

# St Joseph's School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125456
<b>Local Authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	340768
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Anne Duffy

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.  
The inspection of social care was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	78
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	30
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John McManus
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mary Fawcett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Amlets Lane Cranleigh GU6 7DH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01483 272449
<b>Fax number</b>	01483 276003
<b>Email address</b>	admin@st-josephscranleigh.surrey.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	5–19
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 May 2010
<b>Inspection number</b>	340768

**Boarding provision****Social care Unique Reference Number****Social care inspector**

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, one additional inspector and one social care inspector. Inspectors observed 18 lessons or parts of lessons delivered by 17 adults, including teachers, therapists, therapy assistants and teaching assistants. They also held meetings with staff, governors, students, parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation and policies, including the school's improvement and development plan. They also looked at arrangements for boarding and care and for safeguarding. They studied student and staff questionnaires and the 45 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- the progress made by all students as shown by tracking and analysis of data as well as observation
- the extent to which the extended curriculum meets the needs of all learners, including their social, emotional and behavioural needs
- the accuracy, consistency and robustness of systems for tracking, monitoring and analysing all aspects of school's work and their impact upon continuing school improvement
- the overall effectiveness of boarding provision.

## Information about the school

St Joseph's Specialist School and College provides places for students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities associated with autistic spectrum condition (ASC), communication difficulties, and complex learning difficulties. Over the past three years it has seen an increase in the number of students on the autistic spectrum who have complex needs. Most students are from White British backgrounds, with around 23% from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. Students join the school at different ages and stages of their school career and there are approximately three times as many boys as girls.

St Joseph's was awarded specialist status for communication and interaction in September 2009 and holds a number of awards including the National Autistic Society (NAS) Autism Accreditation award. It provides up to 38-week flexible and weekly boarding for around half of its students. Since the last inspection, there have been a number of staff changes. At the time of the inspection, the two deputy headteachers had recently joined the school.

**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**

**3**

### Main findings

'I like school. I'm happy here. They look after me.' These comments, written by one of the students, reflect the nature of St Joseph's. It is a good school in which students' enjoyment is reflected in the particularly good progress they make in their personal development. This progress is supported by outstanding care and guidance and the very strong relationships that exist with parents and carers and with other partners. Boarding life makes an outstanding contribution to students' personal development.

By the time they leave the school, all groups of students achieve well regardless of ethnicity or gender. For many, their progress in communication, personal and social skills is outstanding. The curriculum offers a wide range of opportunities and experiences for older students which challenge and engage them very well indeed. Imaginative curriculum developments at Key Stages 2 and 3 have been effective in providing a varied and interesting range of topics and activities. The school rightly acknowledges that a review of this initiative is now needed in order to ensure that the topics chosen consistently support all areas of learning.

The school holds a large amount of information on each student, which it uses to good effect in order to provide individually tailored support, guidance and care. However, this wealth of information is held by many people and presented in different ways. As a result, it does not always assist teachers or others delivering sessions in identifying key elements in order to ensure that these sessions are planned and delivered appropriately for all students. A range of targets is set for each student but the focus on behaviour and social skills, particularly for those students with complex needs, sometimes overshadows other areas. As a result, the range of teaching approaches is not broad enough to keep learners consistently engaged and ensure that maximum progress is made. While assessment over time is strong, ongoing day-to-day assessment is not used consistently well to evaluate progress made in lessons.

The school has faced some challenges recently, most particularly when changes in staffing at senior management level placed an additional burden upon the headteacher until key posts could be filled. To some extent, energies were diverted towards achieving specialist school status and NAS accreditation and some of the processes for effective whole-school self-evaluation were placed on hold. However, new posts and responsibilities have now been created and there is a strong sense that the headteacher's re-stated vision and values are increasingly shared by all. The school's capacity to improve, which is currently satisfactory, looks set to increase rapidly.

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

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- Ensure that the emphasis placed upon communication and behaviour is matched with an equally strong focus upon learning.
- Streamline systems for target setting and tracking in order to inform planning and enable the rigorous and systematic monitoring of students' progress.
- Introduce a wider range of teaching approaches in order to meet the learning needs of all students.

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

Students make good progress through the P levels and the early levels of the National Curriculum. Students in the post-16 provision also make good progress in their learning and outstanding progress in the development of their personal and social skills. Students' individual communication needs are well supported so that they are able to extend their learning in a range of different situations. They communicate with a range of adults with increasing success. While the school can show that there is little significant difference between different groups, it acknowledges that there is an imbalance between individual progress recorded in learning and that shown in other outcomes. Learning is at its best when students are involved in activities which both challenge and interest them. For example, older students maintained their attention throughout a food technology session where they were supported and encouraged in trying things for themselves and evaluating the outcome. Younger students were able to evaluate what they had learnt about messages and messengers following a religious education lesson in which they were able to take different roles.

Students thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected in their above-average attendance. Older students communicate confidently about the skills that they have gained and are keen to demonstrate these both at school and in their residential groups. Despite some challenges which arise from their emotional and social difficulties, students' behaviour overall is good. It is clear that students know what is expected of them and as a result they are generally very tolerant of one another. They show that they have trust in the adults working with them so that they feel safe. All aspects of healthy living, including issues of sexual health, are dealt with sensitively so that students are able to take these on at a pace that suits them. The excellent menu, recognised by the school's food for life award, is appreciated by students so that the large majority are prepared to surrender their preferred foods to try other, more healthy, options. Students who are boarders enjoy helping to prepare their own breakfasts and evening meals.

The school has worked hard to extend opportunities for 'student voice' and students' views are well represented in almost all aspects of school life, including the appointment of new staff. Members of the school council have recently renamed themselves the 'ideal ideas' group and introduce new ideas with great enthusiasm. When they go into the local community or link with students from nearby schools, students act as very strong ambassadors for their own community. They are particularly motivated by the excellent opportunities that exist for them to be involved in enterprise activities in their own and the wider community. The school's Catholic ethos enhances their social and spiritual

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development well and also provides opportunities for less obviously spiritual outcomes. A project based on the parable of the talents engaged groups in trying to 'make ten pounds grow' and commercial rivalry between them provided strong motivation to succeed. Through opportunities such as these, students develop the more mature social skills and resilience which they will need in later life.

*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>	*
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>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

The curriculum for students in the combined Key Stage 4 and 5 (post-16) classes is well planned and meets their needs and interests very well. For younger students, the introduction of a creative topic-based curriculum provides a wider range of activities which enhance their motivation to learn and to cope with new situations. Students' development of communication and social skills is supported well by speech, language and communication programmes and other therapies. Whole-school topics such as 'one

<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.

\* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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world week' introduce students well to people's differing lives, cultures and experiences. The range of activities in school and off-site contributes very well to students' development and well-being. The school's specialist status has extended the already good opportunities for students to work together with school staff and with other students from different settings.

Changes and vacancies in the middle and senior leadership of the school have meant that the monitoring of teaching has not been as comprehensive as the school would have liked. This has led to some variation in quality between and across the key stages. Lessons are usually enjoyable and students respond well to opportunities to join a group or use a range of interesting resources. Good use is made of visual timetables to ensure that students know what they are going to do and to support them in taking responsibility for moving on to the next task. Teachers' assessment of students' learning and progress over time is thorough. Day-to-day assessment is weaker. This means that, in some lessons, group work is not pitched at exactly the right level to ensure individual progress. There is sometimes an over-emphasis on 'good sitting' or 'good listening' and students become restless. When this happens, teaching assistants are used to keep students on task in a group rather than work with them individually and so opportunities are missed for extending individual progress. The high student-to-adult ratio, while reassuring for staff and students alike, sometimes hinders rather than helps progress because students are not left for long enough to try or practise skills for themselves. There are exemplary arrangements for the care, guidance and support of students. A strong commitment to working with a range of agencies to sustain the learning, development and well-being of every student is evident. Transition for those joining and leaving the school is very well supported. For students due to join the school, this includes a visit from a member of staff and very careful planning to ensure that as much as possible is done to make them feel comfortable when they move into their new surroundings. Parents and carers provided many examples of when the school has supported them and their families, with comments such as 'the school has given 110%'.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

There is a strong sense of teamwork among staff and within the newly constituted leadership team. Following a period of uncertainty, many of the right areas are now being identified for improvement and there is a growing understanding of how areas of

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relative weakness can be addressed. Opportunities for teachers and others delivering learning sessions to learn from each other in a systematic way have not yet been fully utilised. However, staff from all departments, including those new to teaching, speak highly of the support they have received to extend their skills through a range of professional development opportunities. Some staff have found the increasingly complex nature of the students challenging. Nevertheless, they are committed to fulfilling their role well and a shared focus on the needs of the students is evident and effective at many different levels. Arrangements for safeguarding are excellent and reflect the school's emphasis upon providing high quality pastoral care and a safe environment. The school makes full use of the excellent partnerships that have been established to guide students and support their families. This reflects the school's strong commitment to equality of opportunity for every member of the school population. It plays a significant role in its local and the wider community and has links as far afield as South Korea, which it uses to good effect. School and care staff are aware of the difficulties faced by parents and carers who live some distance away, and use a variety of means, including regular telephone calls and informative newsletters, to keep them in touch. Resources are deployed well and the school is working hard to ensure that its success in gaining specialist status results in improved accommodation and opportunities for all. The governing body provides a satisfactory level of challenge and has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, governors recognise that they could play a stronger role in determining the strategic direction of the school.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

**Sixth form**



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Achievement for students in the post-16 provision is good. Staff support students well so that they develop sensible attitudes and become increasingly mature in their approach to work. The excellent development of the students' social skills is very evident in their behaviour around the college and in the local community. Teaching is good and opportunities to involve students in assessing their own work are used well. Good use is made of accredited courses to support and evidence students' achievements. Students gain awards through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network and other bodies which provide well-matched programmes and qualifications to support the development of key skills and life skills.

Students undertake valuable work experience of varying types and this helps to prepare them well for the next stage of their lives. Curriculum provision is very well planned and students enjoy opportunities to take part in everyday activities such as shopping as well as developing their enterprise and horticultural skills. The excellent links between education and care staff support positive relationships so that students gain in confidence and feel able to be assertive when making choices about their futures.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

## **Boarding provision**

The quality of boarding is outstanding. The school meets, and in some areas exceeds, the national minimum standards for residential special schools. The organisation and management of boarding are excellent and, coupled with the high level of staff commitment, competence and team-working, contribute effectively to the promotion of students' welfare. There are well-prepared and clearly-written policies and procedures, together with detailed accurate information for boarders and their parents and carers.

The care team are diligent regarding their safeguarding responsibilities and actively promote boarders' safety and well-being. They receive regular high-quality training in child protection and safeguarding and know about the relevant policies and procedures and where they can be found. Excellent child protection and safeguarding arrangements allow boarders to feel safe.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Boarders learn to value equality and diversity through the school's curriculum which extends to encompass twenty-four hours for those who are resident. Boarders interact well with each other and are generally supportive of one another.

There is carefully planned provision for boarders' health and medical care and doctors from local general practice are available. The school nurses are responsible for the

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overall health and medical provision; staff who are well trained in first aid and medication administration are always available on site and on call. The school's nursing team ensures medication is securely held and detailed and accurate health and medication administration records are kept. Catering is of a high standard and cultural or preferential diets are well catered for. Meal times represent a well-ordered social occasion. Pocket money is appropriately held in safekeeping by staff and boarders have access to this on request. As a result, enterprise lessons learnt in school are reinforced out of school hours.

There is very good provision at the school for boarders to keep in touch with their families and other people who are important to them. A number of pay phones are available which can be used by students without reference to staff. Consistently positive interaction and engagement, coupled with good humour, are evident in the relationships between boarders and staff. Boarders' behaviour is well managed and they respond well to staff instructions and requests. Staffing levels are high and enable the needs of the boarders to be effectively met. A range of communication forums exist where boarders can communicate their views and feel listened to. Communication between boarding and education staff is good and meetings occur regularly.

Boarding accommodation is of a generally good standard with sufficient communal and private space. Boarders are able to personalise their bedrooms if they wish to and some bedrooms are decorated by their occupants to a very high standard. Toilet and bathing facilities afford good privacy and boarding areas and school perimeters are secure. Standards of cleanliness and hygiene are excellent throughout the boarding areas.

There are effective mechanisms in place for the monitoring of the school's conduct by the senior leadership team and the standard 33 (half termly) visitor. Boarders also have access to an independent person should they wish to refer an issue externally.

At the previous inspection, the school was asked to ensure that the governing body of the school fully met its responsibilities by submitting a report following each standard 33 visit. This has now been addressed and reports are submitted after each visit. There are no recommendations as a result of this inspection.

**National Minimum Standards (NMS) to be met to improve social care**

*This is the grade for the boarding provision*

<b>The effectiveness of the boarding provision</b>	<b>1</b>
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**Views of parents and carers**

The responses and comments made in the questionnaires reflect the generally high level of satisfaction felt by parents and carers. This response reflects the views formed by inspectors who also agree with the very few who said that yet more could be done to support their children's learning. The overall appreciation of the support the school offers parents and carers and their children is represented by the comments of two

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parents who wrote: 'A lovely, caring attitude pervades the school' and 'The care and support received from St Joseph's remains outstanding'.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Joseph's Specialist School and College 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 45 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 78 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	44	15	33	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	26	58	8	18	0	0	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	22	49	11	24	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	33	18	40	2	4	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	22	49	13	29	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	47	11	24	4	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	49	14	31	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)	15	33	18	40	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	51	10	22	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	44	12	27	1	2	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	36	15	33	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	47	13	29	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	44	13	29	2	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



13 May 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of St Joseph's Specialist School and College GU6 7DH

Thank you for helping us to learn about St Joseph's. We really enjoyed our visit. It was good to meet so many of you and to see how well you are doing. I am writing this letter to tell you what we found.

Your school is good and the boarding is outstanding. We could see that you and the staff have all worked very hard to improve your communication and this helps you to behave better and to learn more. It was also good to see how independent you can become as you grow older. There are plenty of interesting things for you to do both in and out of school. The ideal ideas group told me about the good ideas that they have had and we were pleased that these are helping to make things even better for everyone. It was good to see how much you enjoy using the spaces you have to play and grow things in. We will make sure that we look after the plants that we bought from you.

Your headteacher and all the staff work hard to help you. We think that it is important that everyone who works with you helps you to learn as much as possible, as well as look after you and keep you safe. We have asked the teachers to look at the way they plan their lessons and keep records so that everyone, including you, can see clearly how well you are doing. We have also asked that all staff think about the best ways of making sure you all learn as much as you can in lessons.

I hope that you will all try your best and do well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Anne Duffy

Her Majesty's Inspector

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