

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118058
Local Authority	North East Lincolnshire
Inspection number	326752
Inspection dates	3–4 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Terry McDermott

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)	171
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	Mrs Margaret Solomon
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Pollard
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Philip Avenue Cleethorpes DN35 9DL
Telephone number	01472 690672
Fax number	01472 200607

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller than average school, serves a wide area. It is presently undergoing building extension. It has an attached Early Years Foundation Stage unit which accepts children into the Reception class. The school has an average proportion of pupils at an early stage of learning English, the large majority of whom are from Eastern Europe. This number is rising rapidly. Many children arrive at times other than the usual. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, while the proportion with a statement of special educational need is broadly average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. There is a Pre-School Playgroup on site run by a private provider. This was inspected separately by Ofsted.

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 with some outstanding features. It has very positive strengths in the excellent care, guidance and support it provides for pupils, which result directly in their outstanding personal development and well-being. Parents overwhelmingly support the school. Comments such as, 'I wish my child could stay here for Years 7 to 11', and 'My child has achieved more than we could imagine in such a short time', reflect the views of many. The school has successfully maintained its focus despite difficulties caused by building work.

The school does well in dealing with the diverse range of pupils in the school and makes sure that their achievement is good. The children's levels of development starting school in the Early Years Foundation Stage are usually below and at times well below typical for their age. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and in recent years they have reached standards that are typically average at Year 2. In 2008, standards at Year 2 dipped to below average and matched the predictions made by the school. In Key Stage 2, standards at Year 6 have been consistently average since 2006 and were so again in 2008. Given the nature of each class and the challenge of supporting pupils in developing their understanding of English, this represents good progress and achievement. Inspection evidence supported by school data, indicates that in 2009, results improved greatly at Year 2 but are lower at Year 6. All results are influenced by an influx of pupils joining school with little or no spoken English and an above average proportion of all pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding because of the explicit and very strong focus the school places on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' behaviour is excellent, both in classes and around the school. They are unfailingly friendly, polite, and well mannered. Pupils from different backgrounds get on very well and respect each other, because of their well developed and keen sense of right and wrong. Their confidence and self-esteem grow quickly because their different achievements are valued, celebrated and rewarded.

The quality of teaching and learning is good, and is readily apparent in the large majority of lessons seen and in pupils' books. Most lessons are lively and fast moving. They grab pupils' attention because short sharp tasks are challenging and encourage them to think for themselves. However, in a small number of lessons, the same tasks are set for all pupils, and even though the support from teachers and teaching assistants is good, the pace of learning is not as swift as it might be.

Pupils are well served by the good curriculum. It is built on strong foundations of literacy and numeracy to ensure that each pupil is able to gain the necessary basic skills. It is regularly reviewed to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils including any who have particular difficulties with their learning. All pupils have the opportunity to play the violin, and to learn French. A good range of extra-curricular activities is offered, and many pupils take part enthusiastically.

Staff show exceptional commitment to the pupils and go to great lengths to create a caring atmosphere in which all can thrive and flourish. In this highly supportive environment, children are not afraid to 'have a go' because they trust their teachers implicitly. As a result, they reach targets which are challenging for them both in their personal development and their academic work.

Leadership and management are good. The calm, yet purposeful and effective leadership of the headteacher is reflected in the peaceful yet busy atmosphere of the school, which runs smoothly and efficiently on a day-to-day basis. School self-evaluation is accurate, and the school knows well its strengths and areas for improvement. The school has addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection, has improved attendance, and reversed a trend of falling rolls. All pupils now make good progress. It has good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children enter the Reception class, their skills, knowledge and understanding are variable, but always at least below that which is normally expected for their age, particularly in their personal and social development. From the very outset, they make good progress because teaching is good, and adults provide such good role models. By the time they leave Reception, most children were working at the expected levels for their age.

Careful planning and organisation ensure that children enjoy their learning. They are regularly assessed to ensure that their tasks are suitably challenging and that the needs of all, including those who find learning particularly difficult, are appropriately met. Resources for both indoor and outdoor learning, including computers, are good and are well used. Children are very well known to all adults and their unique individuality is highly esteemed. They respond very well to the warmth and sensitivity shown by their teacher and other adults, and they behave well. They learn to be safety conscious without being fearful and, in keeping with the rest of the school, their personal, moral, and spiritual development is given high priority. Children play well on their own and with others, and they relate well to each other and to adults. They take responsibility for choosing activities and can enthusiastically explain what they are learning.

Leadership and management of the unit are good. The commitment of all staff to creating a secure and caring environment is excellent. Arrangements for the safeguarding of children are in place and regularly monitored. The school works very closely with children's families and outside agencies to ensure that all children have the opportunity to thrive. The success of this work is seen in children's self-esteem, their personal confidence and their very good manners.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that work set in lessons consistently meets the learning needs of all pupils and is suitably challenging.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 and given their starting points achieve well. At the end of Year 2 standards are typically average. In 2008 the results of teacher assessments were below average. They reflected the high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and of the number of pupils at an early stage of learning English. Inspection evidence shows in Year 2 this year pupils are doing better and exceeding expectations for their age. In Year 6 standards over the last three years, including 2008, have been average. Inspection evidence, backed up by school data, indicates that pupils in the current Year 6 are making good progress from a low starting point even though the standard of pupils' work is lower than previous years. In Years 3 to 5, the very large majority of pupils also make good progress. Pupils

with English as an additional language, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress because of the expert help they and their families receive. In 2008, pupils with learning difficulties did better than similar pupils nationally demonstrating the high quality support they get.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils really enjoy school because 'teachers make learning fun'. They say they feel safe and are adamant that bullying does not exist in the school because 'we all get on well together and look after each other'. Their understanding of adopting safe practices is excellent. Assemblies and lessons enable pupils to reflect on their own and other people's experiences. Pupils have an excellent awareness of how to live healthily and they know that the way they live can affect the world they inhabit. They enjoy the many opportunities they have for physical exercise, and know why 'baked potatoes are better than hot dogs'. Attendance is above average. The school council members are proud of the part they play in raising funds for the school through selling healthy flapjacks. Other pupils make a good contribution to the school by, for example, readily taking on responsibilities for clearing up after themselves in the playground, classes and the dining room. They have a good understanding of issues such as poverty and hunger in communities in other parts of the world. They give generously, usually through the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), to support relief and aid programmes in Africa. Pupils make excellent progress in developing their personal attributes and good progress in the important basic skills in literacy and numeracy. This ensures they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

All lessons are characterised by excellent relationships between pupils and adults, by pupils' excellent behaviour and their very positive attitudes to learning. The best lessons challenge pupils to work independently without direct supervision. In these lessons, practical tasks set by the teacher fully engage pupils' attention. This was demonstrated to very good effect in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, where pupils gained clear understanding of how to derive and then use algebraic equations to predict outcomes. Because pupils know they might be required to share how they work things out with other pupils at the end of lessons, they pay close attention to instructions, and make significant intellectual efforts to work knotty problems out by themselves. In these lessons, learning is rapid, and pupils make consistently good, and sometimes better, progress. In a minority of lessons, opportunities to make this level of progress are missed because work is not matched closely enough to pupils' learning needs. Higher attaining pupils find the work too easy, and lower attaining pupils find the work too hard. In both cases, the pace of learning slows.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. There is a strong focus on improving pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. This is particularly necessary for the rising numbers of pupils who do not speak English at home.

Since the last inspection, there is much more 'linking' of subjects. For example, a rainforest theme encompasses aspects of mathematics, reading, writing, poetry, geography, art and design and music. Children say they find such themed work particularly stimulating. Many of these themed activities are fairly recent, and have yet to show their full impact. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities including sports such as football (enjoyed by girls as well as boys), netball, skipping, cookery, reading and gardening, as well as performance activities such as 'Hollywoods' for music and drama. These activities are popular, so much so that numbers sometimes have to be restricted.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Arrangements for the safeguarding of children meet current government requirements. Health and safety issues are carefully and conscientiously managed. Assessment systems to measure and record both pastoral and academic progress are reliable, straightforward and well used by skilful staff. Any children at risk of 'falling through the net', for whatever reason, are identified as early as possible and strategies are put in place to ensure they catch up. This is especially helpful for those children, about one third of the school's population, who come to St Joseph's at different times of the year, from other schools in the area, and from other countries in Europe. Children are kept very well informed about their progress and what they should do to improve further. A 'traffic light' system is well understood by children and helps them to assess their own progress very effectively. The school works exceptionally well with parents, with very precise communications supporting them for the benefit of the children. There is excellent cooperation with professional and other agencies. This ensures that specialist help is quickly available from a wide range of sources to ensure that all children make good progress whatever their starting point.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quietly insistent but very determined headteacher is well supported by the knowledgeable leadership group. There is a keen sense of teamwork throughout the school and staff morale is high. Recent changes have given greater accountability to middle leaders to check on the quality of learning in lessons. This is a useful addition to regular monitoring by senior leaders, but has only recently become systematic, and has yet to show its full impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Provision for community cohesion is good, because the school not only successfully pulls its own widely dispersed community together, but raises pupils' awareness of the global community through its charitable work with CAFOD. The school pays close attention to ensuring that all forms of inequality are addressed rigorously, and that diversity is recognised and celebrated. Governance is good; governors support the work of the school well by, for example, their attachments to classes. They encourage the school to do better, and are now challenging the school more rigorously about the progress pupils make and the standards they reach. The school consistently meets or exceeds its targets.

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?	1
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?	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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	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	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?	1

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	1
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**

5 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School, Cleethorpes, North East Lincolnshire, DL35 9DL

Thank you for making Mr Marsden and me so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and listening to you tell us so enthusiastically about your school. You made it very clear that your teachers make learning enjoyable, and that you get to do lots of interesting things, both inside and outside lesson time. We were very impressed with your excellent behaviour, your polite manners and the way you so willingly help each other.

We found that St Josephs is good school with the following outstanding features:

- the way in which all the adults in the school look after you
- your personal development, including your excellent attitudes to learning and the obvious respect you have for each other.

However, we also found that St Josephs could do better. If even more lessons had work that was really challenging, no matter how much you already knew, you would learn things more quickly, and reach higher standards.

You can help the school to get even better by continuing to work hard in lessons, and by staying the happy enthusiastic and friendly young people you already are.

May I wish you all good luck for the future.

Yours faithfully

Terry McDermott

Lead inspector