

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120224
<b>Local Authority</b>	City Of Leicester
<b>Inspection number</b>	339638
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 December 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Trevor Watts

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	270
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Boynton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Virginia Marston
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 February 2007
<b>School address</b>	Armadale Drive Leicester LE5 1HF
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies, records of progress, attainment data, correspondence and pupils' work. Sixty-four questionnaires were returned from parents and inspectors examined questionnaires returned from pupils. Inspectors looked in detail at the following:

recent actions taken by senior leaders to raise pupils' standards

- inconsistencies in the standard of teaching throughout the school
- the gathering of information about pupils' progress and the use that is made of it in planning the curriculum and lessons.

## Information about the school

This school is slightly larger than average. A smaller than average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities form a similarly small proportion of the school's population. The proportion of pupils who do not speak English at home is higher than average.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

St Joseph's is a good school that owes much to its Catholic ethos, that results in the outstanding growth of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils feel happy and secure and have excellent awareness of their own lives and beliefs and those of people in other cultures and countries. Almost all pupils say that their teachers help them and are fair, but a few disagree with this and say that some teachers are too strict. The inspection team found that there were some inconsistencies in behaviour management, but agreed with the great majority of pupils that teachers were fair and not overly stern.

Pupils' standards of attainment have risen in recent years and are consistently significantly above the national average. This is because school leaders have prioritised the improvement of standards in the school's development plans. Clear and accurate self-evaluation led school leaders to detect areas where progress was slower than desired. This in turn led to clear identification of the reasons for each relative weakness, and to putting measures in place to improve each situation. These included additional staff training, adopting and adapting a new and imaginative curriculum that encompasses many cross-curricular topics. Renewed procedures for assessing how well pupils make progress are consolidating the already strong procedures for supporting children in their personal and academic needs. Pupils learn at a good pace and enjoy school. They are polite and friendly with each other and with adults. Their learning is best when tasks are interesting, but difficult enough to really stretch them and make them think. Sometimes, however, they lose their enthusiasm when teachers spend a long time explaining too much detail before allowing them to get on with their own writing or mathematics problems. Then they sometimes chatter too much instead of concentrating well. When teachers talk with pupils about their work, and when they mark it, it is usually done carefully and praise is given well. However often it does not tell pupils what they need to do to make their work better, or reach their targets.

School leaders demonstrate their good capacity to improve by their recent successes in raising standards, and also in the way the management team has been strengthened. Training, staff changes, and a redefinition of some roles have ensure that senior staff and subject coordinators work effectively together in organising the curriculum and making improvements to teaching. Governors are becoming more aware of these developments, and are increasingly involved in them. There is justifiable quiet confidence among school leaders that the school is well poised to continue its upward trend.

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

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- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning by:
  - raising the pace of learning in some lessons by reducing over-long explanations, and by expecting greater effort from some pupils when they begin their own work
  - making verbal feedback and written marking more effective by telling pupils what they need to do to improve.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Children enter the Nursery with a level of skills below what is generally expected for their age. They make good progress and enter Key Stage 1 with skills that are broadly average, or a little below in some areas of learning such as writing and number skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Through Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils continue to make good progress and achieve well. By the end of Year 6 all groups of pupils attain significantly above the national average in all tested subjects. There has been a trend of increasingly high attainment for the past several years.

Pupils are proud of their school. They are lively and enthusiastic, but also attentive and well behaved. They help each other and cooperate willingly with teachers and each other. They enjoy their learning and are motivated well by many of the activities they take part in. Progress is best when activities are really challenging for the most able pupils as well as those who need extra support. Progress is also more rapid when pupils receive clear guidance on how to improve their work. Teachers work hard to eliminate perceived gaps in learning, by providing additional support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and to the more able girls in mathematics. There are, effective reading recovery programmes for pupils who struggle with their reading. All groups of pupils willingly join in lessons and achieve well, regardless of their gender, cultural background or particular needs.

In discussions and in response to the pupils' questionnaire, the vast majority of pupils say they feel safe in school, enjoy their lessons and would be confident to go to a teacher if they felt threatened. They have good awareness of how to live a healthy lifestyle and avoid dangers. Many join in additional activities, sports and clubs, from tag rugby to 'extreme Frisbee'. Their valuable contribution to the community is seen in their involvement in many international, local and school events. For example they support younger children in the playground, work on the school council, help at an old people's home, fund-raise and collect gift items for a wide range of charities. Pupils' attendance is average, but the school and local authority have reduced absences considerably, and continue to work hard to improve attendance. Pupils learn good basic skills and apply and develop them soundly in wider, practical situations.

Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development arises from the whole ethos of the school and from the commitment shown by each staff member. Pupils develop an extremely good sense of right and wrong, and gain great insight into other cultures through visits to contrasting schools, and through their lessons. They have untold opportunities to reflect on their lives, the world and higher matters.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<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>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The good teaching is the result of staff's hard work, creativity and committed attitude. Pupils' good behaviour means that lessons proceed calmly and learning is not disturbed. Lessons are planned and prepared well and resources are used effectively, especially when pupils use the electronic white boards. Individual pupils and groups of pupils are supported by separate activities that teachers plan. Pupils are often assisted by capable additional staff. However all lessons are not taught at the same high and challenging pace. Sometimes staff spend too long explaining a topic and pupils may become restless. At times some pupils do not settle well to their work and are not corrected by staff promptly enough. Teachers have begun to assess pupils' progress regularly and systematically. As the best practice spreads through the school this information is becoming increasingly valuable in planning lessons and changes to the curriculum.

The curriculum is being redeveloped around an international primary schools scheme. It is broad and greatly enriched by numerous additional activities during and outside of the school day. These include, residential visits, sporting, drama and music links with other schools and having a visiting artist in residence. Good use is made of partners such as

<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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the fire brigade, cycling proficiency officers and health care personnel. Much support for individuals and groups of pupils is built into the planning of activities such as writing, reading, mathematics or music. This works well because the support is adapted from term to term, depending on the staff's view of how well some pupils or groups might benefit, or how intervention might give them a boost.

Strong relationships between staff and pupils are at the heart of the school's caring ethos. There are effective arrangements to ensure pupils' welfare and to enable their transition to their next school. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is particularly successful in helping their progress and their full involvement in all activities.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</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>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Through the headteacher's clear and purposeful leadership, senior staff have successfully created a drive for higher standards. Staff pull together in an increasingly effective and united manner, sharing decisions, effort and the vision for pupils' high personal and academic prowess. Governors provide proficient support and have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Senior staff are taking on new responsibilities as the staffing structure changes, and there has been regular and effective monitoring of lessons and the curriculum. This has resulted in steady feedback to teachers, and consequent improvements in teaching and planning. The school works closely with parents, the local authority and many outside agencies to ensure that pupils' needs are met. Careful deployment of resources, including staff, ensures that all pupils have equal access to the full range of activities, and are enabled to make good progress. Safeguarding procedures are securely in place and meet requirements. The school actively promotes community cohesion through many strong links within the local area, and through its Catholic roots. It has links with other schools and organisations that reach around the world, in places as diverse as Australia, Greece and Ghana.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<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>2</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>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The Nursery and Reception classes run very effectively as twin strands that merge for some activities and separate for others in ways that children find exciting and very motivating. The bright, challenging and confident teaching combines with a broad and imaginative curriculum, based on highly focused sessions such as 'sounds and letters', French and numbers. Other activities have a more creative, active or explorative nature, such as in physical education, or in the sand, water and outdoors areas. Staff always have clear aims for each activity, including developing children's mathematics, language and social skills. The unit is organised and led well, with a strong staff team who share responsibilities, planning and ideas. New children settle in quickly and get along well together, they develop better speech and listen to what they are told. They enjoy their activities very much both in groups and individually. Regular assessments show that children make good progress in both classes and enjoy their mixed sessions with children of different ages.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

Fewer than one quarter of parents returned the questionnaires. The overwhelming majority of these strongly supported the school. 'This is a great school,' wrote one. 'My



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child loves attending school,' commented another, 'he never stops talking about it.' A very small minority thought that behaviour was not well managed and that the school was not led effectively. Inspectors looked carefully into both of these matters and found that behaviour is very well managed, and that school leaders are good at their jobs and are leading the school forward with dedication and clear purpose. A very small number of comments were about specific matters such as homework or bullying, but inspectors found that the school deals with these issues in a satisfactory and proper manner. A few parents thought that some children were not always challenged sufficiently in lessons. Inspectors saw that this did occur in some lessons, but that school leaders had introduced booster groups, extra sessions for gifted pupils, staff training and additional classroom support staff in order to raise the level of challenge.

## 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 64 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 261 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	63	23	36	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	44	69	19	30	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	36	56	27	42	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	50	29	45	2	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	38	59	24	38	2	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	48	29	45	4	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	53	30	47	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)	30	47	26	41	3	0	5	8
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	47	31	48	2	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	41	29	45	6	1	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	36	32	50	3	2	4	6
The school is led and managed effectively	36	55	20	31	7	1	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	58	25	39	0	1	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 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"><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.**



11 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Leicester

I am sure you will remember when the inspectors visited your school recently. Thank you for welcoming us and speaking with us so willingly.

We found that you go to a good school and you are right to be proud of it. You learn well in lessons and make good progress. By the time you are ready to leave the school you reach above average standards. This is because the headteacher and other school leaders work very well together, and with your parents and other people outside the school make sure you are taught a good range of subjects and are looked after well. Your teachers plan and teach interesting and imaginative lessons all through the school from the Nursery to Year 6. Many of you told us that you enjoy coming to school, and this was obvious in the lessons we saw. Staff look after you well and take care in guiding you how to stay safe and healthy.

There are some things that we have asked the school to do to help you to learn at an even better rate.

We have asked your teachers to make sure you get on with your work quickly and reduce the time you spend chatting. It would help your teachers if you remembered this yourselves. We have also asked teachers to tell you what you need to do to improve your work, and make this clearer when they mark your work.

With my best wishes

Trevor Watts

Lead inspector

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