

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115173
<b>Local Authority</b>	Thurrock
<b>Inspection number</b>	338527
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Selwyn Ward

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	277
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Jackie Bryan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Stephanie Lakin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 February 2007
<b>School address</b>	Scratton Road Stanford-le-Hope SS17 0PA
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 24 lessons and observed 11 teachers. They spoke with governors, staff, parents and groups of pupils. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work, the analysis of the tracking of pupils' progress, school policies and procedures, school leaders' monitoring records, school development planning and risk assessments. They also analysed the questionnaires received from pupils, staff and 163 parents and carers.

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

- reconciling differences within the school's account of progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- exploring why the school's picture of good provision has not resulted in higher attainment and progress in Key Stages 1 and 2
- the extent to which actions have been taken to give effect to leaders' ambitions for moving the school forward.

## Information about the school

The school is slightly larger than average. Most pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. Three-quarters of the pupils are White British. Around a quarter of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds but almost all speak English as their first language. The largest minority group is of Black African heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The school has Activemark and an International School award, as well as Healthy Schools status. The headteacher was appointed to her role in January 2009, having previously been the deputy headteacher.

**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

'I will be sad to see my child leave St. Joseph's. His time here has prepared him well and developed him into a well-rounded boy.' This comment from the parent of a lad coming to the end of Year 6, was typical of many received from parents who praise the way that the school helps their children to grow in confidence and self-esteem. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well together. They behave well and are eager to learn. They listen well to their teachers and to each other. They have a good appreciation of the need for a healthy diet and regular exercise, and they have a finely tuned awareness of safety issues; the school council were emphatic, for example, in demanding of new playground equipment that it be both 'exciting and safe'. Despite these important strengths, the school is satisfactory rather than better because staff do not capitalise enough on pupils' enthusiasm and positive attitudes to learning.

Attainment by the end of Year 6, which was average in 2009, is now above average, but it is only average in Key Stage 1 and the school's tracking data shows that pupils' progress is satisfactory. This is because, too frequently, more able pupils are not given challenging enough work. Often, teaching assistants are largely observers during question and answer sessions and are not always deployed effectively enough, for example, by being used to make a note of those pupils who are slow to volunteer answers so that teachers can direct questions at them. Assessments have been inaccurate in the Early Years Foundation Stage so leaders have not had a clear enough picture of how well the children are doing in their first year at the school. Children's progress is slower than it could be in the Reception Year because activities are not always appropriate for their needs. They often spend too long sitting on the carpet listening passively.

Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum is stimulating because it appeals to pupils' interests, with, for example, focused texts in literacy and geography tying in with the pupils' keen appreciation of environmental concerns. Good partnerships, developed with other local schools and through the diocese, also extend opportunities for pupils, including in sport and music. As a result, the curriculum

- is a key factor in motivating pupils to work hard and do their best. There are good arrangements for pupils' day-to-day welfare but the overall quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory because the individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are not sharp enough in identifying specific strategies for helping these pupils to make faster progress. For all pupils, academic guidance through marking is too variable. There are examples of good marking that shows pupils what they need to do to improve their work, and good opportunities are taken by some teachers to involve pupils in evaluating their own

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and each other's work. However, too often, marking merely offers encouragement or tells the pupils what they have already done.

Although the leadership team and the governing body have an overly positive view of some aspects of the school, leaders' most recent monitoring has given them a sharper picture of where improvements are needed; correctly identifying, for example, points for development for teachers rather than, as previously, just highlighting their strengths. This, and the school's continued success in ensuring pupils' good personal development, shows St Joseph's sound capacity for improvement in the future.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Accelerate pupils' learning by ensuring that:
  - work in all lessons challenges and extends more able pupils
  - teaching assistants are fully utilised during whole-class teaching and teachers direct questions at those pupils who are slower to volunteer answers
  - individual education plans set out specific strategies to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make faster progress
  - all pupils have clear guidance through marking that shows them what they need to do to improve their work.
- Help children to get off to a faster start in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - ensuring the accuracy of assessments at the start and during the course of the Reception Year
  - using assessment information to plan activities matched to individual children's needs, inside and in the outdoor area, that move the children's learning on
  - reducing the time spent listening passively on the carpet
  - giving children purposeful activities that enable them to learn through discovery and play.
- 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**

Pupils' books over the past year, and the lessons seen during the inspection, confirm the picture of satisfactory progress and achievement identified in the school's self-evaluation. School leaders readily acknowledge that, given the pupils' good behaviour, positive attitudes and enthusiasm, they ought to be learning at a faster rate. National test results in recent years have shown the great majority of pupils attaining the nationally expected levels but with fewer pupils than expected attaining the higher levels. In 2009, pupils in Year 6 attained above average results in mathematics but reached only average standards in English.

Teachers' assessments and the work seen during the inspection indicate an improved

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picture this year, with attainment on track to be above average in both these key subjects, but these pupils started Key Stage 2 with above average attainment as measured in their Year 2 assessments, and so their progress and achievement is satisfactory rather than better. It remains the case that not enough opportunities are taken to extend the most able pupils. In a mathematics lesson, for example, able pupils were simply asked to draw two graphs rather than the one that other pupils were drawing. This meant that they made slower progress than if, instead of being asked to do more of the same, they had been set tasks better matched to their capabilities. Nevertheless, pupils' key skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, coupled with their good attendance and punctuality, mean that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils demonstrate mature and thoughtful attitudes. They take an interest, for example in considering issues relating to world poverty, although some display a confused understanding of other faiths. Pupils raise funds for a range of charities and they are proud of the opportunities that they have to take on positions of responsibility in the school, for example in helping new children joining the Reception Year. They work and play together cooperatively, and they demonstrated their sporting prowess during the inspection by bringing back the track, field and overall sports shields in the 'Thurrock Olympics' inter-schools sports day.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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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<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>
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## How effective is the provision?

A key success at St Joseph's is the way the curriculum is made relevant and exciting for the pupils. They enjoy the links between different subjects that increasingly encourage them to develop their literacy and numeracy skills while learning other subjects, including science, history and geography. Well-established partnerships with a wide range of institutions and businesses have helped to extend the curriculum, as have regular themed days and workshops, and leaders have secured funding for extending partnerships over the coming year to further enrich provision for the arts and literacy. Teachers know the pupils well and the good relationships in each class contribute to what parents describe as the 'family atmosphere' of the school. As one parent put it: 'St. Joseph's is an extremely caring school. They are very well organised and each child is valued and encouraged in every aspect of their school life.' Pupils with medical needs are catered for well. The school readily identifies those pupils who have special educational needs, and each has an individual education plan that is appropriately shared with parents, but the impact of these plans is blunted because they do not set out practical strategies for staff to follow in helping each pupil to overcome their difficulties.

Arrangements for keeping track of each pupil's progress have been improved this year, with teachers reporting termly on any pupils falling behind and leaders putting in place additional support to boost their learning. Although teachers now have detailed data on how well each child is doing, they do not all make enough use of this information in planning work in lessons that is matched to pupils' different capabilities. This particularly affects more able pupils, whose progress is limited by work which sometimes lacks challenge. Although, in most lessons, three-quarters or more of pupils eagerly put up their hands to answer teachers' questions, there is a small number in each class who are more reluctant to volunteer. These pupils can be left out when teachers do not direct questions to them to ensure that they are as fully engaged as their peers.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders have recognised that pupils' academic achievement has slipped in recent years.

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While keen to maintain the school's most successful features, they have started on the route to identifying where the quality of teaching and learning can be raised and are beginning the process of securing the necessary improvement. Sharper systems for keeping track of each pupil's progress have enabled leaders to better hold each teacher to account for variations in progress. Leaders have raised their game in monitoring lessons, and recent staff meetings focused on improving the quality of marking have begun to have an impact. Nevertheless, all these improvements remain at an early stage. The strong partnership with parents is at the heart of the school's work, and parents greatly appreciate this. They especially praise the opportunities that they have to raise points with staff. As one parent explained, 'I feel all the teachers including the headteacher and deputy head are very approachable and very helpful.' Governors are supportive but they have not done enough to challenge the school over pupils' progress and achievement. They ensure that legal requirements are met, including those for safeguarding.

Some aspects of equal opportunities are promoted well, and the school functions as a harmonious community where pupils from different backgrounds get on well together. There are shortcomings, however, in targeting the precise support needed by pupils with special educational needs and in meeting the needs of more able pupils. The school has a good awareness of its context in relation to community cohesion, which it promotes well. Pupils are encouraged to take an active interest and develop their roles as young citizens in the locality and in relation to the wider world.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

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

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There has been some uncertainty over the accuracy of assessments in the Reception Year but the indications are that children join the school with skills and capabilities that are at least in line with those expected for their ages. A number have above average skills. Staff look after the children well, and the children make reasonable progress in the areas of learning for the Early Years Foundation Stage, doing especially well in their personal and social development. The children quickly settle into orderly routines. They get on well together and play together cooperatively. Progress slows, however, when children spend too long on the carpet listening to lengthy introductions.

Gaps in assessment information mean that activities are not always targeted as well as they should be to meet individual children's needs. Inside and in the outdoors area, staff do not always ensure that children get the most out of the activities they are assigned or which they choose for themselves; opportunities are missed for the children to learn through play when staff do not discuss the children's activities with them. This is the case both in the Reception class and in the mixed-age Reception/Year 1 class, where children mostly follow a Key Stage 1 curriculum.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
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

Parents express positive views about almost all aspects of the school. They especially value the way in which the school helps their children to grow in confidence and self-esteem. A small number of parents voice concerns over the management of behaviour, but inspectors saw consistently good behaviour throughout the school and teachers managing pupils well.

## 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 inspection team received 163 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 277 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	96	59	62	38	5	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	107	66	52	32	0	0	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	68	42	84	52	7	4	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	75	46	73	45	11	7	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	86	53	71	44	2	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	78	48	70	43	11	7	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	79	48	79	48	3	2	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)	69	42	83	51	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	68	42	82	50	9	6	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	65	40	78	48	15	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	55	34	86	53	11	7	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	73	45	80	49	5	3	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	91	56	62	38	7	4	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

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](http://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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



24 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Stanford-le-Hope, SS17 0PA

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. There are lots of good things about your school, but it is satisfactory overall because you are making satisfactory rather than better progress. Your headteacher and other school leaders know this and we have agreed with them some changes that will help you to make faster progress. You can help with this by telling your teachers if you find the work you are doing is too easy. You can also help by always being sure to read and follow the advice that teachers give you when they mark your work. When teachers ask questions, most hands go up, but it would be good to see everyone have a go at answering. If you are one of the shy ones, make an extra effort to have a go.

We were pleased to see how well you all get on together and how well behaved you are in lessons and around the school. This helps to make St Joseph's such a happy, friendly place to be. You enjoy all the interesting things you get to learn about, and the clubs and other activities that are organised for you. We were especially impressed to see how well all the St Joseph's athletes did in the 'Thurrock Olympics'. I shall have to look out to see if I can spot any of your names going for gold in Rio de Janeiro in 2016! Staff take good care of you, but we have asked them to improve the individual education plans for supporting those of you who need extra help with your learning. We have also suggested some changes to help the children in the Reception Year to get off to a quicker start.

Thank you again for being so polite and friendly, and our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Selwyn Ward

Lead inspector

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