

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Goldenhill

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124314
Local Authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	340541
Inspection dates	23–24 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Nigel Cromey-Hawke

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	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Christine Hulme
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Butters
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited ten lessons, observing eight teachers and all classes. They also held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, and parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation, including development plans, self-evaluation records, policies and performance data. Questionnaires from 62 parents and carers, 111 pupils and 23 staff were scrutinised.

- what the school is doing to improve attainment in mathematics
- how the school is improving the quality of learning and teaching
- given recent changes, how well focused and cohesive staff are in driving the school forward.

Information about the school

This is a primary school of average size. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with some pupils from Gipsy, Romany and Traveller families. There are few pupils who speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The proportion eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The school has Healthy Schools and Activemark awards.

It has been without a permanent headteacher for the last year and is currently part of a loose federation of three Roman Catholic schools led by an acting executive headteacher and an on-site head of school. There have been significant staff changes over the last year.

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 Catholic Primary is a satisfactory school. It has some good features. One parent, reflecting a typical view, commented, 'My daughter enjoys her school day, the staff are very supportive, and it's a warm, friendly school.'

Recent challenges facing the school over staffing are being overcome and it is moving forward under the leadership of the acting headteacher, staff and governors. In the recently restructured Early Years Foundation Stage, children make a sound start to their learning as a result of satisfactory teaching, curriculum, and leadership and management. In this key stage, new systems and ways of working are being successfully embedded, but assessment practice is inconsistent. Pupils' progress through Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall and good in some areas, notably in English and science. Attainment by the time pupils leave in Year 6 is broadly average. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from Gypsy, Romany and Traveller families make satisfactory and, in some cases, good progress, as a result of the good support provided by the school. Teaching is satisfactory, with some that is good. Some activities do not appropriately match pupils' needs, especially the more able, and do not enable pupils to work independently. The satisfactory curriculum has strengths in the use of information and communication technology (ICT), the arts and sport. There is an effective programme of personal, social and health education that promotes pupils' personal development well. The school recognises that some of its plans to develop community cohesion are not fully implemented and that pupils' understanding of the cultural diversity of the modern world is relatively weak. As a result, pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Pupils enjoy their time in school, behaviour is good and pupils say they feel safe and valued. There is a warm and positive atmosphere in the school, created by the good care, guidance and support provided. There is a strong focus upon pupils' health and welfare. Governors support the school satisfactorily. Through its extensive self-evaluation, the school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and appropriate plans are in place to bring about improvement. Some of these plans are shared with its partners in the federation. As such, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to at least good by:
 - ensuring a better match of activities in lessons to pupils' needs, especially the needs of more-able pupils

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- helping pupils to work more independently by giving them clearer guidance in lessons on how to move on to the next stage in their learning.
- Broaden pupils' understanding of and contact with the richness of the wider world.
- Continue to develop assessment practices in the Early Years Foundation Stage in order to track children's progress more accurately, to inform planning and to shape teaching and learning.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

The school is accurate in its self-evaluation that achievement and enjoyment is satisfactory and that attainment is broadly average. Learning is satisfactory in the majority of lessons, with pupils engaged as a result of satisfactory and sometimes good teaching. Pupils acquire knowledge, develop understanding and learn and practise their skills satisfactorily. They are keen to succeed, most apply themselves well in lessons and often work at a good pace when provided with appropriate tasks and guidance. Attainment by the time pupils leave Year 6 is broadly average, although in 2009 it reached high levels in English and science. Attainment is variable across year groups, reflecting differences in the quality of teaching. The school's new leadership team is tackling this vigorously and most groups of pupils are now on track to meet the challenging targets the school has set, including those in mathematics, where there were previous weaknesses. Given pupils' starting points, this represents satisfactory, and in some cases good, progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the small numbers of pupils from Gipsy, Romany and Traveller families make satisfactory progress overall, as a result of the good support and guidance they receive.

Pupils across the school clearly enjoy the majority of their learning and their behaviour is good. The school is a harmonious and happy community in which pupils say they feel safe and from which they benefit enormously. They respond by taking on many responsibilities, for example as members of the school council, as buddies to support each other and by helping around the school. Their involvement in the local community is, however, more limited. The school places a high priority upon raising pupils' awareness of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle. Their understanding of this is good, reflecting the school's awards. Attendance is satisfactory but improving strongly, with the number of persistent absentees being reduced considerably as a result of concerted action this year. Together with the effective promotion of key skills in language and ICT, this means that pupils are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage in their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is predominantly satisfactory. There is some that is good. A specific programme to support the development of teaching has been introduced by the new acting headteacher which is beginning to have a positive impact. In the best lessons good planning ensures that appropriate and varied activities are provided and that challenge from the teacher stimulates pupils' interests. In mathematics split-class teaching between the teacher and the assistant targets pupils' needs effectively. Individual targets for pupils have recently been introduced and are regularly reviewed and updated. Pupils say they find these useful, but in the satisfactory lessons academic guidance is sometimes too generalised and, as a result, pupils are insufficiently informed about their learning and not always able to work independently.

The curriculum is currently under review, with a more extensive range of creative topic approaches being planned across all areas of learning. The effective curriculum for music, the arts and sport promotes pupils' learning and personal development well. Weak areas in mathematics have been identified and good support put in place to target them. The provision of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory and well supported by pupils. An enrichment focus on international cultures is enjoyed by pupils, but their understanding of the wider world is otherwise limited.

The school helps to bring about significant improvements in attitudes, behaviour and relationships for many of its pupils. Transition arrangements for pupils joining and

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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leaving the school are good and the school works well with a wide range of agencies to support vulnerable pupils in their learning. Individual education plans reflect clear and appropriate strategies for supporting these pupils' needs. Teaching assistants are often highly effective in their support of learning. The work of the learning mentor is especially valued by pupils, staff, and parents and carers and provides very good support for pupils' personal and learning needs.

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?

The acting headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is driving improvement forward with determination and skill. Significant organisational challenges have been overcome and staffing consolidated. The headteacher communicates this ambition well to staff, parents and carers, and pupils and this energy is beginning to be embedded at other levels in the school. Leadership and management of subject teaching and learning are satisfactory but improving rapidly. This is helped by increasingly accurate self-evaluation that is providing the school with a good understanding of its strengths and areas that need development. Good plans are in place to address areas for development. Safeguarding procedures are good, reflecting the good care in the school. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory, reflecting the variable teaching provision. Partnerships with local schools are good, but otherwise are underdeveloped. The school has carried out an audit of its social, religious and ethnic context and has a set of planned actions to extend its community cohesion. Other than the effective link with Sierra Leone, many of these planned actions have yet to be fully realised and the school recognises that pupils' understanding of and contact with the wider world is satisfactory. Governors know the strengths and areas for development in the school, visit it frequently and satisfactorily provide support and challenge.

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
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate	
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The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Comprehensive induction arrangements, including home visits, ensure that children and their parents and carers receive a warm welcome to the school. Children settle happily in the safe environment. The majority enter the Nursery with knowledge, understanding and skills at levels below those typical for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy, personal development, and knowledge and understanding of the world.

Progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory, with children reaching broadly expected levels in their early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Progress in their acquisition of language skills is good. Teachers assess children's progress frequently and well, but some staff do not yet use consistently the systems for recording this data. As a result, planning the next steps in some children's learning is not always as well informed as it should be. Teaching is satisfactory and improving well as staff adjust to their new roles.

Teachers communicate regularly with parents and carers and are well aware of children's interests. Pastoral care is good, as is support for vulnerable children. Teachers plan a good range of activities that children enjoy, with a good balance between activities they direct and those children choose for themselves. The outdoor area is satisfactorily resourced but well used and the school has plans to develop it further. Parents and carers are full of praise for the family learning opportunities provided each week. Leadership and management are satisfactory, with staff training up to date and all safeguarding requirements met.

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

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

Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaires are happy with most aspects of the school and consider it to be well led and managed. Some parents and carers expressed concerns about how well they are informed of their children's progress and about the effective management of unacceptable behaviour. Inspection evidence indicates that the school has new and appropriate systems in place for such communication with parents and carers, including the recently introduced texting service, and that behaviour is good.

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, Goldenhill 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 62 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 234 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	55	26	42	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	50	29	47	1	2	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	37	28	45	10	16	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	35	34	55	5	8	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	25	40	32	52	4	6	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	35	32	52	4	6	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	44	31	50	2	3	1	2
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)	22	35	32	52	3	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	39	31	50	3	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	24	38	61	5	8	3	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	29	37	60	4	6	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	17	27	38	61	5	8	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	42	31	50	2	3	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">■ 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.



Dear Pupils

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me and the team when we inspected your school recently. You were very friendly, polite and enthusiastic about what you do. You told us a lot of interesting things about your school and you are clearly very proud of it.

St Joseph's is a satisfactory school. The new acting headteacher, staff and governors are helping the school to improve. You have a satisfactory start to your learning in the Nursery and Reception classes and this continues throughout the school, so that you reach broadly average standards by the time you leave in Year 6. In English and science some of you reach above average standards. You say you enjoy school and feel safe and valued, as a result of how well you are looked after. Your behaviour is good. Well done! Your attendance is satisfactory, but improving. The teaching is satisfactory, with some that is good. The range of subjects you take is satisfactory, with a good focus upon the important areas of English and mathematics. Your ICT skills are well developed. I have asked the school to consider the following things that will help make it improve.

- Make sure that all your lessons are at least good.
- Help you to understand the wider world and to increase your contact with it.
- For the adults who work with the children in Nursery and Reception to use what they know about how well children are getting on to plan activities that will help them to learn really well.

You can help by telling your teachers how best you learn and attending regularly. I wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

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