

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121641
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	339985
Inspection dates	24–25 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Keith Bardon

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	43
Appropriate authority	Interim executive
Chair	Mr Philip Turnpenny
Headteacher	Mrs Judi Morris
Date of previous school inspection	15 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited nine lessons, observed three teachers and held meetings with staff, parents, pupils and members of the interim executive board. The inspector observed other aspects of the school's work, and looked at a range of evidence including policies, the improvement plans, pupils' work and the school's records indicating pupils' progress and attainment. The inspector also analysed the 25 questionnaires returned by parents.

- how pupils' achievement and attainment in mathematics compare with that in English
- the extent to which the quality of teaching varies across the school and what effect this has on pupils' learning and progress
- how effectively those currently charged with leading and managing are working together to address the school's weaknesses and promote its improvement
- how well the provision in Class 1 meets the needs of the Early Years Foundation Stage children.

Information about the school

St Joseph's is a small primary school which serves the local area and surrounding villages. The proportion of pupils eligible to take free school meals is average. One in five pupils is from a minority ethnic background. All pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement for their special educational needs, is broadly average. All pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. The school has achieved the Inclusion Quality Mark and the Activemark awards. A privately managed pre-school shares the school site. The school does not have a substantive headteacher. Since January 2009, it has been led and managed by a number of acting headteachers and currently by a consultant headteacher from the local authority. An interim executive board is carrying out the duties of the governing body.

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

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

St Joseph's provides its pupils with a satisfactory standard of education in a warm and friendly family atmosphere in which they feel safe and well cared for. Many pupils speak of the fun they have at school and the pleasure they derive from knowing everyone as their friends. As a result of the small numbers in each year group and pupils' differing abilities, attainment fluctuates year-on-year. However, as a general rule, pupils enter the school broadly at the level expected for their age and make satisfactory progress as they move through the school and leave Year 6 with attainment that is similar to the national average.

While the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and teachers give careful consideration to the content of lessons, the amount of challenge the work provides for pupils of different abilities varies and at times does not ensure that all pupils, particularly those of higher ability, are making as much progress as they could. Although most teachers introduce new work thoroughly, they have a tendency to 'tell rather than discuss', and opportunities for pupils to talk about their ideas and deepen their understanding are missed. While pupils recognise the need for personal targets, they do not understand fully how to use them to improve their work. Lessons for older pupils are generally better organised and have a clearer focus than those provided for younger pupils.

Provision for Early Years Foundation Stage children is satisfactory but at times the activities provided do not fully reflect the needs of early learners. Staff have a good relationship with children but miss opportunities to intervene while they are playing to secure and develop learning. While provision for children's learning out of doors has improved substantially since the last inspection, a lack of resources limits opportunities for physical development.

Many aspects of pupils' personal development are good. They acquire a strong sense of self-worth, readily help others and value the good quality help and support they receive from staff. The blanket of care the school provides gives all pupils a strong sense of well-being and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds get on extremely well together. The curriculum provides a satisfactory framework for pupils' learning but lacks creativity and cohesion. Consequently, pupils' understanding of how different subjects interlink and how they can use what they have learned in one subject to aid learning in others is underdeveloped.

The school is showing clear signs of improvement and is emerging from a turbulent period in which a lack of clear direction caused its effectiveness to drop and the pace of development to diminish. Under the leadership of a series of acting headteachers and

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with considerable support from the local authority and the diocese an acceptable measure of stability has returned, although the school does not yet have a permanent headteacher. Senior staff have an accurate understanding of where improvements are most needed and clear action plans are being implemented. The recently established and very experienced interim executive board has been quick to recognise the school's strengths and weaknesses and is making well considered decisions to move the school forward. Taking all these factors into account and the determination and unity of purpose being shown by all those associated with the school, the capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve children's learning and progress in Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - - ensuring that at all times the activities provided are appropriate for the age group
 - - making full use of the opportunities that arise while children are playing to develop and extend their learning
 - - providing a wider range of outdoor resources to support children's physical development.
- In order to increase pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress, raise the quality of teaching by:
 - - providing work that is closely matched to what pupils of differing abilities, and particularly those of higher ability, need to learn next
 - - providing more opportunities for pupils to contribute their own ideas and deepen their understanding when new work is being introduced
 - - improving pupils' understanding of how to use their personal targets to improve their work.
- Increase the effectiveness of the curriculum by providing a programme of work which creatively links different subjects together.
- 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 show an enthusiasm for learning and readily participate in lessons, particularly when activities allow them to work together, which is something they do well. Teachers are steadily introducing pupils to the skills of self-assessment, but most have still to acquire a full understanding of what this involves. Pupils work hard for all staff, listen carefully to what teachers are saying and remain on-task until the targets they have been set are achieved. While they readily answer teachers' questions, pupils are less inclined to take the initiative and generate discussion with questions and ideas of their own.

Over time, pupils' attainment is broadly average and the gains they make in knowledge and skills represent satisfactory achievement and progress. Many pupils read

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competently and with understanding which aids their learning in many subjects. They write well-constructed pieces of text in a range of different styles but the language they use is often quite ordinary and at times lacks flair. Attainment in mathematics is rising but is still a little below that in English. Pupils often have difficulty recalling number facts and have to recalculate things they should know by heart. This slows the pace at which they are able to work. This has been recognised by the school. Improvements are being made but have yet to take full effect. Pupils with special educational need and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall, and at times good progress when receiving individual tuition. The achievement of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds compares favourably with that of other pupils and they often do a little better than their peers nationally.

Pupils are happy, polite and well behaved so that lessons proceed purposefully and in a good atmosphere. They feel completely safe and secure under the blanket of care the school provides and readily approach staff if they have a problem or concern. Pupils of all ages get on extremely well together and willingly help around school. They enjoy contributing to decision making, particularly through the school council and take considerable pride in representing the school at sports events. Pupils show good appreciation of the need for a healthy lifestyle and the importance of a balanced diet. Many take regular exercise in and out of school. Average attendance and a reasonable range of basic skills provide a satisfactory platform for future learning and life. Pupils develop into thoughtful, social and well-balanced individuals with a strong sense of right and wrong. They appreciate the skills of others and thoroughly enjoy the many cultural experiences the school provides for them.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	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

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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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?

Most lessons have clear objectives which teachers share constructively with pupils at the start. The amount pupils learn often depends on how well the work is matched to their needs and the challenge it provides for pupils of different abilities, which is much better in some lessons than in others. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and classrooms have a pleasant atmosphere. What pupils have to do is explained clearly and thoroughly but opportunities for pupils to discuss new work in detail and put forward their own thoughts and ideas at this time are often quite limited. Although this is now much better, for much of the period since the last inspection teachers have had too little opportunity for training or professional development. Consequently, some of the more recent national initiatives, such as teaching pupils how to assess and evaluate their own learning and progress, have only recently begun to feature in lessons. Teaching assistants play an active part in lessons and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for those who need additional support to participate fully. Teachers' marking provides pupils with satisfactory guidance on how to improve their work.

The curriculum meets pupils' needs satisfactorily but much of the content is quite ordinary and has not developed sufficiently since the last inspection. While some links are being made between different subjects, these are rather tokenistic and do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to use and apply their knowledge and skills in meaningful ways. The strength of the curriculum lies in the good range of additional features the school incorporates, including regular educational visits and visitors, which enhance pupils' learning and broaden their horizons. Well-established arrangements, often involving other schools, enable the school to provide a good range of extra-curricular activities which are very popular with pupils.

Pupils feel that they are cared for well and their parents agree. Staff keep a vigilant watch over all pupils, particularly those who may be vulnerable or experiencing difficulties in their lives. Every effort has been made to cushion pupils from the effects of the turbulence the school has experienced and they have remained positive and happy. Secure links with outside agencies ensure additional help is available for pupils who may need it. Provision for pupils with special educational need and/or disabilities is organised effectively. Staff awareness of how to target support and measure its impact is increasing and this is having a positive effect on the progress these pupils make. Procedures for ensuring pupils attend school regularly are satisfactory. Well-established and effective arrangements ensure children settle into the Early Years Foundation Stage quickly and that pupils transfer to high school smoothly at the end of Year 6.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	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?

After an unsettled period in which the school has experienced significant changes in leadership and management, a more consistent and focused approach, supported fully by the local authority and diocese, is providing much needed stability and confidence. Staff recognise that some improvements have been slow to take place but there is a shared understanding of what is needed and a determination to accelerate development. It is, however, 'still early days' and the measures taken have still to have a significant effect on pupils' attainment and achievement. After an extended period in which insufficient checks were made on the quality of teaching, leaders and managers are monitoring lessons closely and, while the school is aware that there is still room for improvement, the pace of improvement in teaching and learning is accelerating. Despite the turbulence, parental support for the school has remained strong. Parents and carers raise a considerable amount of money to support provision and aid improvement, and links between home and school are good. Good relationships ensure no pupils are discriminated against but variations in the quality of teaching result in some unevenness in the learning opportunities pupils receive. Procedures for safeguarding pupils' welfare are rigorously checked by the interim executive board. While the school knows its pupils and their families well and makes a positive contribution to the local community, links with communities further afield are very limited and this is a recognised area for development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3

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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

Most children attend the adjoining pre-school and often enter Reception with knowledge and skills that are typical of the age group. They make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and move into Year 1 with attainment that is broadly average. Teaching is satisfactory and for much of the time children are provided with a range of interesting activities both indoors and out. However, planning does not always take full account of the needs of the age group and, on occasions, Early Years Foundation Stage children experience activities more suited to the older pupils in the mixed-age class which do not support their learning well enough. Frequent use is made of the newly developed outside area but a lack of large equipment limits the range of physical activities that can be provided. While staff keep a careful watch over the children while they are playing and assess and record their progress carefully, opportunities to join in and work with the children to develop learning further are too often missed. Relationships between staff and children are good and pupils' welfare is promoted well. Routines are well established and mostly adhered to by the children, although one or two need occasional reminders of what is required. Children develop good personal skills, working and playing happily together and sharing ideas and equipment well. Colourful records are kept of children's achievements. These are annotated carefully by the teacher to ensure progress is being made and parents are invited to add their own observations from home. Satisfactory plans for improvement are steadily being implemented. Links with parents and the pre-school are good and children settle into school quickly.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

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Most parents hold very positive views of the school and of the provision it makes for their children's education. They are particularly appreciative of the 'supportive atmosphere' staff have maintained throughout the recent turbulence so that their children have been happy to attend school and have continued to learn. While parents feel that the acting headteachers have supported the school well, a number express concerns about the lack of a substantive headteacher. The interim executive board recognises and shares parents' concerns and is moving quickly and decisively to resolve this matter. All options have been considered fully and well-considered plans are in place, firmly based on the best interests of the pupils.

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 28 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 43 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	64	8	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	71	8	29	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	46	13	46	1	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	32	17	61	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	54	9	32	1	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	36	12	43	3	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	57	12	43	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)	9	32	14	50	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	43	12	43	1	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	64	7	25	1	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	32	17	61	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	3	11	15	54	3	11	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	61	8	29	0	0	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 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.



26 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Tadcaster, LS24 9JG

Thank you very much for the very friendly greeting you gave me when I visited your school recently. Lots of you smiled and chatted to me which made me feel comfortable and welcome. I thoroughly enjoyed finding out about the work you do, and special thanks go to those who talked with me about the school. St Joseph's is a satisfactory school which looks after you well. It was good to hear how happy and safe you feel at school. This is important to the staff and I know they will be pleased, particularly as the school has gone through quite a difficult time lately. The behaviour I saw both in and out of lessons was good and it is clear that you are growing into sensible and considerate young people with strong sense of responsibility – well done!

While most of you are making satisfactory progress and producing work that is close to the level it should be for your age, I feel it could be even better. I have asked teachers to look at a number of things to help this to happen. These include making sure that the work is set always at just the right level and challenges you to produce your best work all of the time. I have also asked teachers to involve you more in discussion when they are introducing the lesson or something new. You can play your part by making full use of the targets teachers set for you so that your work is always improving.

All the pupils I spoke to said they enjoyed lessons but I think there is room for improvement to make them even more interesting. It is some time since the school had a good look at the curriculum and it is not as exciting or well put together as it might be. Teachers will be making changes and you can help by trying to use your knowledge and skills widely and in as many different subjects as possible. In addition, I have asked the school to make sure the activities given to the youngest children in Class 1 are always fully suitable and suggested that teachers need to get involved more to help children to learn while they are playing. Class 1 children need some large toys to play on outside to give them more opportunities to be active. Thank you once again for a very enjoyable two days and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Keith Bardon

Lead inspector

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