

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112908
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	338046
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Susan Walsh

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	155
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss Margaret Booth
Headteacher	Mrs Deborah Tibble
Date of previous school inspection	10 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons taught by 6 teachers, and held meetings with governors, pupils and staff. They observed the school's work including the school improvement plan, the school's records of the monitoring of teaching, samples of pupils' work and 36 questionnaires from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

The progress of more able pupils.

- The progress pupils make in writing.
- The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the progress children make in communication, language and literacy.
- The contribution of members of staff with management roles.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools and draws in pupils from a wide catchment area. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average and few pupils are from minority ethnic groups, although the school does provide for a few travelling families. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school has undergone a period of change since the previous inspection. The previous headteacher retired after being absent for some time. A new headteacher took up her position in September 2009. Since then, other members of staff have also been absent including some with management responsibilities.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The school has been through a difficult time when staff absences slowed the rate of improvement but the hard work and commitment of the staff have been pivotal in ensuring that the impact on pupils' well-being has been minimised. Prompt action by the new headteacher has ensured that the school is on track and is improving in many areas of its work, though some uncertainties regarding staffing remain. The school provides a warm and welcoming environment where pupils feel exceptionally safe. Relationships are very good and pupils grow in confidence and maturity as they move through the school. Consequently, behaviour is outstanding and the pupils are extremely considerate, polite and well mannered. The strong Catholic ethos of the school ensures pupils' sensitivity to others is very well developed and that they are able to make an outstanding contribution to the school community.

Children get off to a satisfactory start in the Reception classes. However, the school is aware that curriculum planning is relatively weak and that opportunities are missed to make child-initiated activities more exciting by using resources and topics imaginatively. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, information about children's progress is not always organised efficiently enough, or used sufficiently well to plan for children's individual needs. Progress has improved in Key Stage 1 and is now good but progress is only satisfactory in Years 3, 4 and 5. Pupils make slower progress in writing in these year groups than they do in reading and mathematics and presentation is an issue, especially in Year 3. Progress then accelerates in Year 6 and pupils usually reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. However, there are signs of improvement with more of the oldest pupils now working at or above the expected levels in both English and mathematics. Overall, pupils have achieved satisfactorily from their individual starting points.

Although teaching is satisfactory overall, there is some lively teaching in Classes 2, 3 and 6 that excites pupils and promotes good progress. However expectations vary and work is not always finely matched to pupils' needs in Key Stage 2. Some teachers ensure that marking tells pupils how to improve their work but, in several classes, pupils are given insufficient guidance, particularly regarding improving their writing. The range of opportunities for writing varies considerably from class to class.

The headteacher's tenacious leadership, which includes an ambitious vision and high expectations of both staff and pupils, together with accurate self evaluation, has been fundamental in driving improvement. Staff morale is high and there is a shared determination to further accelerate the pace of improvement. The contribution of staff with management roles is developing. Already progress has accelerated in Key Stage 1

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and attainment at the end of Year 2 is rising. More pupils are working at the higher Levels 3 and 5 at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. This demonstrates the school's satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the pace of improvement in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
- developing a coherent plan for delivering the curriculum
 - organising assessment information more efficiently and using that information to plan for children's individual needs
 - making more imaginative use of topics and resources to make child-initiated activities more purposeful and engaging.
- Improve pupils' progress in writing in Key Stage 2 by:
 - improving the presentation of pupils' work
 - using marking more effectively so that pupils know exactly how to improve their work
 - providing pupils with a greater variety of writing tasks.
 - Enhance the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 by:
 - making certain that all teachers have high expectations
 - ensuring that work always is closely matched to pupils' needs
 - resolving uncertainties regarding staffing.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

In 2009, pupils did not make enough progress in Key Stage 1 and attainment was below average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. However, pupils are now making good progress in their lessons in Key Stage 1 because of improvements to the quality of teaching. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 1, pupils of all abilities were quickly able to grasp the difference between odd and even numbers because of the skills of teachers and teaching assistants in questioning pupils and rephrasing explanations. Attainment is rising and is now above average by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress is uneven in Key Stage 2 and this is associated with variations in the quality of teaching. Pupils are determined and hardworking and will always try their very best. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peer group. When teaching is good, or they are taught by well informed teaching assistants in small groups, they make good progress. However, when activities are not well matched to their needs, their progress slows although they always try hard to succeed. The progress of pupils from Traveller backgrounds is starting to accelerate because the school works well with

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external agencies to make sure that all staff have a good understanding of these pupils' needs.

Pupils are exceptionally proud of their school and say that, 'Everyone gets on well together.' Consequently they feel very safe. By the end of Year 6, they have developed an exceptional understanding of how to keep healthy and fit because of the school's strong focus on personal education. The pupils value the introduction of the new house system and are keen to point out that it means that 'they all get a say'. The pupils' involvement in worship provides excellent opportunities for spiritual development. The 'Statements to Live by' introduced by the new headteacher have a profound effect on pupils' moral development because important messages about what is right and wrong are taken on board by pupils. They ensure that pupils think very carefully about their actions and attitudes and help them to make an exceptional contribution to the school community. Attendance rates have improved and are now broadly average. Although attainment in basic skills is average, pupils are well prepared for secondary school and are very confident about moving on. Their confidence, positive attitudes and strong work ethic means they are well prepared for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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?

Relationships between teachers and pupils are warm and supportive. Pupils are not afraid to make mistakes because they know that their efforts are valued by staff. Teachers' expectations are very variable and the neat, well-presented work that is seen in some classes is not reflected through the whole of Key Stage 2. Occasionally, work is not matched to pupils' individual needs and there are examples of pupils of different abilities completing very similar work in both English and mathematics lessons. This can hold back the progress of the most able pupils and cause difficulties for those who find learning hard. Although marking has improved, not all staff are following the school's new marking policy. Sometimes marking only offers praise and does not tell pupils how to improve their work. The use of individual academic targets is having a very positive effect on progress in some year groups. For example, in Year 6 pupils know their targets well and they are frequently referred to by both pupils and staff.

There are good features to the curriculum, such as the way pupils' personal development is supported, and courses that ensure pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and safe. However, the way that the curriculum promotes pupils' basic skills is satisfactory. The school has focused on improving the use of visits to stimulate writing and this has had some success, especially in Key Stage 1. Efforts have been made to provide writing activities that are interesting to boys. For example, there has been a trip to a local football club that involved drama and writing scripts. However, there is a wide variation in the quality of writing tasks that are provided in the classroom in Key Stage 2. Effective partnerships with the local high schools are successfully extending opportunities for pupils, particularly those related to learning a modern foreign language and promoting involvement in the arts.

The high priority that is given to providing good quality pastoral care is reflected in pupils' excellent personal development. Pupils know they are well looked after. Potentially vulnerable pupils and those from Travelling families are carefully nurtured. The support for pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities is much improved. For example, more formal support has been provided for those who are finding mathematics work difficult. A vigilant approach to checking pupils' attendance is helping to boost attendance rates

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

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How effective are leadership and management?

The way pupils' progress is assessed and tracked has been enhanced and this has been combined with a cycle of robust monitoring. As a result, the school has been able to pinpoint exactly where it needs to improve. Pupils who are in danger of falling behind are now identified earlier and offered a good range of interventions, but the impact of this improved support has not been rigorously evaluated. Staff, including subject coordinators, are starting to develop their management roles. Governors are also developing their skills and are beginning to provide a greater level of challenge. The quality of teaching has improved in Key Stage 1, reflecting improvements to the continuity of staffing. However, the school is aware that it has not resolved the instability in staffing in Key Stage 2 and the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching that arise from this. Leaders have also identified the weaknesses in provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Staff and governors work hard to ensure that pupils are safe and secure in school and safeguarding procedures are good. The school plays a vital role in the local Catholic community and is, in itself, a highly cohesive community where pupils of all ages and backgrounds mix well and support each other. International links are developing but the school knows that it does not contribute enough to the wider community in the United Kingdom. There is a good commitment to promoting equal opportunities. Stereotyping is frequently challenged and pupils are quick to express disapproval of any forms of discrimination. Partnerships are particularly strong and are used both to enhance the curriculum and to secure expert support for pupils with additional needs.

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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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	3

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Reception class with skills that are similar to those that are expected for their ages except their skills in writing, which are below those expected. They make satisfactory progress in the Reception class and, when they join Year 1, their skills are similar to those expected but, until recently, their writing skills remained below average. However, this year more children are likely to reach the expected levels because of an improved focus on developing children's writing skills, including ensuring that children understand the links between sounds and letters. Children in the Reception class are articulate and confident. They feel safe because they are well looked after. Staff are reflective in their practice and are determined to develop the quality of provision. Satisfactory leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage has led to improvements to the general environment and to the way the outdoors is used but the school is aware that it lacks a coherent plan for delivering the curriculum. Children's learning is regularly checked but staff are aware that the information obtained is not always gathered together effectively enough, or consistently used to plan curriculum activities that are well matched to the needs of individuals.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire are very pleased with what the school provides, saying that the school has a strong sense of community and is very caring and supportive. A few parents and carers feel that the school does not respond to their concerns. The inspection evidence shows that the school does take suitable account of parents' and carers' views. For example, the recent survey regarding school uniform sought parents', carers' and pupils' views and the vast majority of parents, carers and pupils were more than happy with the current uniform. The school agrees that more could be done to help parents support their children's learning at home. A small number of parents were concerned about the way that instability in staffing had affected their children and inspectors agree that uncertainties about staffing in Key Stage 2 need to be resolved.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Joseph's Catholic Primary 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 155 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	64	13	36	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	75	9	25	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	53	15	42	2	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	64	12	33	0	0	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	23	64	12	33	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	53	14	39	3	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	58	14	39	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)	20	56	15	42	0	0	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	64	11	31	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	50	16	44	2	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	53	14	39	1	3	2	6
The school is led and managed effectively	24	67	10	28	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	69	9	25	1	3	1	3

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



11 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary, Mansfield, NG20 9RP

It was a delight and a privilege to visit your school. I really enjoyed talking to you all and listened very carefully to what you had to say. I very was impressed by your excellent behaviour and by the way you all get on so well together. It was lovely to see older pupils helping younger ones and it's obvious that you all care a lot about each other. You really do put 'Statements to Live by' into action. Well done! I was also amazed by how much you know about keeping safe and healthy. The Year 6 were extremely good at answering the police officer's questions during the DARE lesson and I learnt a lot about the dangers that can be in the home.

You go to a satisfactory and improving school. Teaching in your school is satisfactory and helps you to make satisfactory progress. Your standards of attainment are similar to those reached by children at other schools. However, attainment is rising and more of you are reaching the higher levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. I have asked the school to make sure that all teachers always expect the very best from you. I have also asked them to make certain that you always know exactly what to do to improve your work and to make sure that the work you are set is never too hard or too easy.

Managers at your school are working hard to make your school better. They know that although provision for children in Reception is satisfactory it could be improved by proving more imaginative activities that are more closely matched to children's individual abilities. You can help your school to improve further by continuing to work hard in lessons and making sure that your work is always neat and well presented.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Susan Walsh

Lead inspector

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