

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Preston

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119430
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339439
Inspection dates	26–27 May 2010
Reporting inspector	David Byrne

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	327
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mark Allen
Headteacher	Mrs Valerie McNamara
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 19 lessons taught by 11 teachers. Meetings were held with governors, staff, pupils and the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documents relating to safeguarding, the progress and attainment of pupils, the curriculum, the school's development plan and the way in which the school evaluates its own performance. The inspection team analysed 57 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and others from staff and pupils.

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

- the rate of progress of all groups and whether it is fast enough
- the quality of teaching and whether it is good enough to meet the needs of all pupils
- the excitement and inspiration provided by the curriculum and its impact on learning
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers in monitoring the performance of the school and driving forward improvements
- the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation.

Information about the school

This is a large primary school. The majority of pupils are White British but a significant minority are from minority ethnic backgrounds. An above-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language, the percentage of which has increased in recent years. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. An above-average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has the Healthy Schools accreditation, has gained status as an International School and has been judged to merit the Investors in People Award.

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. Pupils make good progress in their personal development but could do better academically. The school is popular with parents and carers, the large majority of whom are positive about the support given to their children. The school values each pupil, regardless of ethnic or cultural background.

From very low starting points, most pupils progress satisfactorily, with those who speak English as an additional language learning at a good rate. Progress is accelerating in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1 to 2. Improved targets are now being met in Year 2. This progress has yet to have an impact on the Year 6 test results, which are low.

Personal development is good overall, although attendance is low despite the efforts of the school to reduce absence. The pupils are generally happy and their enjoyment and achievement are satisfactory. They feel safe and have a good knowledge of staying fit and healthy. Most have good attitudes to learning and to others but a significant minority struggle with their behaviour. This minority of pupils are managed well; consequently, behaviour, although at times challenging, is good. The pupils' voice is valued through the school council, in which the pupils have pride.

The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching promotes good relationships and assessment identifies the needs of most pupils. Some lessons lack excitement and a sense of urgency and, too often, pupils are expected to listen for too long and follow instructions rather than think independently. Some good developments in the curriculum are underway. Greater attention to reading and writing across the curriculum is improving progress. Generally, however, the curriculum lacks the excitement to keep many pupils interested. The best teaching is where pupils' interests are met and they have chances to apply their skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) to a variety of situations.

Leadership and management, including governance, are satisfactory. The school's self-evaluation is mostly accurate and gives the school a satisfactory capacity to improve. Important tools for accelerating achievement and progress quickly enough, however, are not securely established. Improvement planning lacks some clarity and precision and management systems for ensuring consistency in teaching across the school are not assertive enough.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement and accelerate their progress by:

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- – raising the expectations of staff of what pupils can achieve independently
- – developing a curriculum that reflects pupils' interests and inspires them to apply their skills of reading, writing, mathematics and ICT to all subjects
- – working with families and pupils to reduce absence.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management by:
 - – developing clear strategies for managing change in order to accelerate the implementation of necessary change
 - – improving the quality of improvement planning and accompanying systems to monitor the progress towards achieving the school's targets.
 - – developing the role of the governing body in monitoring the school's performance.
- About 40% of 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**

Most pupils are generally quiet and attentive in lessons, however, their attention tends to wander when they are expected to listen for too long. Most share and cooperate well with each other, chatting about their tasks sensibly. Their ability to make decisions and direct their own learning, however, is held back because there are too few opportunities for them to take responsibility for their own learning. Where pupils are given opportunities to experiment and try things out for themselves, for example in creating music using instruments, learning accelerates and enjoyment increases.

Children start the Nursery with levels of skills that are very low for their age. As pupils move through the school, the proportion reaching national expectations improves at a satisfactory rate. The rate of improvement is not rapid enough, however, for attainment to rise to the national average and, at Year 6, attainment is low. Pupils' progress is, however, accelerating as a result of initiatives to lift attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in reading and writing in Key Stage 1. The improvement in pupils' progress is moving through the school but is yet to have an impact on Year 6 results. Girls do better than boys, with the White British boys being the lowest attaining pupils. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make better progress than others in their year group. This is because of good-quality support and guidance.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and contributes to the positive relationships developed between pupils and adults. The school community is harmonious and the cultural variations within it are celebrated and respected by all. The majority of pupils have a good sense of how to live safe and healthy lives. They benefit from initiatives such as those from a national energy company to promote exercise through swimming. This not only benefited pupils but also had a very positive impact on the community. The pupils make great efforts to raise funds for others less fortunate than themselves, for example raising funds for charities such as Cafod and for those suffering after the Haiti disaster. Although attainment is low, the good levels of personal development and the strong relationships developed by the pupils means that they are satisfactorily prepared for their next stage of education.

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

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	4
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	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	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory and this is reflected in the rate of pupils' progress and achievement. Lessons are generally well organised, with good systems employed to manage behaviour. Lessons proceed at a satisfactory rate but too much adult-led talk and direction holds back learning. While assessment is used to identify pupils with different needs, the level of challenge provided to pupils is not always high enough to get the best out of everyone. Opportunities to invigorate learning, for example through the use of interactive whiteboards and by creating lively and vibrant classroom displays, are not consistently taken. Marking is prompt and gives pupils pointers to improve, but many targets for improvement are rather general and not refined closely to individual needs.

The curriculum meets the needs of the majority of pupils. It ensures the good inclusion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and gives good support to those who speak English as an additional language. The development of the core skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are planned for satisfactorily. Opportunities to apply these skills imaginatively and independently are, however, too few to promote good progress

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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or achievement. St Joseph's International Schools status is testimony to its commitment to international links to extend pupils' knowledge of global issues.

The school gives a high priority to helping pupils whose circumstances mean they require additional help and their families and in this aspect of care it is outstanding. This level of care goes some way to overcoming the barriers pupils have to learning and education in general. Close liaison with outside agencies from health, education and social services adds to the quality of care. Good efforts by the school encourage parents and carers to get involved in their children's education, although the uptake is at times disappointing. The school strives to reduce absence but strategies to do so are only partially successful.

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?

A high priority is given by leaders and managers to promoting pupils' personal development successfully. The school is committed to equal opportunities and ensures that any incidents of racism are virtually non-existent. Academic achievement is a clear focus for improvement but strategies for raising attainment are not sufficiently well defined. Subject leaders and managers recognise the importance of improving teaching so that it consistently inspires and excites pupils. Positive action has been taken to share good practice, for example in reading and aspects of writing, but there is a lack of urgency to establish improvements quickly enough. The governors are very supportive but not all are fully aware of their role in monitoring attainment and ensuring that the school takes action to improve attainment. Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements and ensure that all in the school are safe. Efforts to engage parents and carers in their children's education are imaginative and contribute positively to pupils' learning. The school plays a pivotal role in its local community, promoting cohesion within it. An audit of the school's strengths and weaknesses clearly sets out a clear vision for extending its contribution to community cohesion further. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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	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	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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

A warm and welcoming environment and good levels of care ensure that children are happy, feel safe, secure and ready to learn. Good-quality teaching overall, with strengths in the Reception Year, provides a good balance of adult-led and child-chosen activities which promotes good learning. Activities are linked effectively across all areas of learning. The children were fascinated, for example, by feeling ice cubes and were amazed by how rapidly they melted into water. The outdoor provision is of a good quality and much improved since the last inspection. The children love being outdoors enjoying vigorous bike rides, planting sunflower seeds and sharing with others.

An above-average proportion of children start school with levels of development that are lower than is typical for their age, particularly in their communication, language and literacy, and in personal and social development. Good progress, overall, enables children to prosper in all areas of learning but the proportion reaching the levels expected for their age by the start of Year 1 is lower than average.

Leaders and managers have been effective in improving the quality of provision since the last inspection and in raising achievement. This improvement is starting to benefit the rate of progress as pupils move through the school. Assessment systems are at an early stage of development in the Nursery. The role of parents and carers in their children's development is valued and encouraged at all times.

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

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Views of parents and carers

Less than one fifth of parents and carers returned questionnaires outlining their views of the school. The overall response is very positive. Parents and carers are particularly appreciative of the care the school provides for their children and the support it gives to families. The inspectors agree with the positive views. Some concerns were expressed about the behaviour of pupils in and around school. Inspectors found that a few pupils have challenging behaviour but, overall, pupils conduct themselves well and show respect to others. A small minority of parents and carers expressed the opinion that progress is not as good as it could be. Inspectors agree that there is scope for better progress, although it is currently improving.

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 inspector received 57 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 327 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	33	32	56	4	7	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	27	47	27	47	2	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	47	26	46	3	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	39	28	49	5	9	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	22	39	33	58	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	37	29	51	5	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	33	36	63	1	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)	13	23	39	68	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	35	32	56	0	0	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	37	28	49	4	7	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	30	34	60	2	4	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	22	39	32	56	0	0	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	51	25	44	1	2	1	2

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.



28 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Preston, PR1 5XL

My team and I enjoyed spending some time with you in and around school. Your teachers are very caring and help you all to get along well together. You develop a good understanding of how to live safe and healthy lives and you also do much to help your school community, for example by being school council members. Most of the time your behaviour is good and you are friendly and helpful to others. It was good to see how you do your best to help others through raising funds for charity appeals such as the Haiti disaster.

You learn English and mathematics at a satisfactory rate. You generally enjoy lessons but often you are expected to listen for too long. As a result, you are given too few opportunities to make own choices and set your own agenda for learning. This holds back the progress many of you make.

There are some things that your school could do even better and I have asked your headteacher and governors to consider the following.

- Find ways of making lessons more interesting by giving you more opportunities to influence what you learn and reduce the time you spend listening to adults.
- Improve the role of school managers and the governing body in keeping an eye on the school's performance so that your attainment is raised.

You can all help by doing your best to attend school regularly and working with the teachers to bring about more interesting lessons in which you are more involved. I wish you all the very best for your future.

Yours sincerely

Mr David Byrne

Lead inspector

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