

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131112
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	341095
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Janet Simms

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	416
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Ward
Headteacher	Stephen Phillips
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors spent the large majority of time looking at learning. They observed 27 lessons or parts of lessons and 17 teachers. They held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders, with subject coordinators and other staff. They spoke with several groups of pupils and with a governor. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at assemblies and playtimes. They scrutinised much school documentation, including development planning, pupils' assessment and tracking records, documents related to safeguarding, governors' minutes, attendance data and records of the monitoring of teaching. They also analysed 171 parents' and carers' questionnaires, with their additional comments, and those from staff and students.

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

- standards and achievement for pupils currently in school, especially at Year 6
- how effective the school is at improving writing and mathematics
- any differences between the achievement of groups, particularly of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, boys and girls, and pupils with English as an additional language.

Information about the school

This school is larger than average and the nursery has recently been incorporated into the main school's registration. It is over-subscribed and has embarked on a new building programme to extend its provision. The above average proportion of pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language has increased during the last few years, and continues to do so. Numbers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are also above average. There has been a high turnover of teaching staff recently, so many are new to the school and some to the profession. The school holds a number of awards including Healthy Schools, Investors in People and Working in Partnership with Parents.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This outstanding school has built very successfully on its many strengths reported at the last inspection, retaining the excellence it showed then. It is a school where the 'whole is more than the sum of the parts' and where outstanding leadership and management have moved the school onwards with deep commitment to improving an already excellent quality of education equally for every one of its pupils. They achieve well here and the track record of success shows the school's exceptional capacity to sustain further improvement. Senior staff underestimate the impact of some aspects of the school's work, although their rigorous self-evaluation is ably supported by the increasing challenge from governors. This leads to accurate, highly critical analysis of where things could be better and how they can be improved. The identification of writing, for instance, has led to changes in provision which have raised standards. A group of girls who underachieved recently were identified quickly, so tracking and teaching methods have been strengthened to make sure no groups do so now.

Standards are high by the time pupils leave the school and their personal development is excellent throughout, creating confident, happy, well-rounded children who are thoughtful and reflective. They show consideration for others and are courteous and polite. Groups who are potentially vulnerable, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or who use English as an additional language, achieve exceptionally well. They gain confidence and self-assurance which, together with well-developed social and language skills, prepare them very effectively, as their peers are, for the next steps in their education and for the world of work. Attendance is average, but was influenced last year by early outbreaks of swine flu. In general, parents agree strongly that pupils are very keen to come to school regularly when they can and have responded well to the school's strong measures to reduce unnecessary absences such as holidays.

Enjoyment and a love of learning pervade the school at every level because relationships amongst all adults and children here are a key strength. These provide an environment where pupils feel safe and very secure, so they thrive and flourish, developing, in tandem, their personal and academic skills exceptionally well. The equal focus on both these aspects is a key reason for the school's success. The overwhelming majority of pupils are very happy indeed here and their parents and carers are extremely pleased with everything the school provides. Partnerships, including those with parents and carers, are very strong. They form a firm foundation for continuous learning. The recently introduced parents' forum has identified areas where parents and carers would like more help, such as understanding new learning strategies, which the school is now providing.

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An outstanding curriculum, excellent care, guidance and support, and good teaching lead to the outstanding outcomes described. A strength of the school lies in its very effective development of staff new to the profession. New teachers are improving their practice very rapidly under the skilful guidance of experienced staff. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons and elsewhere are outstanding but their evident potential to be more active partners in learning activities is not always exploited fully. When provided with such opportunities, a buzz of excitement leads to excellent teamwork and outstanding learning. When not, pupils are attentive and listen well, but can be somewhat passive.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that pupils' enthusiasm for learning through active participation is harnessed consistently in the different phases of lessons, to improve their achievement further.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Teachers prepare lessons imaginatively and thoughtfully to ensure that pupils enjoy their work and that areas such as social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding develop as well as academic attainment. In Year 5 literacy lessons, for instance, pupils were learning exceptionally well through group project work about areas of concern to them, including animal rights, global warming and school issues such as homework. They had chosen these independently through research. Excellent planning linked their literacy theme of persuasive writing and speaking to these arguments, resulting in outstanding, confident group presentations. This focus on speaking and listening is key to the improvement evident in pupils' writing. It begins with high quality learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where teachers' clear modelling of pronunciation gives rise to very effective phonics learning, greatly helping children's phonology and confidence in speaking clearly. Drama activities in a Year 4 literacy lesson helped pupils to make rapid strides in learning, inspiring them with ideas for their writing about what they could hear, see and feel in imaginary worlds. Pupils in Year 6 are on track to meet or exceed their targets, with writing much improved over results last year, and seen in their current writing related to their history project. Such stimulating lessons lead to outstanding progress, but sometimes where pupils have less opportunity to be actively engaged, learning is less effective. Setting pupils in different groups in mathematics ensures that more able pupils are stretched effectively and they are reaching the higher levels they should. Effective emphasis on the use of accurate vocabulary in lessons such as mathematics, and teachers' constant encouragement to reflect on what they and others have done, help pupils to talk about and understand their learning very effectively.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Pupils feel safe and know how to keep healthy and fit because the school's outstanding curriculum and its procedures for safeguarding, guidance and support are exceptionally effective. They know that staff care very much about their welfare and are confident to share any concerns with adults. New 'statements of provision' for more able pupils ensure that their needs are considered as effectively as the excellent provision for other vulnerable groups. This has resulted in more of the higher-attaining pupils reaching higher targets this year, for instance in writing. All groups are monitored closely, resulting in highly focused interventions if needed through the very effective work of the inclusion team. Almost all teaching observed was good, with some outstanding practice which is accurately identified by the school's own monitoring. Pupils are clear about how to improve because teachers' marking and other feedback are good.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

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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How effective are leadership and management?

Outstanding leadership and management maintain the school in its strong position. The headteacher is quietly inspirational in driving the strong ethos and promoting 'statements to live by' which underpin all interactions and behaviour. His personal leadership of areas related to child protection is a model of good practice. The few procedural issues relating to the documentation of safeguarding were rapidly resolved. Together, the senior team has strengthened a community where partnerships of all types are valued and there is a strong sense of cohesion. These often provide pupils with opportunities to contribute their own efforts, through supporting children abroad, for instance. Such links also create memorable experiences such as having an Olympic gold medal winner present sports awards, an event which pupils were keen to share with inspectors. Staff morale is very high, with those at all levels expressing great pride in being part of the school and its wider community. This is a happy place where all children are treated equally and the development of the 'whole child' is truly the objective of all the school's work

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get an excellent start in the Nursery and make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. The high ratio of staff to children in the Nursery, combined with excellent understanding of the needs of this age group, lead to outstanding provision, including excellent evaluation of each step of individual children's learning and

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development. The well-used, stimulating resources available, indoors and outside, lead to exciting experiences covering all areas of learning. Here, and in Reception, the need to improve children's language takes very high priority. Provision is very successful in improving speaking and listening and emerging reading and writing skills for those with English as an additional language and others. A strength of the Early Years Foundation Stage mirrors that in the main school, where equal emphasis is placed on children's personal and 'academic' development, so they grow in confidence, cooperation and independence. They show curiosity and courtesy in interacting with other children and with adults. Almost all those in Reception are on track to meet their learning goals, with a minority likely to exceed them. Reception teachers are new to the school and good teaching from all adults provides well for children's continuing development in all areas of learning. The school is actively seeking to recruit a leader for the Early Years Foundation Stage, which is currently managed by the headteacher and other senior staff. This is effective, but these staff cannot devote as much time to this area as they would wish. The separate management of the Nursery is outstanding.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers who returned the questionnaire are exceptionally positive. Very few expressed any disagreement with the 13 statements below, though a few mentioned individual concerns, which inspectors followed through. The overwhelming majority of those making additional comments were highly positive. Many expressed the view that this is an excellent school, with exceptionally warm and caring staff. They feel that their children are happy and achieving well. Inspectors agree fully with these views. The vast majority of parents and carers feel that relationships with the school are very good and that they are well supported and informed, and again, inspectors agree. Some comment that communication between home and school is improving continually, through the text service for instance.

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 171 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 416 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	109	63	61	35	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	141	82	28	16	3	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	109	63	57	33	5	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	103	60	61	35	3	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	119	63	51	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	105	61	58	34	7	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	102	61	58	34	7	4	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)	100	58	57	33	5	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	92	53	72	42	7	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	73	42	83	48	7	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	71	41	90	52	7	4	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	114	66	51	30	3	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	125	73	42	24	3	2	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.



17 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Guildford, GU2 8YH

Thank you so much for your very warm and polite welcome when we came to your school for the inspection, and to those of you who filled in the questionnaire for us. We enjoyed our time there and were very pleased to be in your lessons and talk to you there and in your meetings with us. I am writing to tell you what we found out.

We looked especially at certain things. The first was how good your work standards are and we found these to be high. You achieve well during your time in the school, not only in your subjects, but in your excellent personal development. This helps you to become friendly, caring, independent young people. All the adults take good care of you and keep you very safe and secure so you can learn really well. The second was how much your writing and mathematics have improved and we found that the school has helped you improve these a lot. In writing, we were very pleased to see how drama and 'talking' practice help you think of exciting ideas to write about. We were delighted to see how all of you from different backgrounds and countries get on well together, and we were looking to see if there are any differences between your progress. We found that there is no real difference and that's great!

In general, we found your school to be outstanding. You learn some really interesting things in your lessons and your teaching is good. You have super relationships with your teachers, which lots of you and your parents talk about. Even in such an excellent school staff are very aware of what needs to be better. We agree with them that your behaviour is excellent. Sometimes, you don't get enough chance to do things or talk enough in lessons and we found that where you do, this is where you learn best. So we have asked the school to make sure you all have more opportunity in lessons to be more 'active' in your learning. Because you all enjoy the school so much, we feel that you will do your best to help everyone to do this and enjoy learning even more.

Thank you again

Yours sincerely

Janet Simms

Lead inspector

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