

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113467
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	338179
Inspection dates	25–26 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Graeme Bassett

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	124
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Coward
Headteacher	Angela Jeffery
Date of previous school inspection	8 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff with management responsibilities, and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation including the school's self-evaluation form, the school improvement plan, records of pupils' progress, minutes of governors' meetings and safeguarding procedures. In addition, 35 parental/carers questionnaires were scrutinised.

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

- the effectiveness of the leaders' management strategies in coping with the disruptions caused to staffing by the financial constraints and the school's falling roll
- the pupils' standards and achievement and whether they make enough progress, particularly in their reading and writing in Year 2
- the effectiveness of procedures and processes deployed by the school to develop community cohesion and to raise pupils' awareness of the traditions and customs of other people.

Information about the school

This small Catholic primary school serves a wide area throughout Newton Abbot. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average and their range of needs includes moderate learning needs, behavioural, emotional and social needs, and autistic spectrum disorder. The proportion of pupils qualifying for free school meals is below average. The school has reduced from seven to five classes since the last inspection. Breakfast and after school care are organised by the school. The school has a Healthy School award and an Activemark award for physical education and sports.

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

This is a satisfactory school. However, it has experienced significant management problems since the last inspection. The headteacher, governing body and staff, faced by a financial deficit and the prospect of reducing the number of classes, worked diligently to resolve these problems. The school is now more stable, and it is currently improving. The views of many parents were summed up by one parent who said, 'The overall feeling of the school has changed for the better.'

Steady improvements are evident as a result of the good leadership and management of the headteacher who provides a clear direction to the work of the school. She is the driving force behind the school's development and several initiatives are now established that promote more structure to teaching and learning. Self-evaluation is accurate and the growing engagement of senior teachers in setting and evaluating priorities for the future is having a good impact on teaching. The capacity for sustained improvement in the future is satisfactory.

The overall quality of teaching is improving because of the initiatives undertaken to improve planning for different groups of pupils. Currently, some elements are good, particularly provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is clear that progress made by current Year 6 pupils last year accelerated., They have improved their achievement and it is now satisfactory. The standard of their work is slightly above average. However, the work of pupils in Year 2 shows that some of the more able ones are not always challenged sufficiently well.

The school collects a good range of information about each pupil's progress. However, some inconsistencies exist in the way teachers use assessment data and also in the quality of their marking. As a result, many pupils do not always understand their targets and are not sure what they need to do next to improve.

Pupils say that they enjoy the themes in the curriculum and especially when subjects are linked together. The school has a good care, guidance and support programme to support pupils' personal development, which is one of the school's strengths.

Safeguarding is good. Inspectors found that, despite a few pupils who can be over boisterous when they get excited, behaviour is good overall, with most pupils behaving excellently. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good but many have limited awareness of the different customs and traditions of other people living in our multicultural society.

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.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress and further raise standards throughout the school, but especially in Key Stage 1, by:
 - ensuring greater consistency in the quality of marking to give pupils a clearer understanding of their targets and how they can improve their work
 - improving the use of assessment information to provide activities that are more accurately matched to pupils' abilities, particularly for the able pupils in Key Stage 1.
- Widen the pupils' awareness and understanding of the customs and traditions of other people and the multicultural nature of our diverse society by widening the curriculum.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The quality of pupils' learning observed in the classrooms was satisfactory. In Year 6, pupils' current standards in reading, writing and mathematics are seen to be slightly above average. Currently the progress made by Year 6 pupils is more rapid than in the past because of improved planning of tasks that meet the needs of all groups of pupils. The work of the more able pupils in Year 6 exceeds the expectations for their age, in English and mathematics. Pupils are developing secure use of information and communication technology to develop research skills and to enhance their writing skills. Nevertheless, some of the more able pupils in Year 2 do not do as well as they should, especially in writing and this holds down the overall standards at the end of Key Stage 1. The lower attaining pupils are succeeding well in all classes because of good support in lessons. The pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.

Most pupils present calm and interested attitudes in lessons. A very large majority of pupils show by their positive attitudes that they appreciate the caring way with which staff respect all of them. Pupils mix well together across all age groups and, as a result, they form lasting friendships. Pupils feel safe and secure in school and have a good understanding of the need to remain healthy. This is recognised in the Healthy School award and Activemark. Pupils' contribution to the school and local community throughout the parish is good. Many eagerly accept responsibilities on the school council, as play leaders and as house captains.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers are creating interesting lessons, for example through the use of information and communication technology for research. The planning of lessons for different groups of pupils within the mixed-age classes is satisfactory and improving. It is particularly secure in meeting the needs of the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities who have detailed programmes to aid their development. However, there are still some inconsistencies in lesson planning because teachers do not always make sufficient use of assessment records to ensure that they identify tasks that build upon what pupils already know. This is most noticeable for the more able pupils in Years 1 and 2, and this restricts their attainment. Pupils do not always understand the targets that list what they need to learn next.

The curriculum does ensure that all the pupils remain challenged by new themes and topics, even when they spend a second year in a class. The creative links which incorporate subjects such as literacy, science, geography and history are beginning to have a good impact upon inspiring pupils' interests. The teaching of a modern foreign language is established well and the use of the newly formed computer suite is aiding the development of pupils' information and communication technology skills.

The various after-school clubs, visits and residential visits provide additional opportunities to extend pupils' skills and interests and enhance their spiritual and cultural awareness. The links made with pupils in the local cluster of schools are most beneficial, especially for those who occasionally swap schools for numeracy workshops. The staff have good relationships with all pupils. All pupils are included in all that the school does. The Christian ethos of the school forms the foundation of the good care,

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guidance and support given to all pupils. The breakfast and after-school clubs are well organised and provide pupils with good opportunities to play and take part in creative activities safely. A range of vulnerable pupils with different needs are very well supported and achieve well as a result.

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior staff are beginning to take a stronger role in developing their own responsibilities for subjects and other areas. Leaders and managers have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. As a result, the school improvement plan identifies accurate priorities and actions which are being embedded well to drive forward improvements. The professional development for all teachers and support staff, arranged by the senior leadership team to improve teaching and learning, is gradually beginning to show an impact on raising standards. Staff changes in Key Stage 1 presented a temporary problem this term but the school has dealt with it effectively. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties and governors are well aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding procedures, including child protection and risk assessment. The effectiveness of safe guarding procedures is good. The governors' efforts in supporting the headteacher in resolving the financial problems faced have been effective and appreciated. The school promotes equality of opportunities while tackling discrimination. Tracking ensures that any underachievement can be identified and addressed; the school is aware of some different rates of progress of pupils of different abilities and is taking steps to close the gap. The school's leaders understand its context and promote community cohesion effectively with other schools and agencies in the local area. Although communication is being established with a school in St Lucia, wider links are more limited. Engagement with parents is increasing and the school website gives good levels of information.

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

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	
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision for children in Reception is good because the leaders and managers have established a very clear direction for development. Teaching and support are good, with good questioning and a successful balance between teacher-led activities and opportunities for children to choose what they do. Assessment procedures are thorough. Children are well cared for and feel secure. Those who started school in September have already settled into the routines of the class and are making good progress.

Children's skills when they enter the Reception class are broadly as expected for their age in most areas of learning but with slight weaknesses in their language development. They make good progress across the different areas of learning but some still have limitations in their writing by the time they enter Year 1. The recently commissioned outdoor area provides a good extension to the well-resourced classroom environment and is beginning to give extra opportunities for them to freely extend their learning outside.

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 majority of parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire and those who

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spoke to the inspectors expressed their support for the school. Parents commented how they were pleased with the school's work but some also commented upon the disruptions caused by staffing issues. The inspectors noted that the school is now more stable and financial difficulties are being resolved. Behaviour was a concern of a number of parents and carers but the inspection team judged that most pupils behaved excellently in lessons and only a very small number were occasionally too boisterous around the school.

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 School 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 inspections team received 35 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 124 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	57	12	34	1	3	2	6
The school keeps my child safe	15	43	16	46	3	9	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	4	11	23	66	6	17	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	8	23	21	60	3	9	2	6
The teaching is good at this school	5	14	23	66	2	6	2	6
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	20	23	66	2	6	3	9
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	12	34	20	57	3	9	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)	4	11	22	63	3	9	2	6
The school meets my child's particular needs	7	20	21	60	3	9	2	6
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	20	14	40	7	20	4	11
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	2	6	20	57	6	17	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	3	9	19	54	5	14	4	11
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	37	16	46	3	9	3	9

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.



27 November 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Newton Abbot, TQ12 1PT

Thank you for helping us when we recently visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and finding out about your school. We found that it provides you with a satisfactory education. There is a good caring attitude in your school and it is a happy place. Well done!

These are the things that we judged to be good in your school.

- Your headteacher provides a clear direction to the leadership and management work of the school.
- Your teachers give you good encouragement and, because of this, your work is steadily improving.
- The children in the Reception class are already settling quickly into school routines. Their classroom is well resourced and the new outdoor area is beginning to give extra opportunities for them to work outside.
- Throughout the school, the staff care well for you. As a result, you are all developing good attitudes towards your work and towards each other.
- You have a good understanding of how to remain healthy and keep safe.
- You are very polite and your good behaviour helps to create a positive environment in school.

There are still some ways in which your school could be better, and we have asked your headteacher and governors to do some specific things.

- Carry on making teaching and learning better, especially in Key Stage 1, and especially for those of you who are able to learn quickly.
- Help teachers make better use of information about your progress when they plan tasks. This will make sure work is right for you and help all of you learn even faster. We also want them to ensure that teachers' written comments in your books help you to understand clearly what you need to do to improve. We have asked them to always check to make certain that you know exactly what you have to do to improve your own work. You must play your part by reading the comments they write in your books and listening carefully to their advice.
- Help your teachers to include more ways for you to widen your understanding of

the world beyond your own neighbourhood. This will help you to develop a better awareness of the different customs and traditions of other people in our modern society.

Once again, thank you for your help.

Yours sincerely

Graeme Bassett, Lead inspector

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