

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122813
<b>Local Authority</b>	Nottinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	327802
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Brennan

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	202
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Jim Patchett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Philip R Patterson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 November 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Old Babworth Road Retford Nottinghamshire DN22 7BP

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 January 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	327802

**Telephone number**  
**Fax number**

01777 702850  
01777 707117

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school admits pupils from the town of Retford. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small but growing number of pupils are from different, mainly Eastern European, backgrounds. Most of these pupils join the school at the early stages of speaking English. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with skills and abilities that are broadly typical for their age. The school has been awarded the Active mark. Following a serious accident the headteacher has been absent from school since before Christmas. At the time of the inspection a team of senior leaders, led by the EYFS leader, was managing the school.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This good school serves pupils' academic and personal needs well. Pupils achieve well to reach standards at the end of Year 6 that are consistently above average. Pupils who join the school at the early stages of learning English achieve well, as do those whose learning needs a boost. Children make rapid progress in the EYFS.

Here children's learning is at the heart of all staff do and, for their age, many children develop into sophisticated and able learners. For the most part this excellent start is built upon in other classes. However, some more able pupils do not do as well as they might. Much of this is because teaching and learning and the curriculum, which although good overall, have some shortcomings.

A good atmosphere for learning, which is helped by the good behaviour of pupils, is evident in all classes. Teaching is skilled when it comes to showing pupils what to do. In most classes pupils are given work that suits their varying needs. Work is presented in an interesting way, enabling pupils to make decisions about what to do, how to do it and who to do it with. However, in some classes teaching plays it safe and does not give pupils work that is hard enough or which involves them joining together in arriving at solutions to problems. The curriculum is made interesting through the good range of additional activities. Schemes of work give structure to the curriculum but on occasion too much structure. Links across subjects to make learning creative are evident but these are not fully in place. Consequently, while most parents feel their children are doing well and enjoying school a few feel that their children could be doing better.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils get on with each other and are happy. They are active and social. Younger pupils enjoy the support of their older peers on the playground who act as 'Happy Helpers' and 'Play Leaders'. Pupils are beginning to add to their knowledge of the lives and customs of others from the growing ethnic diversity within the school.

Improvements to marking and school tracking help with the setting of individual targets, and with pupils taking responsibility for achieving these.

Tracking, underpinned by a clear pattern of termly assessments, also helps direct resources at pupils in most need of help and provides leadership with a snapshot of how well the school is doing. However, the use of tracking information does not ensure that all higher attaining pupils are given suitably challenging tasks. Pupils learn how to look after themselves. They are well cared for and have ready access to personal advice. Suitable attention is given to procedures to secure their safety and well-being. The overall quality of care, support and guidance is good.

The quality of leadership and management is good. The EYFS leader has taken up the reigns of extended leadership well. It is testimony to the school's management systems and depth of leadership that the school has continued to function well in the headteacher's absence. The school has made good headway with the key issues of the previous inspection. It has responded well to its changing context and has demonstrated good capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

This expertly led unit ensures that children's education gets off to a first rate start. Guiding principles are understood by all of the team and reflect a consistency of approach. Close partnership with parents ensures that children settle quickly in to school. Very detailed assessments of how well children are doing keep parents informed and involved. However, some parents are less certain about the rationale for learning that underpins the unit as a whole.

Staff know the children very well, especially those they have particular responsibility for. They know exactly when to step back and give children their independence, and when to guide, prompt and question learning. They provide just the right balance of adult and child-led learning that moves easily from indoors to outdoors. As a result children reflect on what they do and develop new lines of enquiry for themselves. The unit bursts into life as children fetch things from all corners for themselves to learn with. The school's mantra 'fetch it, use it, put it away' was perfectly illustrated by a girl making her own Jack in the Box. As a consequence of such outstanding provision children achieve very well academically and personally. By the end of their time in the EYFS almost all reach expected standards across all areas of learning and an impressive number achieve beyond in several areas.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Make sure that all higher attaining pupils achieve well, by keeping a closer eye on their progress and consistently setting work that challenges them.
- Help pupils to work in a collaborative and investigative manner more often, and link learning across subjects.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Following an excellent start to their education in the EYFS pupils achieve well through the school. As a result, current standards and those achieved over time are significantly above average in English, mathematics and science. This can be seen in national test results in Year 6, which are invariably above average and occasionally significantly so. The school has a strong track record of meeting its challenging targets. The school has responded well to an increase in pupils joining the school at the early stages of speaking English. These pupils are progressing well thanks largely to the sensitive support and small group teaching they receive and because they are quickly assimilated into school life. Other pupils who need help with their learning also do well. However, the achievement of higher attaining pupils is uneven. A small but significant number in some infant and junior classes are not helped to make the most of their capabilities.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' largely positive attitudes towards themselves, each other and school contribute well to the good progress they make. Attendance rates are above average. The good standard of basic skills reached, together with pupils' positive attitudes, positions them well to make the most of the next stage of their education. There are a few times however, when learning is not made interesting, that some pupils switch off and become passive rather than being questioning, lively learners. For the most part pupils work and play happily together. They have a good understanding of what is needed to keep fit and healthy. Pupils clearly know the difference between right and wrong. This is indicative of their good social, moral, cultural and spiritual development. The latter is aided by the prayerful start to each day. Work with the parish and beyond, including a range of charitable works, helps pupils develop consideration and respect for others both within and beyond the immediate locality.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Classrooms are calm and pupils feel able to give of their best because relationships between adults and pupils are comfortable and encouraging. Teaching is driven by a clear sense of purpose. Pupils know what is expected of them and lessons proceed smoothly. Demonstrations of what to do are invariably clear and are aided by the widespread use of interactive whiteboards. The majority of teaching builds upon these consistent strengths and by focusing on interesting and engaging tasks. On these occasions not only do pupils gain in knowledge but they also acquire valuable learning skills such as the ability to work with others, problem solve and review their work. This was typified in a Year 1 literacy lesson. Here groups of pupils negotiated key roles such as illustrator, writer and so on as they sequenced and produced their own large version of traditional tales. As a consequence, pupils of all abilities and backgrounds made a valuable contribution. In a few lessons, however, tasks are more mundane, promote too little in the way of pupils working to solve problems and, in particular, are too easy for higher attaining pupils.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

Underpinned by the Catholic ethos of the school, programmes such as those for drug awareness give structure to the curriculum for pupils' personal development. As a result, pupils learn how to stay safe and make the most of their time at school. Clear schemes of work for individual subjects give structure and progression to teaching. There are examples, for instance in Year 6, in which pupils put themselves in the shoes of historical characters when writing and combine learning across subjects. However, this flexible and thoughtful use of schemes to make learning interesting and creative is not widespread. A wide range of well-attended additional activities and trips out of school add interest to what the school offers its pupils.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Procedures for securing pupils' safety and well-being meet current government guidelines. Pupils' attendance is closely monitored and the school works well with parents in this regard. Tracking is used to good effect for pupils needing help to acquire English or whose learning needs a boost. It is used well in guiding the work of teaching assistants, who provide sensitive support, and in directing pupils to particular catch-up programmes. The school has been quick to work with outside agencies to add to its expertise for these pupils. However, despite regular assessment the progress of higher attainers is not given the same consideration. As a result, the school does not always spot quickly enough higher attainers who are slipping off the pace. Tracking information is used well to set individual targets in key areas for pupils. The regular use of pupil/teacher 'surgeries' keeps these under review and draws pupils themselves into being responsible for aspects of their improvement.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The management team are fully involved in leading the school forward and in checking on how well it is doing. Other curriculum leaders and governors also play their part well. Governors, for example, are actively monitoring the work of the school for themselves. A clear calendar of key tasks governing lesson observation, work scrutiny and data analysis provides a solid structure for this. Information gained from this is of good quality and gives leaders a largely accurate view of how well the school is doing. Information is used to good effect to guide training. However, monitoring is not always timed to fit in with key milestones in the school development plan. This undermines what is otherwise a pertinent and well-written document. The large majority of parents express confidence in the school. The school surveys their views. Although the school has increased parental representation on the governing body its role in these surveys is limited.



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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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup>Grade 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

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

29 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary, Retford, DN22 7BP

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school when we visited it recently. We very much enjoyed our time with you and would like to share with you what we thought about your school.

You play your part well in making this a good school. You work hard and play well with each other. We were struck with how well the older pupils look after and play with the younger ones. We were also impressed with how many of you knew your targets.

For the most part, there are lots of interesting things for you to do in lessons, especially in the Nursery and Reception classes. We could see clearly how much you enjoy this type of work. You rise to the challenge of work that makes you think and solve problems well. You work well together, especially on tasks that cover more than one subject. We have asked the school to help you work in this way more often.

We also found that that there were times when work was too easy for some able children. We have asked the school to keep a closer eye on how well these children are doing and to make sure those of you who find work easy are given work that is hard and interesting enough all the time.

You can help in making the school better still by continuing to try hard with your work and doing your best.

Thank you once again and good luck in the future.

Yours sincerely

John Brennan

Lead inspector