

St Joseph's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111702
Local Authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	325439
Inspection date	19 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Rosemary Rodger

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)	302
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	Mr Ian Stubbs
Headteacher	Mrs Josephine Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Marton Road Middlesbrough TS4 2NT
Telephone number	01642 819252
Fax number	01642 819252

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the impact of actions to improve achievement of pupils at risk of underachieving
- the success of strategies used to achieve effective engagement of all pupils, especially boys
- the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, the chair of governors, senior leadership team, including the deputy headteacher, the Foundation Stage leader and a group of Year 6 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 inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This is an above average sized Catholic primary school situated close to the centre of Middlesbrough. The area served by the school has an above average level of social and economic deprivation. An above average proportion of pupils are eligible for a free school meal. There are an average number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds including Pakistani, Indian and African. A small minority of pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language. The school runs a daily breakfast club in a nearby sports centre. The school has Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision. This is for three- to four-year-old children, the youngest attending part-time each day.

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 that provides superbly for the all round care and development of its pupils. Based on very low starting points into the EYFS, all pupils make outstanding progress by the time they leave school in Year 6. Achievement is excellent and standards were significantly above average in the 2007 national tests. The outstanding progress and exceptional results of 2007 have been maintained in the past year because of the excellent impact of actions to raise standards of all pupils, particularly boys in Key Stage 1, whose underachievement was identified as an area for improvement. The excellent leadership of the headteacher and the governors is successful in overcoming barriers to pupils' learning. It ensures that the school lives up to its mission statement which is to 'Celebrate the uniqueness of every individual and recognise the talents they bring to our school'. Parents fully endorse the judgement of the inspection and praise the ways in which the school 'Is very family orientated and always has a welcoming feel to it'. They also praise the 'Warmth, friendliness and approachability' of the staff and the high priority given to the 'Children's educational, social and spiritual growth'.

The headteacher, with the support of the governors and staff, works diligently and with a palpable passion to ensure that every child learns in an 'environment, which promotes tolerance, respect, courtesy and an understanding of different faiths and cultures'. Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. This is due to the high expectations of teaching and the zero tolerance approach to misbehaviour. As a result, pupils develop high levels of respect and responsibility. They spoke with enthusiasm of the willingness of staff to allow an early start to school to enable them to use the computers to improve basic numeracy skills. Links with the community are exceptionally strong with many reciprocal benefits such as the partnership with a local museum and sports centre. The strong sense of common belonging and respect for cultural diversity creates a powerful ethos of inclusion and mutual support.

The quality of teaching is outstanding. Probing questioning and excellent clarity in explanations mean that pupils' misunderstandings are identified quickly to ensure successful learning. Teaching assistants make an outstanding contribution to pupils' learning, particularly in their support of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Other initiatives such as 'Boys' Champion' and 'Playing for Success' have helped to improve boys' interest in reading with excellent results. A robust assessment scheme provides detailed information on pupils' progress term by term. Data from this is analysed to ensure that pupils at risk of underachieving are supported successfully. Pupils too are aware of their role in peer marking and helping each other. The excellent curriculum provides pupils with high quality topics on the Vikings, Rivers, the Second World War and Henry VIII. This provides an excellent opportunity for pupils to apply their basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). Classroom displays are vibrant and reflect the high quality of pupils' work in many subjects, but mostly their excellent writing skills. Specialist staff in Key Stage 1 support the pupils learning to speak English effectively. Pupils boasted proudly of the number of languages they learn, mentioning French, Chinese and German. The promotion of healthy lifestyles is evident in the extensive range of physical education activities in school and out-of-school clubs such as Dino's football club, dancing, tag rugby and squash. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the daily breakfast club. The care, guidance and support for pupils are excellent. The school is vigilant in checking that pupils are safe and secure. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

Outside agencies are used extensively to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Partnership with neighbouring schools is a strong feature of successful strategies to promote excellent behaviour.

The leadership and management of the headteacher are outstanding. The leadership team work effectively as a team and over the past few years have implemented very successful strategies to raise standards for all pupils. The high expectations of the headteacher that every child has a right to succeed permeate all the school's work. Challenging targets for improvement are set. Senior staff coach and support newly qualified teachers and engage in relevant professional development. Self-evaluation is extremely thorough and involves all stakeholders. It accurately pinpoints what needs to be achieved. This is most successfully demonstrated in the improvements to boys' literacy skills. Governors are challenging and fully support the school in its community work. Improvement since the last inspection has been excellent and the school has an outstanding capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in their learning based on their low skills on entry. They achieve well. They are confident learners and enjoy their time in school. Many worthwhile activities are provided to encourage independence and enable children develop their personal, social and emotional skills exceptionally well. Actions to improve speaking and listening are having a good impact because there is greater encouragement to talk, effectively stimulated by well deployed staff in all areas. Children from different backgrounds and cultures work and play in harmony. This was well exemplified in the 'café' as children enthusiastically prepared snacks. Detailed observational assessments provide a good base on which to plan and provide suitably challenging activities, well matched to the range of children's needs. This is particularly noteworthy for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children are kept safe and close liaison with parents and other agencies ensures that children are cared for well. A recent reorganisation of the three rooms that comprise the EYFS is in the early stages of development with regard to access to learning outside and the availability of resources in each area. Actions to improve this are progressing well, although there is still some way to go to achieve the 'free flow' provision for all children. Access to the outdoor area is too limited so children are unable to choose to learn outside as well as inside. Leadership and management are good. The recently appointed leader has a well planned agenda for creating an EYFS unit. This is progressing well with some changes to provision in each area and common planning in all areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that children in the EYFS have regular and well planned opportunities to learn outdoors as well as indoors.

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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?	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?	1
The standards ¹ 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

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?	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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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

23 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's RC Primary School, Middlesbrough, TS4 2NT

Thank you for helping to make my day in your school so enjoyable. It was very interesting to talk to some of you and find out what you enjoy about school. Please thank your parents for their comments too.

Your school is outstanding. This is because you all work very hard and make outstanding progress towards meeting your targets. You are all very sensible and your behaviour is excellent. Even those of you who used to misbehave now know that it is best to be sensible and set an example to others. You all said how much you enjoy all the additional activities you take part in, such as the football club and the clubs after school. You are looking forward to your residential trip to the Lake District very much.

Your teachers and headteacher also work very hard to make sure you are taught to understand your work. Those of you who need help are grateful that you can come into school early in the morning to practise your multiplication tables on the computers. It is so obvious that you enjoy everything in school. The youngest children learn to get on with each other well too. I have asked the school to ensure that children in the Nursery and Reception classes have regular opportunities to learn outdoors as well as indoors.

I send you my very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Rosemary Rodger

Lead inspector