

# St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Highfield

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108391
<b>Local Authority</b>	Gateshead
<b>Inspection number</b>	324760
<b>Inspection date</b>	28 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Graeme Clarke

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)	109
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>	Mrs Carol Lauder
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Anne Parkin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 February 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>	Whinfield Way Rowlands Gill Tyne and Wear NE39 2JE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01207 545972
<b>Fax number</b>	01207 549417

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors gathered evidence from lesson observations, looking at pupils' work, assessment information, documents, interviews and discussions with the headteacher, staff, pupils and a member of the governing body. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects:

- pupils' standards and progress overall in Key Stage 1 and in mathematics in Key Stage 2
- the way the school uses target setting and assessments to support pupils' learning
- the quality of management and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

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, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This smaller than average size school moved into a new building together with a community primary school in April 2007. The two schools share some facilities such as the hall and computer suite. The school serves mainly Roman Catholic families from the Derwent valley area to the south west of Gateshead. The locality is mixed but broadly average in its socio-economic character. An average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Almost all pupils come from a White British heritage. A very small number are learning to speak English as an additional language. EYFS provision is in the Reception class.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Joseph's is a good and very inclusive school. Many aspects of its work are outstanding. The headteacher, ably assisted by her senior team, provides clear educational direction to the school's work. All adults in school successfully foster the principle that every child does indeed matter. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. The school forges very effective partnerships with parents, the church, local government, community organisations and nearby schools. These partnerships, together with pupils' study of life in other countries such as through the 'One World' project, greatly widen their understanding, enhance their well-being and make an outstanding contribution to community cohesion. Parents of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are especially appreciative of the school's support which successfully enables their children to play a full part in school life. Almost all parents have total confidence in the school. One sums up their views, 'My little girl is thoroughly enjoying school, her development is remarkable; writing, spelling, numeracy have improved very quickly. I am delighted with the progress she has made.'

Achievement is good. Pupils enter Year 1 with broadly average starting points, they make good progress and leave school with standards that are above average. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have experienced difficulties with staffing changes in recent years and this has affected the continuity of their learning. Nevertheless, they have made satisfactory progress and teachers' assessments show standards at the end of Year 2 are average with an above average number of pupils reaching the higher levels in writing and mathematics. The staffing situation is now much more settled and pupils' progress is improving. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2. The results of national tests in 2007 were above average in English, mathematics and science. Provisional results for 2008 show a similar picture overall. Reading rose noticeably as every pupil reached the level expected for their age and an increasing number reached the higher level. Standards in mathematics also improved at the higher level. However, in science and writing standards dipped slightly because fewer pupils exceeded the level expected for their age. In English and mathematics results exceeded the statutory targets set. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the few with English as an additional language receive effective help and make good progress.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They have a particularly strong sense of social and moral awareness. The large stained glass window produced by pupils working with a specialist artist is a marvellous example of creative and spiritual development. The Healthy School Award reflects pupils' very strong grasp of the need for healthy eating and that many take part enthusiastically in the wide range of physical activities during and after school. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, would not change anything about it and, notably, really value the friendships they make. Attendance has improved to above average. Exemplary behaviour in lessons and assemblies and very polite and considerate conduct in corridor spaces carries over to the playground where pupils play safely. They say bullying is minimal and quickly dealt with. Pupils happily share the accomplishments and success of others. They contribute very extensively to their school and the wider community, for example, through their school council, buddy system, school performances and charitable work. Very effective partnerships and well developed social and basic skills ensure pupils are well prepared for their future.

Pupils benefit from good teaching and an outstandingly rich curriculum enhanced by the contribution of many visitors and visits and after-school clubs. Lessons are well planned with interesting and challenging activities. Teaching assistants are well deployed and give effective

support which ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities fully participate in lessons and make good progress. Care, guidance and support are good. Relationships between adults and pupils are exemplary and reflect the school's outstanding ethos of pastoral care. In turn all pupils thoroughly enjoy learning and make good progress. Recently introduced arrangements to track pupils' progress and support anyone at risk of falling behind are not yet having their full effect. This is because pupils' long term goals lack sufficient clarity to guide teachers when tracking pupils' progress, although there are strengths on which to build. Teachers now help each pupil to understand what they should concentrate upon to improve the quality of their work in the short term, more so when they mark pupils' writing than mathematics

The headteacher shows great commitment and resolve to develop and improve the school which gives good value for money. Good leadership and management have led to pupils' good achievement. Governors fulfil their role in an exemplary way. They have a clear knowledge of the school from reports they receive and from systematically gaining a first hand view of its work. They hold it to account and they too are determined that the school should improve. They ensure safeguarding requirements are met. Senior leaders diligently monitor pupils' progress and their review of the school's performance is mostly accurate and leads to a well formed action plan for development. The school has successfully addressed most issues raised at the last inspection. Nevertheless, there are clear signs of success in improving attendance, the quality of teaching, and in raising standards in reading, science and mathematics. The school has a good capacity for further improvement.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Children make a good start in the Reception class. Staff hold the welfare of children in the utmost regard and offer the highest level of care and appropriate support. Strong links with parents foster their confidence. One comments, 'I have been delighted with the friendly atmosphere... all the children know and support one another... The ethos comes across as caring, friendly and supportive. The buddy system is a particularly nice way of helping children settle.' Children are courteous and considerate which reflects well formed and positive relationships. They develop confidence and become totally immersed in the activities which are carefully planned and managed for them both inside and outside. Children's involvement in activities they initiate or the teachers direct is diligently guided, carefully monitored and their progress is recorded. This good teaching is the product of effective collaboration between teachers and assistants and leads children to learn well in all areas of the curriculum.

When children began Reception last year their skills and knowledge were below those typical for this age group, although a little higher than usual in mathematical development. Most children made good progress so by the end of Reception in 2008 they reached above average in all areas of learning except mathematical development which was well above average. Standards at the end of Reception were broadly average two years ago and have improved because of the recently introduced assessment procedures which give staff a good grasp of each child's progress. This information is used effectively in planning activities that match individual needs. The relatively new leadership shows determination to improve further and promote greater progress and higher achievement.

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

- Make pupils' long term goals more precise and use these targets more effectively to track and support their progress.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	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?	2
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	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

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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	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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

## 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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	2
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



## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

1 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Highfield, Gateshead, NE39 2JE

Mr Hall and I really enjoyed our recent visit to inspect your school. Thank you for helping us when we came into your classrooms and assembly to see you at work. You were very polite and helpful and we did enjoy talking with those of you whom we met. We were delighted to see how much you like to take part in activities during and after school, how you value the help you get and especially the friendships you make. You are very well behaved and considerate to others in lessons and outside. We were pleased to see how you contribute to school life, for example as school councillors, house captains or buddies and how you help others who are less fortunate than you. The headteacher and all the staff are very proud of you.

Your school gives you a good education. Your new building is very warm and welcoming and well organised. All the adults in the school look after you very well and that is why you feel safe and happy. Last year many children in the Reception class made good progress. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 also made good progress, especially in reading and mathematics. We noted that last year pupils in Year 2 did well at the higher levels in writing and mathematics and that standards overall in Year 6 are above average. We were especially pleased that pupils who get extra help did really well. When we looked at your books we were pleased to see how much care you take to make your work neat. We saw how teachers tell you how well you are doing and, especially in your writing books, how you can improve. When we looked at the targets you have, and spoke with some of you we found you uncertain about the levels of work to aim for at the end of your time at St Joseph's, and what to do to reach them. We have asked the school to help those of you in Years 3 to 6 be clear about the levels in English, mathematics and science it expects you to reach by the end of Year 6, and to help you to reach them.

You have very many opportunities at St Joseph's RC Primary School to learn about life and these should stand you in good stead for the future. We hope that you all do really well.

Graeme Clarke

Lead inspector