

Malvern, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116901
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	326479
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Andrew Watters HMI

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)	128
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	Richard Brankin
Headteacher	Ann-Marie Wallbank
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Newtown Road Malvern WR14 1PF
Telephone number	01684 573016
Fax number	01684 891205

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is situated close to Malvern town centre. When children enter the school their attainment is variable but generally just above what is typical for their age. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is located in the Reception class. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups has increased in recent years, but is still below the national average. The school has won a number of awards, including Leading Aspect awards for developments in teaching and learning and enabling children to become independent learners. The school is currently applying for an Artsmark award and also a Green Flag award. The St Joseph's Swans and Cygnets pre-school group is managed privately and will be inspected separately.

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 that reflects its Catholic ethos and ambitions. The school aims to value everyone and celebrate differences based on a belief that each child is a unique individual, created in the image of God. These aims are met well and influence all aspects of school life. The school grounds are used effectively to promote positive learning experiences and encourage pupils to value and care for the environment, which they clearly do. This is an exciting time for the school. Pupils, the headteacher, teachers and all adults who work in the school speak enthusiastically about the renovations and extensions to the school buildings and the exciting plans for the future.

Pupils achieve well and make good progress. While the majority of pupils attain standards which are above average for their age, and there is no significant underachievement, the school is not complacent and recognises that more pupils in each year group could reach higher standards. This reflects the school's aspirations and ambitions for all pupils to do as well as they can. The value added to pupils' achievements is generally good, although less so for the Year 3 and some of the Year 4 pupils, where progress in mathematics is slower than in other years. The school has been particularly successful in raising standards in boys' writing, and many boys write enthusiastically, using a good style and sentence structure. The pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and some make exceptional progress.

Most pupils behave well and clearly have a great time at school. They are enthusiastic, good humoured, articulate and eager to talk about their work and achievements. They care for each other, are rightly proud of their school and appreciate the interesting and challenging experiences they have in lessons and in the wider curriculum. This is what some of the pupils said about the school: 'Our teachers make our lessons fun,' 'We all make sure no one is left out,' and 'Our teachers have helped us understand how we can learn best.'

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, reflected in the positive outcomes for pupils. However, in a few lessons, the quality of pupils' learning is not as good as it might be, particularly when the pupils' work is not matched well enough to their different learning needs. Assessment is used effectively in most classes to inform teachers' planning and help the pupils move on to the next steps in their learning. The pupils' involvement in assessing each other's and their own work has made a very positive contribution to their good achievements. Pupils discuss each other's work with great sensitivity and maturity, which is a credit to them and their teachers.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides a wide range of good learning experiences. Carefully chosen themes and topics provide interesting and engaging contexts for learning, for example the Forest School initiative and the Eco-Schools Project. There are many examples of good quality art work around the school and French is also taught. 'Bonjour, monsieur inspector,' said one young pupil during lunchtime, clearly relishing the opportunity to speak another language! The quality of pastoral care and academic guidance is good. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and currently meet government recommendations. Just over a quarter of the parents responded to the inspection questionnaire. The majority of responses were overwhelmingly positive and this comment reflects many of the parents' views: 'St Joseph's is an exceptionally run school. The teaching staff are highly skilled and very devoted to the care and development of the children, each of whom is treated as an individual.' Just under a third

of the responses were more negative and critical of aspects of the school's leadership. The inspection found no evidence to support these views.

The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher is passionately committed to securing continued improvement for all pupils. She receives good support from the deputy headteacher and other senior staff. Monitoring and evaluation are secure, although systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are not always as rigorous as they might be. Governance is good. The school has a good capacity for further improvement and has improved well since the last inspection.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

During their time in the Reception class, children have a good start to their school life and achieve well. Their good progress is carefully tracked and monitored by their teacher, who provides a secure and safe learning environment, in which all children prosper and grow, both academically and socially. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum provides a range of exciting and stimulating contexts for learning. Children were fascinated and intrigued when investigating the lifecycle and habitat of snails. This study was used effectively to develop and improve the pupils' understanding of, and care for, small creatures. Good opportunities are provided for children to choose their own activities and become independent. There are extensive external works currently taking place, which are planned to provide even better outdoor facilities for the Reception children. These are expected to be completed by September 2009.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and increase rates of progress further, particularly in mathematics in Year 3 and for some of the Year 4 pupils, by matching the pupils' work consistently to their different learning needs.
- Eliminate inconsistencies in teaching and learning by providing more effective coaching and training and making the best use of the good and better teaching already in the school.
- Introduce more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the impact of initiatives in lessons by frequently checking that improvements become embedded on a day-to-day basis, and ensuring that all teaching is consistently good or better.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The pupils' achievement and rates of progress are good in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Overall, almost 77% of the pupils make good or better progress. This is even better in some year groups, for example 51% of the pupils in Year 6 are currently making exceptional progress in English. Rates of progress are generally better in English and science than in mathematics, although there is no significant underachievement in any year group. While standards are generally above average, the school has high expectations and recognises that there are pupils in each year group who are capable of reaching higher standards, particularly in mathematics and writing. The results of national tests and teachers' assessments in 2008 show that standards were slightly above the national average in Key Stage 1, and broadly in line in Key Stage 2. Inspection evidence revealed that the progress made by the Year 6 pupils who left the school in 2008 was good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Most of the pupils behave well, have positive attitudes and are kind and considerate to others. They show an increasing and commendable commitment to caring for the environment, and achieve this successfully through their work in the Eco Project, recycling initiatives and use of the school grounds. Pupils make a positive contribution to the community through supporting local charities, performing for parents and the parish members, and sensitively supporting families who have experienced challenging times. Pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school, which reflects well in their good attendance. Relationships are extremely positive, both between pupils and with adults. Tolerance and social justice are exemplified in many aspects of the pupils' behaviour, for example the Play Leader scheme. The pupils clearly respect and like their teachers because they are treated fairly and listened to when they have any concerns. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are developing a satisfactory understanding of Britain as a culturally diverse society and have a growing awareness of faiths and cultures globally which might be different from their own. Pupils feel safe and know how to live a healthy lifestyle. The recent 'fun run' in March this year was promoted and celebrated effectively in the school magazine! Some pupils spoke very sensitively about encouraging others to bring healthy snacks to school. The school has received an award for developing pupils' learning skills, including their resourcefulness and resilience. These personal qualities, which were evident in many lessons, along with their good achievements prepare them well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good, reflecting well in the positive outcomes for pupils. Most classes are managed effectively, with pupils responding well to challenging and stimulating contexts for learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 made good progress when writing 'flashbacks' in their stories. Some of this writing is of high quality. However, there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and in a few lessons, the pupils' work is not matched well enough to their different learning needs, which results in a lack of challenge for the more able pupils, who become restless as a result. Assessment is used effectively in most classes to help teachers plan the next steps in the pupils' learning. In addition, pupils' self- and peer assessment helps them to analyse their own work and evaluate it against carefully chosen success criteria. This process is having a very positive impact in improving boys' writing. Teaching assistants generally make a valuable contribution to raising achievement, although on occasions they are not always deployed sufficiently effectively during lesson introductions. The pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and are included well in all aspects of the curriculum. Some very sensitive support is given to pupils to help them develop emotionally as well as academically.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is innovative and reflects well the needs and aspirations of most of the pupils. All statutory requirements are met. The curriculum is greatly enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as football, tag rugby, netball and table tennis. These are

appreciated by the pupils and well attended. Environmental issues are given a high priority and pupils really appreciate the various opportunities to explore their ideas about conservation, recycling and sustaining the earth's natural resources. They are very proud of the school grounds and spoke enthusiastically about attracting wildlife! The pupils are developing a sound understanding about other cultures and festivals, for example celebrating the Chinese New Year and studying world religions. Music and the performing arts are promoted enthusiastically, and each class has taken part in two performances for parents this year. The school also hosts regular Malvern Area Music Festivals, which attract almost 100 musicians from other local schools. Provision for ensuring the pupils' well-being permeates all aspects of the curriculum and is a central feature of the school's aims. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage in their education and many are mature, well-rounded young people, capable of making a valuable contribution to the local and the wider community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of pastoral care is good. The pupils are cared for well in a secure and safe school community, where their individual concerns are listened to sympathetically and their successes are celebrated. Safeguarding arrangements currently meet government requirements and risk assessments are carefully attended to, such as those relating to the residential visit to Alton Castle. Challenging targets are used effectively to raise achievement and improve the pupils' self-esteem. For example, those pupils who have individual education plans have targets for their emotional development as well as their academic improvement. Potentially vulnerable pupils are carefully monitored. The school has been rigorous in ensuring that pupils' records are passed on to receiving schools, and that other agencies are alerted when necessary. Academic guidance is good. The recent assessment for learning initiative is having a positive impact in raising standards and helping pupils know what they need to do next to make good progress. The school has responded well to parents' ideas and concerns; for example, cooked meals are expected to be introduced on site in September, the range of after-school clubs has been extended and the playground area by the Reception class is being improved, to provide a covered area for parents to meet their children. There are effective links with social services and the parish church.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is led and managed well. The headteacher provides good leadership and is ensuring a successful focus on raising standards and achievement. She has effectively led a good range of improvements since the last inspection, particularly to ensure that the school's collective leadership is more effective. She receives good support from the deputy headteacher, who is a positive role model for other teachers. The literacy coordinator, who is also the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, provides thoughtful and effective support and together they make a good senior team. The provision and outcomes for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well managed by the special educational needs coordinator. While monitoring and evaluation are secure, the systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning and ensuring that weaknesses are eliminated are not always as rigorous as they could be. The headteacher and governors recognise that this is an important area for development as they seek to build on proven success and aspire to become an outstanding school. Pupils' achievements are tracked

carefully and assessment data is used well to evaluate the progress made by individuals and groups of pupils and set up intervention strategies when necessary. Strategic planning is secure and the governors provide a good level of challenge and support to the school's leadership. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to promoting community cohesion. Pupils have considered different faiths and cultures but there is less understanding about how the school community contrasts with local and national communities, and how faith, ethnicity and socio-economic factors influence the development of all communities.

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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 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	2
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?	3
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**

8 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Malvern, WR14 1PF

Thank you for welcoming me so warmly and enthusiastically when I visited your school recently. You were all extremely helpful and made sure I knew where I was going, how to find the people I needed to speak with and the classrooms I needed to visit. It made such a difference to my work in your school over the two days that so many of you came up and spoke with me. I really enjoyed all my conversations with you, in the corridors, on the field and playground and in your lessons. Thank you particularly to those of you who gave up some of your play time and lunch break to tell me about the things that you have been doing for others and what you enjoy most about your school. I was really impressed with all of you!

I am pleased to tell you that you go to a good school, and I am sure you know that already. Mrs Wallbank, your teachers and all the other adults in school look after you really well to make sure you are safe, enjoy your time in school and do really well in your work. You get lots of opportunities to do interesting and exciting things, and I know how much you all appreciate the school grounds, looking after the environment and attracting wildlife!

To help make your school even better I have asked Mrs Wallbank to make sure that:

- your work is always challenging and matched carefully to what you need to do next to improve
- your lessons are always well planned by the teachers so that whatever class you are in, you can continue to get even better in your work
- your lessons are checked more often to make sure that you all get the best learning opportunities every day.

Thank you again for being so friendly and helpful and I wish you every success in the future.

Yours faithfully

Andrew Watters

Her Majesty's Inspector