

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111373
<b>Local Authority</b>	Warrington
<b>Inspection number</b>	325363
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 September 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Clare Henderson

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)	315
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>	Donna Kendal
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Alan Saunders
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 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>	Walton Avenue Penketh Warrington Cheshire WA5 2AU

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 September 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	325363

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This larger than average, oversubscribed school, serves an area of relatively high social advantage. Most pupils are White British and none of the few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average, as is the number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has gained a number of awards including Healthy Schools, Activemark, Artsmark and Basic Skills Quality Mark. The headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in September 2008.

## 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 Catholic Primary is a good school with outstanding features. Key factors in its success are the excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning shown by pupils. This, accompanied by good quality teaching and outstanding pastoral care, enables pupils to become confident learners, secure in the knowledge that their achievements and interests are valued. Parents overwhelmingly appreciate what the school provides. Comments such as, 'St Joseph's is part of our family's life', and, 'this is a well run caring school', sum up their feelings. Inspection findings agree with parental views.

The children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Achievement is good throughout the school. Standards attained in Year 6 national tests have been, for the most part, above the national average since the last inspection. In tests, Year 2 pupils consistently attain above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2007, Year 6 results showed a dip in mathematics and science, and so the school swiftly put in place a wide range of additional opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical and scientific investigative skills. The impact of this rapid intervention has been seen in the improved provisional 2008 test results.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils say they, 'love school', and thoroughly enjoy learning. This is reflected in their attendance which is well above the national average. Pupils say they feel safe and know there is someone to talk to if they have a problem. They greatly value opportunities to express their views, for example, as school councillors. Pupils have an excellent awareness of the need to lead a healthy lifestyle and they understand the reasons why it is important to have a healthy diet and do plenty of exercise. The school takes every opportunity to involve pupils both in the school and wider community, through, for example, links with a school in Uganda and as a Fair Trade school. This well developed sense of the global dimension of community prepares them very well for their future lives.

Pupils' enjoyment of learning is excellent because activities provided by the good curriculum meet their interests well. The teachers make learning fun and so pupils make good progress in lessons. Marking of pupils work is especially effective in English where pupils are given good support and guidance on how to improve their work. This guidance is not as effective in other subject areas where pupils are less clear about how to improve their work further. Good partnerships with support agencies and high quality intervention by teachers and teaching assistants ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well.

Leadership and management are good. Governors contribute very effectively to this process. Appointments have been carefully made to ensure continuity of leadership. Staff, under the leadership of the new headteacher, have a clear understanding of how their defined roles and responsibilities benefit the whole school and all its pupils. However, the management skills of some curriculum subject leaders, in evaluating pupils' progress and identifying how pupils' learning can improve, are underdeveloped.

Accurate self-evaluation ensures that the school knows itself well and this contributes to its sustained improvement. Arrangements are in place to promote child protection, health and safety. The school is in a good position to improve even further and it provides good value for money.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children join Reception with skills that are typical for their age. They settle happily into the stimulating, lively environment and become confident learners who work together well and show positive attitudes in all activities. They make good progress and particularly so in their personal development which is outstanding. For example, in all their activities they show very good care and respect for one another. By the end of Reception, they achieve skills that are securely within the early learning goals expected of them. This is as a result of the good teaching, care and support they receive. Daily sessions focusing on letters and sounds help to boost their early reading and writing skills well. The outdoor learning areas are used well so that learning takes place in an environment, which encourages the children to explore and investigate. Planned improvements to outside areas will improve provision for children's physical development still further. The EYFS is well led. Planning is successfully matched to children's needs because it is based on thorough observations of the children. There are excellent partnerships with parents. They speak highly of links made with them, particularly prior to their children starting Reception. A comment typical of them is, 'it is well organised and well thought out'.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of marking in all subjects to ensure pupils know how to improve their work.
- Extend the management skills of curriculum subject leaders to enable them to evaluate pupils' progress and identify next steps in learning more clearly.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are above average and all pupils achieve well in their academic development. Good progress from the EYFS continues in Years 1 and 2 so that, by the age of seven, pupils reach standards which are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In Years 3 to 6, emphasis on the basic skills of reading, writing, mathematics and science ensures good achievement for all pupils. Standards in mathematics and science dipped to average in the 2007 national tests. The school identified what it needed to do to bring about improvement and rapidly moved to improve provision. For example, they introduced more investigation and problem solving into the mathematics and science curriculum. The impact of the strategies introduced was seen in the improved provisional 2008 tests results when standards well above national expectations were seen in English, mathematics and science. Particularly pleasing were the good number of pupils who reached the higher than expected levels. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the good support they receive.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of pupils are outstanding. Pupils work very well together supporting one another and are keen to share their good feelings about St Joseph's. Pupils' personal qualities reflect very good support given for their moral and social development. Spiritual development is outstanding. The school is cultivating links with a school in Uganda and it has plans to increase the pupils' understanding of the multicultural society existing

locally. Pupils are very proud of their school and eagerly undertake the many roles and responsibilities they are given; for example, as playground buddies ensuring that younger pupils' are happy at lunchtime. As a result, they develop into mature young people ready to transfer to the high school. Pupils really enjoy their work in class. An example of this was seen in a Year 6 class where a group of pupils were eager to carry on their work even though the teacher wanted to gather the group of pupils together. Pupils are very aware of health and safety issues reflected in their achievement of the Healthy school and Activemark awards. Citizenship is very well developed especially through strong links within the local community. For example, pupils learn to waltz so that they can join with senior citizens for a bi-annual tea dance. Links with local industry widens pupils understanding of the world of work and prepares them well for their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is good and this results in effective learning by pupils throughout the school, which adds to pupil's enjoyment of lessons. A range of teaching styles, including the effective use of humour, contributes to the very positive attitude pupils have towards their school and their learning. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is outstanding. They enjoy learning and work enthusiastically on the tasks they are set. There are very good relationships between pupils and this enables them to develop their collaborative learning skills when the need arises. Teachers are confident and knowledgeable in their delivery of lessons, although in a small number of lessons, pace is lost and learning slows because there is too much teacher talk at the beginning of the lesson. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good because support for them is well informed and well organised.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good; it meets statutory requirements and matches the academic and personal needs of all pupils. Throughout the school, pupils develop a firm grasp of the basic skills that they will need for future success. Pupils the school identifies as gifted and talented have opportunities to extend their skills through effective links with local high schools. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of after-school activities and clubs in which all teachers are involved. These promote pupils' interests and talents well. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to engage and interest pupils has had a positive effect on pupil enjoyment, but currently, there is not enough access to direct use of ICT on a day-to-day basis. One of the strengths of the curriculum is that it offers pupils numerous opportunities to practice their writing skills in lots of different subject areas and scenarios, which support the development of this vital skill. Consequently, standards in writing are above average throughout the school.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of care, guidance and support is good overall. However, the pastoral care and support pupils receive is outstanding. All pupils are treated with respect as individuals, while at the same time they learn and understand their responsibility to care for each other. Target-setting is used well to encourage learning. In English, pupils are guided well through

their marked work in how to improve further. However, this good practice is not consistent across all subjects. The guidance given to those identified as gifted and talented or with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good, adding great value to their learning. Pupils feel safe, secure and confident and they have a strong respect and trust for their teachers. Procedures for safeguarding pupils and for assessing risks are in place and national guidelines for the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers are followed.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The highly effective governing body has, together with the recently established senior leadership team, been instrumental in ensuring that a smooth transition, following the retirement of the longstanding headteacher, has taken place. This continuity has ensured that excellent personal development and care for all pupils has been maintained. The recently established leadership team has quickly developed a clear knowledge of the school's needs, has identified the correct priorities for improvement and set in place good action to achieve them. This, coupled with the strength of previous initiatives shows the school's good capacity to improve further. The school sets and reaches challenging targets. Equal opportunities are promoted well and resources are used effectively for the benefit of pupils' learning so that all pupils make good progress. Governors' clear understanding of the school's work and their support for the headteacher's high aspirations enables them to give the school good guidance and challenge.



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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?	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?	2
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

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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>	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?	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	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**

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you very much for your help when we inspected your school. We enjoyed our visit very much. Thanks to all those pupils who talked to us about what you were doing in lessons, what happens in the playground and the jobs that you do around the school. Special thanks to the pupils who met us at lunchtime. Now I would like to share with you what we thought about your school.

Yours is a good school, for instance:

- the staff take excellent care of you all and teach you well
- children in the Reception class have a good start to their schooling
- your attitude to lessons is very good and it is clear that you all enjoy school
- we were impressed with how well you are doing in writing
- the school works well in partnership with local high schools to make your learning exciting and interesting
- the staff provide you with good opportunities to enjoy activities after school.

To make the school even better, the staff need to:

- let you know, when they mark your work, what you need to do next in order to improve further
- Ensure that subject curriculum leaders become more involved in checking on how well you are doing in your work so that they can help you do even better.

We hope that you will carry on working hard and help the teachers so that St Joseph's can become an even better school.