

St Joseph the Worker Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131836
Local Authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	341227
Inspection dates	21–22 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Diane Auton

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	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Anthony McGuinness
Headteacher	Miss Christine Gordon
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2006
School address	Bewley Drive Southdene Kirkby L32 9PF
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, and a group of parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including data about pupils' progress and attainment, the school's planning documents, policies, procedures and records. They reviewed information provided by parents in the 77 parental questionnaires that were returned.

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

- the standards reached by pupils and the progress they make
- the effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum in building on pupils' skills from year-to-year
- the impact of leadership and management on achieving the best possible outcomes for pupils
- how well provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to progress in their learning and development.

Information about the school

This average size school serves an outer-city residential estate and also draws around one third of its pupils from other districts across the city. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is greater than that found in most schools. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. The number of pupils who enter or leave the school at times other than the usual transition points is above average overall, and is well above average in some year groups. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a very small proportion from other heritages. Early Years Foundation Stage education is provided in the Nursery and Reception classes. The school shares its site with a children's centre.

The school holds the Healthy Schools Award, the Activemark and the Education Extra Award.

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

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good, inclusive school with outstanding provision to promote pupils' welfare and pastoral care. Well-led, effective practitioners work together to ensure that teaching methods and the curriculum are responsive to pupils' needs and interests. As a result, pupils with a very wide range of individual needs enjoy coming to school, become engaged in learning and make good progress, often from extremely low starting points. Attainment in Year 6 rose steadily over the three years from 2006 to 2008, with pupils reaching broadly average standards by the end of Key Stage 2 in 2008. Standards dipped in 2009 and were below average in all subjects; this was linked to exceptionally high pupil mobility and to a much higher proportion of pupils in the Year 6 group with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Nonetheless, pupils in this and all the other year groups made good progress during the last school year. A drive to improve pupils' writing skills has started to lift standards in writing and this is helping to underpin improving achievement across the subjects.

The school has, correctly, concentrated its energies in recent times on improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The well-planned curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to practise and develop those skills in their work across other subjects and this is having a positive impact on progress and achievement. Staff have now identified a need to broaden the range of opportunities for pupils to learn through investigations, particularly in science, in order to address an ongoing issue of relatively lower attainment in that subject.

The school tracks pupils' progress conscientiously and reviews it regularly. This has enabled staff to identify and give extra help to pupils who are struggling. The school sets high expectations for the progress that pupils in each year group should make in a school year. In contrast, its expectations for individual pupils are not set out in sufficient detail. This limits the school's capacity to identify pupils who may be underachieving. Individual improvement targets are set, but are not regularly shared with pupils and this limits their impact on raising achievement even further.

The effective headteacher has created a strong team ethos, with a sharp focus on school improvement. Self-evaluation is largely accurate, based on monitoring which is rigorous and systematic. School development planning is strategic, with governors and staff actively involved through the year in reviewing progress towards ambitious improvement targets. All of this, together with the skills and talents of the staff, means that the school has good capacity to continue to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise attainment in English and mathematics by:
 - developing the use of individual learning targets that are regularly shared with and understood by pupils
 - setting the expectations for each pupil's attainment against which to measure and review their progress during the year, and, in particular, to also identify pupils who may be underachieving.
- Raise attainment in science by:
 - providing frequent and regular opportunities for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 to take part in scientific investigations.

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

Pupils apply themselves well and make good progress in most of their lessons, showing interest, enthusiasm and enjoyment of learning. They work well with a partner or in groups and this helps them to develop and offer their ideas confidently. They take a pride in their work and try hard to present it well in their books. In the minority of lessons where teaching is less effective, pupils' concentration sometimes wanes and this means that their progress then is slower. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with skills that are below expected levels for their age. They go on to reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. The rise in standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in recent years reflects the increasingly positive impact of the school's provision on pupils' attainment. The dip in 2009 does not reflect a decline in the school's effectiveness, but relates to an atypical year group.

The school's tracking information shows that pupils made good progress in both key stages during the last school year, particularly towards improving their skills in writing. This good rate of progress is being sustained in the new school year and tracking information shows that standards in English and mathematics are likely to rise again in 2010. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well as a result of the good provision made for them in this inclusive school. Pupils do not attain as well in science as in the other subjects because current provision in the subject is less effective. Pupils show good awareness of healthy living and personal safety. They enjoy taking responsibility as school councillors or reading buddies. They form good relationships with each other and with the adults in school and they say they are confident that help is on hand if they encounter any problems. They consider and discuss important issues in lessons and the good curriculum is enabling them to develop an awareness of cultural diversity and of cultures beyond the area in which they live. Attendance issues identified at the last inspection have been addressed successfully and attendance is now good.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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
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
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Ongoing improvements in provision are helping pupils to enjoy school and achieve increasingly well. Rigorous monitoring ensures the continuing effectiveness of provision. Teaching is of good overall quality, although it was no better than satisfactory in a small minority of the lessons observed. Lessons are planned well to take the range of learners' needs into account. The pace of learning is usually brisk, tasks appropriately challenging and teachers use questions well to extend pupils' thinking. Teachers ensure that pupils are given a clear understanding of what they are expected to do and to achieve in lessons. Regular assessment ensures teachers have an overview of pupils' progress. The use of individual learning targets has not been fully developed and so pupils are not given a clear enough understanding of how well they are doing. Well-trained teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning, especially those who have additional needs.

The curriculum is designed effectively to meet pupils' needs and to reflect their interests. This ensures they are fully engaged in most lessons. There are good opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their basic literacy and numeracy skills through work across the areas of learning. The curriculum is well enriched by opportunities for pupils to develop skills in sports, the performing arts and to learn a modern foreign language. A wide range of visitors and visits, including residential trips, add well to the effective programme to promote pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education.

Carefully planned provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures they enjoy full access to learning and social inclusion. Pastoral care is excellent and the school works sensitively to support vulnerable pupils and their families. This is

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helping to break down barriers to learning and progress that a number of pupils encounter. Effective steps are taken to promote good attendance and the school works supportively with families where there is a record of their children's poor attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Governors and staff all wholeheartedly share the headteacher's clear vision and resolve to take the school forward and to achieve the best possible outcomes for its pupils. Middle leaders play an active role in assuring the quality of provision, contributing well to ongoing school improvement. Teachers work well together, sharing ideas and planning collaboratively. The school's leaders set challenging improvement targets, based on detailed knowledge achieved through systematic review. Regular progress reviews help to identify pupils who are experiencing difficulties and this helps to ensure that those pupils are given the support they need. The school currently sets out its expectations for all pupils' progress against the same broad criteria. This method does not take sufficient account of individual needs. As a result, progress reviews are not as effective as they might be in helping to ensure that pupils who are able, but who may be underachieving, are clearly identified and supported to achieve their potential. Rigorous monitoring systems help to assure the good quality of teaching and the curriculum.

The supportive, well-informed governing body is an effective critical friend to the school. The school regularly canvasses parental opinions on important issues and parents expressed great appreciation of all that the school provides for their children. The school complies well with statutory requirements for safeguarding, health and safety, and child protection, through well-managed procedures and thorough ongoing reviews of their effectiveness. Its inclusive ethos supports equal opportunities and access to educational entitlement well. The school contributes well to community cohesion. This is achieved by its partnerships in the parish and the community, with the high school, with the children's centre, with a range of agencies that support pupils' health, welfare, social and learning needs and with its partner parish in Ecuador.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Nursery class with skills that are well below those expected for their age, particularly in speech and language. They make very good progress in their personal and social development, so that by the end of the key stage it is broadly in line with expectations for the age group. They make good progress in establishing skills that contribute to early learning in literacy and numeracy, although their overall attainment is below age-related expectations. The quality of teaching is good and children are provided with a rich, stimulating environment, both indoors and in the well-planned outdoor area. There is a good balance of activities chosen by the children and those led by adults, and children are thereby enabled to develop independence. Effective assessment is supported by a wide range of evidence gathered through observations of the children at work and play. Staff use this information well to plan the next steps in children's learning and to meet their individual needs.

Children interact well with each other and enjoy warm, trusting relationships with the caring staff; as a result, they are happy and secure and ready to learn. They settle quickly because induction procedures are sensitive and staff forge positive relationships with parents. Parents are increasingly involved as partners in their children's learning and assessment, although this development is at an early stage. The provision is well led and managed. It is monitored regularly and this supports ongoing improvements. Procedures to ensure children's welfare are good and meet requirements. The setting is inclusive and very good provision is made for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they enjoy full access to learning and progress well.

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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

About one third of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. A very large majority of those who responded said they agree or strongly agree that they are happy with their children's experience at the school. This is in line with the inspection team's judgement on the school's good overall effectiveness.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Joseph the Worker 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspector received 77 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 236 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	69	20	26	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	55	71	21	27	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	47	61	27	35	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	60	29	38	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	46	60	28	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	44	57	31	40	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	53	30	39	1	1	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)	40	52	31	40	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	44	57	33	43	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	53	30	39	4	5	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	52	32	42	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	49	64	24	31	3	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	51	66	25	32	1	1	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.



23 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph the Worker Catholic Primary School, Liverpool, L32 9PF

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome when we visited your school.

As you know, we came to see how well the school is doing and how you are all getting on with your learning. These are some of the good things we found about St Joseph's.

- St Joseph's is a happy school and you are well behaved and polite young people. You work hard in your lessons, you enjoy your learning and you get on well with each other and with the adults in school.
- The school gives you a good education.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage gets your education off to a good start.
- You are making good progress with your learning and standards are rising, especially in writing. Keep up the good work!
- I was so pleased to hear about how much you enjoy school. You told me that you really like all the teachers and that you think the after-school activities are very good.

There is still some work to be done to make St Joseph's the best school it can possibly be. I have asked the headteacher and the staff to make some improvements to the way they review your progress, to help to find out when pupils need extra support to do as well as they possibly can. I've asked them to develop individual learning targets for you in English and mathematics, to help you know how well you are doing. Lastly I've also asked them to provide more investigations for you to do in science, because this will help to raise standards in that subject.

You can help with all of this by continuing to do your best and by continuing to be happy learners.

With my very best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

Mrs Diane Auton

Lead inspector

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