

St Joseph's RC Primary School, Halliwell, Bolton

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105223
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	336454
Inspection dates	5–6 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Geoffrey Yates

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Pat Tansey
Headteacher	Mr Mike Crawford
Date of previous school inspection	5 September 2006
School address	Shepherd Cross Street Halliwell Bolton BL1 3EJ
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at planning files, the school's tracking data, pupils' books, safeguarding documentation, pupils' questionnaires and 36 questionnaires returned by parents.

- how well pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage are doing
- whether pupils are progressing and achieving as well as they can, especially in writing and mathematics
- the quality of provision in relation to Every Child Matters and the impact this has on the outcomes for pupils
- the use made of assessment data to promote pupils' learning.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school located in an urban area two miles outside the town centre of Bolton. The religious aspect of the school will be inspected separately by the Salford Diocese. The proportion of pupils eligible to receive free school meals is well above average, as is the proportion of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The large majority of the pupils are of White British heritage. There is a small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. There is childcare provision on the school site that is not managed by the governing body. It will be subject to a separate inspection and the report will be published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to:

- standards of attainment in writing, especially for boys
- the overall quality of learning
- the use made of assessment information to identify pupils who are not making enough progress and get them back on track
- pupils' attendance.

Since the previous inspection, standards of attainment and the progress pupils make have fluctuated considerably. However, standards are currently significantly lower than average. The unvalidated results of national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2009 show some improvement, especially in reading and mathematics, but writing remains a major area of weakness, with attainment well below average. Information from previous years' assessments shows that a significant number of pupils are not on track to achieve their targets. Since the previous inspection, attendance levels have declined significantly from above average to below average.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some good features. Teachers and support staff relate well to pupils, and classrooms are well organised. However, pupils' learning and progress from Year 1 to Year 6 are inconsistent and overall progress is not strong enough to close the gap between pupils' present performance and the standards they should be reaching. This inconsistency was evident in some lessons observed, in the information the school holds about pupils' progress and in the work seen in pupils' books. Assessment data are not being used effectively. For example, some pupils have been given targets to improve their use of full stops and question marks, yet they are being asked to use speech marks in their writing when they still do not apply question marks and full stops accurately. Marking is inconsistent. On occasion, even when pupils are given good pointers for improvement, there is little evidence that teachers ensure they take notice of what is being suggested. In addition, the school does not use performance information well enough overall to enable it to gain a sufficiently accurate view of pupils' progress.

Pupils enjoy school and have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. Behaviour is satisfactory, both in the playground and in lessons, because staff are diligent in this respect and deal with any potential problems swiftly. Pupils get on well together in an

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environment that is friendly and very mindful of and responsive to their social and emotional needs. Since the last inspection, good attention has been given to improving the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children now make good progress and achieve well in that key stage from a starting point below that typical for the age group. Most parents think highly of the school, as do the pupils.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Teachers in leadership roles are becoming increasingly effective in bringing about improvement in their areas of responsibility. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning takes place, although the school recognises that there needs to be a sharper focus in how effectively teaching has an impact on pupils' learning. Most recent national test results show signs of improvement in some subjects. The quality of the school's self-evaluation is satisfactory. As a result of these positive indicators, the school demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the standards of writing by:
 - evaluating the impact of current strategies for teaching and learning and taking effective action to improve them
 - ensuring that work is challenging and well matched to pupils' needs
 - providing regular and challenging opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in other subjects.
- Improve the quality of pupils' learning to at least satisfactory by ensuring that:
 - more focused feedback is given to teachers on how to improve pupils' learning and appropriate action is taken by teachers as a result of this
 - pupils understand exactly what they need to do to improve their work and act upon this advice.
- Ensure that the evidence from the school's systems for checking pupils' progress is used effectively to enable any underachievement to be addressed without delay.
- Raise attendance levels to satisfactory or better by:
 - implementing effective strategies to encourage good attendance
 - taking decisive action to reduce the number of unauthorised absences.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Pupils' overall progress, achievement and learning are inadequate. This is mainly because assessment information is not used effectively and some of the work pupils are asked to do in lessons lacks sufficient challenge. Although teachers have developed good strategies to ensure pupils concentrate on their work, these are not consistently used and in some classes pupils lose concentration when not closely supported. Some pupils are keen to discuss their work, as observed in a Year 2 literacy lesson, but the quality of learning dips in some classes when teachers do not ensure that all pupils fully understand what is being taught. Pupils with special educational needs and/or

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disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, respond well to targeted intervention and support in lessons but some of the systems to guide and support them are new and have yet to have a full impact on their progress.

Standards in the last three years have been significantly below average and pupils have made too little progress. While standards in mathematics improved to become broadly average in 2009, standards in writing were again very low. The school's assessment information about the work of the present Year 6 indicates some signs of improvement in writing but standards remain below average. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well.

Pupils say that they feel very safe in school. They undertake many roles to contribute to its work, including looking after younger pupils and involvement in the school council. They have good moral and social awareness and understanding of beliefs, customs and cultures different from their own. Pupils are very aware of the importance of respecting others and this message is a key part of the school's Christian ethos. They arrive punctually at school but attendance levels are below average.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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How effective is the provision?

Staff establish good classroom routines and good relationships with the pupils. Where teaching is best, questioning is used well and teachers are confident to change the course of their lessons if things are not going as well as they might. Teachers plan interesting lessons but sometimes pupils are kept sitting and inactive for too long, with the result that they become less interested in what is being said. Opportunities are missed to use questioning well and staff are not always alert to pupils' lack of understanding. Assessment systems are in place to support learning but the information gathered from them is not used well enough. There is a lack of consistency in providing pupils with information about what they can do to improve their work and when it is provided, ensuring that pupils respond properly. As a result, the use of assessment to support learning is inadequate.

The curriculum provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils, with good use made of information and communication technology, especially in Year 5, to promote learning. There are strengths, such as the provision of modern foreign language teaching, sport and music and these contribute positively to pupils' enjoyment of school. However, too few challenging opportunities are provided for pupils to use and develop their writing skills in a range of contexts. Pupils' understanding of cultural diversity is promoted strongly. Extra-curricular activities are well attended.

There are rigorous systems to keep pupils safe and good programmes to promote their personal, social and emotional development. All groups of pupils benefit from the good level of personal attention they receive. Links with parents are satisfactory overall. Parents whose children have special educational needs and/or disabilities and carers of looked after pupils are fully involved in, and appreciative of, the actions taken to support them.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, senior leadership team and middle managers are successful in promoting care and respect for others and the needs of the individual. As a consequence, any forms of discrimination are eradicated. Safeguarding procedures are of good quality, contributing significantly to the confidence that both pupils and parents have in the quality of the school's care. The effectiveness with which the school

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promotes equality of opportunity is satisfactory. It monitors pupils' involvement in school and extra-curricular activities soundly and ensures that all groups of pupils have the chance to participate. The school has identified what needs to be done to improve pupils' academic performance and has drawn up action plans to achieve this. Middle leaders are taking an increasingly active role in promoting improvement. The school has established satisfactory partnerships with other schools and good links with the church and Catholic high school. It makes a good contribution to community cohesion, for example, through a well planned and successful approach to integrating pupils of all ethnicities. In this, it also contributes to the cohesion of its local community. It maintains strong links with its local parish and has established a link with a school in Spain, celebrating this through various curriculum activities. The quality of governance is satisfactory. Good use is made of the knowledge provided by a governor with expertise in safety issues and as a result, there is rigour in the procedures to ensure the health, safety and well-being of staff and pupils. Governors have a satisfactory awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start school with skills that are below those typical for their age, especially in some aspects of their language, communication and mathematical development. They happily settle into school routines and quickly grow in confidence and independence as they check themselves in at the start of the day and choose their own activities and resources. Children make good progress in all aspects of their learning and as a result,

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most are working within the expected levels as they enter Year 1. This is because teaching is good and children enjoy a wide range of well planned activities that engage their interest and encourage them to explore for themselves. A visit to Eureka Museum and an autumn walk in Rivington effectively extend the children's first-hand experiences of the wider world. Relationships are good. Children delight in the adults' lovely touches of humour during story time and question and answer sessions that make learning fun. There is a good balance between adult-led activities and those that children choose for themselves. The outdoor area is used throughout the day to extend children's learning experiences. However, opportunities to develop their physical skills using large equipment are somewhat limited. Leadership and management are good. Staff work well as a team and use a good range of resources and examples of children's work to provide a bright, stimulating learning environment. There are good links with parents, who are very supportive of their children's learning both in school and at home.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The school undertakes its own review of parental opinions. Responses from parents who returned the inspection questionnaires are mostly positive about aspects of school life including the way the school cares for and educates their children. However, some parents have concerns about the progress their children are making. Inspection findings reflect their concerns. There was no evidence to support other concerns expressed. Some parents took time to add comments to the questionnaires they returned to reinforce the strength of their positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Joseph's RC Primary School, Halliwell, Bolton to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 207 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



9 October 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of St Joseph's RC Primary School, Halliwell, Bolton, Bolton, BL1 3EJ

My colleague and I were very pleased to meet you and have the chance to talk to some of you on our recent inspection of your school. Thank you so much for helping us and making us feel welcome. We enjoyed seeing you not only in lessons but also in the playground and at lunchtime.

While we found some good things happening in your school, we decided that overall it needs to improve significantly because at the moment it is not doing as well as it should in some important aspects of its work. As a result, we have given the school a 'notice to improve'. This means that an inspector will visit the school within the next eight months to see what progress is being made to improve the areas of weakness we have identified. The school will also have another inspection in about a year's time. However, we do feel that the leaders and governors of your school will be able to make the improvements needed. These are:

- to improve your writing skills
- to improve how well you learn so that you all make the progress you should and achieve well
- to make better use of all the information teachers have about how well you do to make sure that you make good progress
- to improve your attendance. Many of you do not attend school often enough to enable you to do well in your school work.

These are some of the good things we found out:

- Most of you enjoy school and say you feel very safe.
- You have a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles.
- The children in the Reception class are doing really well.
- You like your teachers, and the adults in school look after you well.

We also found behaviour in school to be satisfactory, although some of you feel it could be better.

I am sure that you will do your very best to help the headteacher, staff and governors make the changes that are necessary to make your school even better.

Yours sincerely

Mr Geoffrey Yates

Lead inspector

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