

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Chorley

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119671
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	327106
Inspection dates	25–26 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Shirley Herring

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)	153
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 Chris Jenner
Headteacher	Mr Martin Banks
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Cedar Road Chorley Lancashire PR6 0JF
Telephone number	01257 265998

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	25–26 November 2008
Inspection number	327106

Fax number

01257 233107

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	25–26 November 2008
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average and serves the parish and local area. Almost all pupils are from a White British background and there are small numbers of pupils of Asian, Polish and Afro-Caribbean heritage. The proportion of pupils at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Three of the six classes contain more than one age group. The school caters for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It has strengths in the curriculum, the care it takes of its pupils and their personal development. Pupils enjoy school and say they particularly like the teachers and the responsibilities they are given. They have a clear understanding of the value of diet and exercise in living a healthy lifestyle. They say they feel safe and are confident that they can approach an adult if they have a problem. They make a good contribution to the school community as school councillors and as play leaders. They also raise money for charities at home and abroad.

Children enter the school with skills that are broadly typical for their age. They make satisfactory progress and reach average standards. Standards in Key Stage 1 have been broadly average for several years and achievement is satisfactory overall but few pupils exceed the level expected for their age. Results of the 2007 national tests in Year 6 showed standards were broadly average though fewer than expected attained a higher level. Unvalidated results for 2008 show standards were broadly similar to 2007. More pupils than expected reached the level expected for their age reflecting the good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, the proportion achieving the higher level fell short of the school's targets and no pupil attained the higher level in writing. More able pupils do not achieve as well as they can, because work is not always well matched to their needs and level of understanding.

Teaching is satisfactory overall and pupils make sound progress. Whilst examples of good teaching were seen during the inspection an examination of pupils' books shows that over time there has been insufficient challenge for more able pupils and this has restricted their rate of learning.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The school is successful in its aim of being a happy school and it provides a good level of care for its pupils. However, it has not addressed the weaknesses, correctly identified in its self-evaluation, with sufficient urgency. Consequently, standards have remained satisfactory for some time and there has been insufficient improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. The role of the subject leaders is developing but they need more opportunities to monitor standards in their subject and hasten the necessary improvements. Governance is satisfactory.

Parents recognise the good level of care and support the school provides. The school has good links with other professionals to provide additional support where needed. The school has developed suitable systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress and setting targets. However, these are not yet always tailored to the needs of the individual, particularly the more able, to help them to improve. The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and there is an extensive range of additional activities to promote pupils' interest and enjoyment.

There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and recent improvements in the systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress show the school has sound capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is good and children achieve well. Children enter the reception class with a range of skills which overall are broadly typical for their age although they have limited awareness of letters and their sounds. Consistently

good teaching and a vibrant learning environment enable children to make good progress in their learning and most children achieve or exceed the expected level by the time they enter Year 1. They are well prepared for the next stage of learning.

Letter sounds are taught systematically to successfully address gaps in this area of learning. There is a good emphasis on developing children's personal, social and emotional skills and so personal development is good. Children respond well to the high expectations to put up their hands and to listen to each other. Activities are interesting and relationships are good and so children clearly enjoy learning. There is good access to an interesting outdoor area where well planned activities enhance learning.

The welfare of the children is outstanding. There are very good procedures for introducing children to school and so they settle quickly, without tears, and develop good attitudes to school from an early age. They gain a good understanding of a healthy lifestyle and learn how to stay safe, for example using scissors carefully. Parents are fully involved in their children's learning, for example children are given a worksheet to practice new sounds at home. There is suitable provision for children in the breakfast and after-school clubs.

The EYFS is led and managed well. There are good systems for tracking children's progress and this information is used effectively to ensure that daily tasks and the long term curriculum are well matched to the needs of individual children so they make good progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more challenge in lessons and clearer guidance for more able pupils so that they achieve as well as they can.
- Take more robust action to address the weaknesses identified correctly by the school.
- Provide subject leaders with more opportunities to monitor standards and accelerate the rate of improvements.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils enter school with a range of skills that are broadly typical for their age. They make satisfactory progress during their time in school and attain broadly average standards by the time they leave Year 6.

With slight variations from year-to-year, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have been broadly average for several years. In the 2008 unvalidated national assessments these standards were maintained though the number achieving a higher level in mathematics and reading was lower than expected.

In the 2007 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 standards were broadly average and pupils made satisfactory progress. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in English and mathematics was slightly above average though the number achieving a higher level was average. Provisional results of the national tests in 2008 show the proportion achieving the expected level for their age exceeded the school's targets, reflecting in part the good level of support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who make good progress. However, the number achieving the higher level in mathematics fell short of the school's targets and no pupil

reached a higher level in writing. More able pupils do not achieve as well as they can because teaching does not always provide suitably challenging work. The few pupils with English as an additional language are well supported and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils say they thoroughly enjoy school, adding that their teachers make learning fun. They are proud of their school and speak passionately about it. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. Older pupils thrive on taking on extra responsibilities, such as being play leaders in the playground. They have sensible attitudes to health issues and enjoy the healthy school lunches and physical exercise ranging from football to line dancing. Most pupils attend regularly and on time and overall attendance is in line with the national average. The school is working well as a community. Behaviour is good overall and the challenging behaviour of a small minority of pupils is managed well. This makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils' good contribution to the wider community includes raising funds for local charities as well as supporting children in Belarus and Chernobyl. The work of the school council is appreciated by staff and pupils. It meets regularly, works hard to seek the views of pupils and has made many suggestions which the school has acted upon to improve the school environment and play opportunities. The preparation of pupils for their future education and lives is satisfactory. They have well developed personal and social skills and achieve satisfactory levels in English, mathematics and science.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory and so pupils make sound gains in their learning. Examples of good teaching were observed during the inspection and thoughtful organisation, the promotion of pupils' good behaviour and the support offered to pupils who need extra help are good features of most lessons. However, examination of the work in pupils' books shows that over time teaching has not focused sufficiently on the needs of more able pupils so they do not achieve as well as they can. The good questioning skills of the majority of teachers help pupils to clarify and extend their ideas. Pupils' work is marked regularly though teachers' written comments do not always make it clear what pupils need to do to move forward. Assessment is used satisfactorily to track pupils' progress and to organise them into teaching groups. However, in many lessons the work set for higher attaining pupils is insufficiently matched to their abilities and consequently their rate of learning is restricted.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a rich and varied curriculum. It meets all statutory requirements and provides pupils with sufficient opportunities to learn the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information communication technology in addition to other subjects. The school's focus on practical, investigational work in science has led to an improvement in standards. The school ensures that learning is meaningful because it carefully plans themes with strong links between subjects. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and other vulnerable learners is good and so they make good progress. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of well planned visits and

visitors that provide first-hand experiences for pupils in a variety of topics. The good programme for personal, social and health education makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development and extends their understanding of other faiths and cultures. The high quality and varied range of after-school activities offers something for everyone and encourages pupils' love of school. This is reflected in the very high proportion of pupils who attend at least one extra-curricular activity.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care and support for pupils is good. Parents are justifiably confident that their children are very well looked after at school. The breakfast and after-school clubs provide a welcome extension to the care provided beyond the school day. All the recommended procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place. There is a wide range of successful strategies in place to support vulnerable pupils and those at the early stages of learning English as an additional language so they achieve well.

The school is a very caring community where relationships between adults and pupils are very good. Consequently, pupils feel valued and secure. They report that occasional incidents of misbehaviour are dealt with swiftly and effectively and know to whom they can turn for advice.

The academic guidance given to pupils is satisfactory. However, because marking is inconsistent, pupils are not always clear about what they have to do to improve their work. Pupils now have targets to help them to make progress but these are not yet sufficiently precise to match the needs of the individual or tell them what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Staff work well together to provide a high level of care and a good learning environment where pupils feel safe and secure and enjoy their time in school. The school evaluates its work accurately but has taken too long to address identified weaknesses, particularly in checking that pupils of all abilities make enough progress. Consequently, progress has remained satisfactory for some time. The role of the subject leaders is developing and they are meeting the challenge with enthusiasm, but they do not have enough opportunities to monitor standards and accelerate the rate of improvements. The school has new systems in place for tracking pupils' progress but these are too recent to have had an impact on standards. Community cohesion is promoted well. There are good links with the parish, and various groups such as the Brownies meet in school. The school makes every effort to include families from different backgrounds and helps new arrivals to settle well, for example translating the newsletters into Polish. There have been satisfactory improvements since the last inspection and the school has a sound capacity to improve further. Governance is satisfactory.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	3
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	3

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?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

28 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Chorley, Lancashire, PR6 0JF

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and to the school council. You told us how much you enjoy school and the good range of activities that the school provides. You are rightfully proud of your responsibilities and the contributions you make to school.

Yours is a satisfactory school. There are many good things about it but some things could be even better. We agree with you and your parents that the school takes very good care of you. There is always an adult in class to give you extra help when you need it and help you to get on. You play your part by working hard and behaving well.

To make things even better we have suggested that the school does the following things.

- Make sure that those of you who can find things easy have more challenging work so that you can reach a higher level.
- Use all the information it has to help you to make progress more quickly.
- Give the teachers who are in charge of different subjects more time to make sure that everyone is doing as well as they can.

Good luck to you all. We hope you continue to enjoy school so much.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Shirley Herring

Lead inspector