

Saint Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111680
Local Authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	325430
Inspection date	9 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Derek Sleightholme

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	211
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	60
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Steve Bowman
Headteacher	Mrs Alison Toward
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Rosecroft Lane Loftus Saltburn-by-the-Sea TS13 4PZ
Telephone number	01287 640613

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	9 February 2009
Inspection number	325430

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Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the effectiveness of strategies used to challenge more able pupils
- the effectiveness of actions taken to improve the outdoor learning opportunities for Early Years Foundation Stage pupils
- the effectiveness of recent actions by school leaders to use self-evaluation to inform the setting of school improvement priorities
- the 'St Joseph's Out of School Club', managed by the governing body.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with senior leaders, governors, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader and pupils. In addition, parts of lessons were observed, school documents, samples of pupils' work and the parents' questionnaires were scrutinised.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that most of 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 is an average size primary school. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. The number with a statement of special educational need is average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A few pupils are at an early stage of acquiring English. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision consists of Nursery and Reception classes.

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. 'My child is happy and enjoys coming to school and loves learning new things', is a written comment that typifies most parents' positive views of the school.

Achievement is good and standards are above average. From a below average starting point as pupils enter Year 1 they make good progress. Current standards in Year 2 are average in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory in English, good in mathematics and outstanding in science. Current standards in Year 6 are average in English, above average in mathematics and well above average in science. In the 2007 Year 6 national tests, results were, overall, average. The provisional 2008 Year 6 results are above average overall with good improvement at the higher level in mathematics and science. Science results are provisionally well above average reflecting the excellent progress pupils make in this subject. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the few who are learning English as an additional language make good progress because they have access to sensitive support that is focused closely on meeting their individual needs.

Pupils' personal development and well-being including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are polite and friendly. They eagerly welcome visitors to school and behave well. Pupils feel very safe in school knowing they can gain access to personal support quickly. A particular strength is pupils' recognition of the benefits of a good diet and regular exercise. They enthusiastically take part in daily exercise. An excellent feature is how they enthusiastically prepare healthy snacks for each other. During the inspection, pupils were eager to drink warm vegetable soup on a cold winter day. Pupils make a good contribution to the community. This can be seen in their enthusiasm to serve as playground leaders and to be members of the newly established school council. Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is above average. Pupils care deeply for others and the school effectively tackles any discrimination. They listened to an expert talking about the plight of children in Romania prior to responding well to the national shoebox appeal. Pupils are well prepared for the future.

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons start promptly, relationships are positive and questioning is purposeful. Pupils are provided with clear guidance on the purpose of lessons so that they understand what they are expected to learn. The teaching of science to pupils in Years 4 to 6 is outstanding. The enthusiasm of the expertise rubs off on the pupils. They are eager to use their knowledge of concepts, such as evaporation, to plan and conduct experiments. Lively teaching challenges more able pupils really well in both science and mathematics and these pupils regularly reach high standards. This is not the case in English, especially for writing, where the progress of pupils across the ability range slows because teaching is not as successful at planning to meet the full range of needs. Although classrooms incorporate attractive displays these are not used sufficiently to increase pupils' vocabulary and punctuation.

The curriculum is good. The good thematic programme helps pupils to make effective learning links across subjects. School displays confirm topics, such as 'Whatever the Weather', provide pupils with good opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills when learning in science and the humanities. However, this is not always the case and the technical skills of writing are not always developed effectively across subjects. Pupils have good opportunities to make the most of the experiences provided by visiting specialists including sports partnership coaches. Pupils can take part in a residential experience and join a variety of extra-curricular activities including cross country and homework clubs.

Care, guidance and support are good. Child protection, risk assessments and safeguarding meet requirements. The management of the after school 'St Joseph's Out of School Club' meets childcare registration requirements. Throughout the school pupils are encouraged to attend regularly through a recently introduced awards system. Academic guidance is good. Pupils' progress is closely tracked and support provided when the need arises. Pupils are set targets matched to their needs and provided with good guidance. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from the good links the school has with external agencies.

Leadership, management and governance are good. The recently appointed headteacher, supported by two senior managers, are providing purposeful leadership. Early outcomes are a clear development plan based on an accurate audit of provision. Managers have already set writing as the top priority. They are ambitious in their plans to bring about further improvements to the premises. Leaders set challenging targets for Year 6 pupils and are well placed to achieve them. This is having a positive impact on improving standards. Community cohesion is good. Following an audit of provision the school has increased the pupils' voice in school by re-establishing the school council. The school promotes diversity in the mono-cultural locality by involving visitors from different cultural backgrounds to work and share their experiences with pupils. Parents are sent a weekly newsletter and most feel well informed although a few feel they would have liked more information about recent organisational changes. Governors have improved their monitoring role and now challenge and support the school well. With the good progress made the school has good capacity for further improvement. It provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children enter the Nursery with starting points below what is typically found. They make satisfactory progress throughout the Nursery and Reception classes. By the time they enter Year 1 standards remain below average in most areas of learning. Achievement is satisfactory, with some good achievement in creative development. Children learn and develop satisfactorily. Most settle in to school routines. At times, some children lose interest in activities because they are not sufficiently challenged by them. Children enjoy a range of practical activities where they are encouraged to become independent and make choices. For example, several children 'made a Chinese meal' as part of their China topic. Although there has been satisfactory improvement to the outdoor provision and it is used regularly, provision of additional facilities is acknowledged as priority. The leader has a clear vision of how continuity between Nursery and Reception assessment and planning needs to improve to ensure work is more carefully matched to the needs of the children. Welfare requirements are good. Children are well cared for and good attention is given to those with additional needs. Parents recognise the staff are hard-working and dedicated but would like to have more information about daily routines and their children's progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve learning and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Improve writing for pupils of all abilities ensuring that work always matches pupils' ability and they have regular opportunities to practise the full range of technical skills in other subjects.

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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?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

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?	2

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**

10 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Saint Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School, Redcar and Cleveland, TS13 4PZ

Thank you for helping us when we inspected your school. You were friendly and helpful. We enjoyed visiting your classrooms, looking at your work on display and in your books and talking to you about your school.

You attend a good school. We agree with you that it is a friendly place to be. Your behaviour and attendance are good. Your enthusiasm for daily exercise and good knowledge of healthy foods convinced us you have an excellent understanding of the importance of being healthy and staying fit. You told us you feel safe at school and know how to get help if you need it. The school takes good care of you. We saw how well you help the daily running of the school through the many responsibilities you have, such as being a councillor or playground leader.

We enjoyed looking at your topic work on display around the school. It illustrates the good curriculum that is provided for you. Teaching is good and helps you to make good progress. By Year 6 you reach above average standards overall. Your writing is currently improving satisfactorily. You make good progress in mathematics. We were impressed with your enthusiasm for science, a subject where you make outstanding progress. Well done! Your school is well managed. Your parents appreciate what is provided for you. The school is checking to ensure they are kept well informed in the weekly newsletters. Please remember to take these home.

There are two things the school could do better.

- Improve the activities that help children to learn and develop in Nursery and Reception.
- Ensure you all make quicker progress in writing. We have asked that tasks always match your ability and that you have more opportunities to write in other subjects.

You can do something about this by working hard and doing the best you can for your teachers.

We wish you and all the staff the very best for the future.

Derek Sleightholme

Lead inspector