greatly. At St Joseph's, pupils are actively encouraged to look after each other, for example, through the 'buddy' system. Year 6 pupils are justifiably proud of the way in which they support children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They introduce them to routines, for instance, in the dining room; make toys for them during design and technology lessons; and share a teddy bears' picnic. Above all, as older pupils remark, 'the children always have someone to help them'.

From broadly average starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils make good progress as they move up through the school, and they achieve well. Following the last inspection, unavoidable staffing difficulties led to teaching and learning becoming rather less effective than previously. As a result, pupils' progress slowed and was satisfactory overall. Although new to their roles, leaders have responded thoughtfully and firmly to halt this decline. For example, systems to track pupils' progress have been overhauled and improved. This means that staff spot more quickly if an individual is not on track to meet their targets and can then take the action needed to steer the pupil back on course. The school's assessment information provides strong indications that progress is accelerating as such new procedures are becoming embedded.

Overall teaching and learning are good. Lessons are planned carefully and teachers and pupils are quite clear about what learning is to take place. As a consequence, pupils are increasingly involved in evaluating their progress and determining how they can improve. For example, they help to set their own targets. Relationships between pupils and adults are warm and mutually respectful so pupils are confident to ask for help. Teaching assistants make strong contributions to learning, often supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities so they, too, make good progress and achieve well. Teachers choose activities that spark pupils' interest, frequently making effective use of information and communication technology. In the main, they rise successfully to the challenge of adapting tasks to suit the varying needs of their pupils. Occasionally, the work for different groups of pupils is too similar. This can mean that some have to rely heavily on adult support while others are not stretched enough. In both cases, learning slows down.

Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6. In particular, significant proportions of pupils reach the higher National Curriculum level (Level 5) except in writing. At the end of Year 2, writing is also the weakest aspect of pupils' attainment. Accurate self-evaluation has enabled leaders to identify the need to raise standards in writing and a range of measures are set out in the school's plans for improving its performance. There has not yet been time to see their impact on standards. Despite the comparative weakness in writing, the skills, attitudes and characteristics pupils acquire set them up exceptionally well for the next stage in their education. They are extremely well mannered and polite. Staff reinforce these qualities at all times, for example, by thanking and complimenting pupils. Pupils themselves are instrumental in encouraging positive attitudes. The school council is very active and has instigated a 'golden table' to reward particularly good behaviour at lunchtime. Pupils are delighted when midday supervisors nominate them for this

honour, appreciating treats such as flowers on the table and fruit juice to drink. Pupils' exceptional contribution to the school, local and wider community is enhanced by the outstanding partnerships forged by St Joseph's. The school supports community cohesion well. Year 6 pupils are eagerly anticipating visiting and working with pupils from a school that serves a community very different to their own.

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support. Leaders ensure that current government safeguarding requirements are met. The school does its utmost to ensure that all pupils get the help they need, working closely with a wide range of agencies and professionals. This commitment underpins the school's good practice in promoting equality and eliminating discrimination. A strength of the good quality curriculum is the way in which pupils' personal development is promoted during lessons, daily routines and the huge variety of clubs and visits. Pupils are extremely knowledgeable about healthy lifestyles and they take part enthusiastically in physical activities. Older pupils are aware of the rise in childhood obesity and understand why the school encourages them to make healthy choices. Pupils' awareness of how to stay safe is exceptional. They appreciate that reckless use of the internet could expose them to danger and know exactly how to respond should they have any concerns. The school organises termly anti-bullying assemblies and an anti-bullying week in the autumn term and most pupils feel entirely safe in school. Pupils behave outstandingly well in lessons and around school, even though a few of them need extra help to manage their behaviour.

The headteacher ensures that her determination to enable every pupil to achieve as well as possible is shared by staff and governors. Teamwork within the school is very strong. Governance is good. Governors have developed their ability to challenge the school by increasing their understanding of performance data. This is one example of how the school has moved forward since the previous inspection. The current leaders' track record reveals a good capacity for continued improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception class from around 13 different nursery settings. A strength of the provision is the way in which staff rapidly establish each child's needs, settle them into routines, and enable them to start learning. Induction arrangements are excellent and right from the start parents are partners in children's education. When they join the class, children's skills vary greatly but are, overall, broadly in line with the expectations for their age. Their social skills are typically well developed but reading, writing and calculating are less strong. Children make good progress as a result of good teaching and well planned learning opportunities. By the end of the Reception Year, most children are working at the expected levels and a significant proportion has exceeded them. However, writing skills tend to lag behind. Children greatly enjoy their learning, for example, enthusiastically throwing large dice and developing their number skills in the secure outdoor area. They are cared for exceptionally well. Very positive relationships with staff and older pupils help children to become extremely confident and sociable. For example, they play their part as members of the school council. Leadership and management are good and ensure that assessment procedures are thorough and systematic, tracking each child's progress carefully over the year.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching consistently meets the needs of all pupils.
- Improve attainment in writing for children in the Reception Year and pupils in Years 1 to 6.

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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?	1
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 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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	1

The quality of provision

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

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 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**

Thank you for being so pleasant and helpful when my colleague and I visited your school. We really enjoyed our short time with you. Special thanks go to the members of the school council. They gave us lots of interesting information during our discussions. This letter is to let you know what we found out about your school. St Joseph's is a good school and it has some outstanding features.

One of these is your own personal development. You learn a great deal about staying safe and healthy and we were extremely impressed by your good manners and excellent behaviour. You make an outstanding contribution to the school and the community, becoming super young citizens. The skills you learn and the way you always try hard to do well mean that you are prepared extremely well for moving on to secondary school. Above all, you told us how much you enjoy school. You mentioned that you particularly like your friends and teachers and all the exciting clubs and activities.

You make good progress and reach standards that are above average. This is because you have good teaching. We noticed that, occasionally, the work you do is a bit too hard for some of you and too easy for others. We have asked the school to make sure your work is always just hard enough. You can help by telling your teachers if you find tasks too hard or too easy. You don't always reach the same high levels in writing as you do in other kinds of learning. We would like the school to help you improve your writing. We are sure that you will play your part by continuing to try hard.

Your headteacher, the staff and governors are working very hard to make your school even better. We would like to send them, and each one of you, our very best wishes for the future.