

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Lancaster

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119620
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	342861
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 July 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sonya Williamson HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	216
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Paul Ryan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Juliet Walling
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 February 2006
<b>School address</b>	Aldrens Lane Lancaster Lancashire LA1 2DU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01524 65576
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<b>Email address</b>	head@st-josephs-lancaster.lancs.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Inspectors observed 15 lessons and saw seven teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. Local authority advisory and support staff were consulted. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide variety of school documentation including improvement plans, self-evaluation, tracking and assessment data, monitoring reports completed by leaders and managers and from the local authority, case studies of vulnerable pupils, safeguarding procedures and pupils' work. Inspectors examined questionnaires from 38 parents and carers, as well as those from pupils and staff.

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

- how well all groups of pupils are challenged and supported
- the impact of assessment on pupils' progress
- how well staff new to the school are supported and best practice is shared
- how well middle leaders help to ensure that the curriculum is adapted to meet pupils' individual needs and interests and to help them enjoy their learning
- whether pupils are now making better progress in mathematics.

## Information about the school

This school is of average size and has separate buildings for the Nursery, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is very high. Most pupils are of White British heritage, a few are from White Romany or Gypsy backgrounds and a small number are from a range of other ethnic groups. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English an additional language are below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average overall but is high in Key Stage 2. There are big yearly variations in the relative proportions of boys and girls. The school has achieved Healthy School status and the Financial Management Standard for schools. Numbers of pupils are rising as a result of the closure of a nearby school.

The school was judged to require significant improvement at its last inspection and was given a notice to improve. It has undergone significant staffing changes since that inspection.

**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

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School now provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agree that their child enjoys school and pupils are adamant that they feel safe in school.

Children enter the school with skills that are below those expected for their age and they progress satisfactorily to attain standards that are below the national average. The good quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is a strength of the school. It contributes significantly to the better rates of progress and rising standards that the school is now experiencing. The school is coming through a period of staffing turbulence. Staff work effectively as a team because new staff are inducted well and because they are made to feel welcome by both pupils and colleagues. Staff are good role models for pupils and have increasingly high expectations of them, although these are not yet consistently high, especially for the most able pupils. The quality of teaching varies widely but is satisfactory overall with an increasing proportion that is good. Where teaching is strong, teachers make effective use of assessment information to set learning tasks that are well matched to pupils' needs. They adapt their teaching appropriately in response to their assessment of pupils' learning. Inconsistencies in pupils' progress still remain. Some of these are linked to changes in staffing and others are due to the variable effectiveness with which teachers use assessment information, for example, to plan work for different groups of pupils. Despite these variations in teaching, there are no consistent discrepancies in the progress of different groups of pupils or between subjects. Pupils' progress in mathematics is now similar to that in other subjects.

The headteacher's leadership in embedding ambition and driving improvement through a difficult period has been strong. She has had to take on many middle leadership roles as well as ensuring the strategic management of the school. She has kept the school moving forward. The local authority has provided effective support to the school, especially in relation to managing staffing changes and the professional development of new and existing staff. The school has successfully tackled many of the issues from the last inspection and pupils' achievement is now satisfactory. These factors, alongside the school's accurate self-evaluation, indicate that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Partly due to the high rates of staff turnover, the roles of subject and phase leaders are underdeveloped. Their involvement in monitoring the quality of provision and outcomes

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for pupils is limited. This has meant that school plans to adapt the satisfactory curriculum to better meet the needs and interests of pupils have been delayed. The curriculum is well adapted to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they make good progress. This is a significant improvement since the time of the last inspection. The curriculum ensures that all groups of pupils make good progress in their social and moral development, have a secure understanding of healthy lifestyles and show satisfactory spiritual development. However, the curriculum provides too few opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of cultural issues and the diverse groups of people and nations across the United Kingdom and globally.

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

- Raise standards in all subjects and reduce inconsistencies in the rates of pupils' progress by:
  - adapting the curriculum to better meet the needs and interests of learners, especially the more able, through the introduction of more relevant topics and better links with pupils' prior experiences
  - improving the use of assessment information to inform teachers' and curriculum planning and to determine the most appropriate interventions when potential underachievement is identified
  - increasing the proportion of good or better teaching through continued monitoring of its impact on learning, providing opportunities to share best practice and ensuring that pupils are aptly challenged as well as supported
  - developing the role of subject and phase leaders in monitoring the impact of provision on learning, and ensuring opportunities for the promotion of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are provided.
- Develop pupils' cultural awareness and understanding of diversity issues by:
  - raising the profile of such issues across the school
  - adapting the curriculum
  - celebrating the diversity of culture in the school community.
- About 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

The very large majority of pupils' questionnaire responses indicate that pupils enjoy school, that they believe they learn a lot and behave well, and that they think the school prepares them well for the move into the next class. Pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory. This year has seen rapid gains in progress for some groups of pupils. A higher proportion of Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve their challenging targets than

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in the previous three years and attainment is improving. The downward trend in attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has been halted and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. A significant proportion of this latter group of pupils have social, emotional and behavioural issues and the support provided by the school helps them to manage their feelings well and maintain a focus on learning.

Although attendance is below average it is improving and targets set by governors have been exceeded. The school deploys a range of increasingly effective strategies to reduce persistent absence and to promote parents' and carers' understanding of their responsibilities for ensuring their child attends regularly and comes to school on time. Pupils are respectful and supportive of each other and of their teachers. They are tolerant and understanding, and willingly contribute to the school community by making the most of opportunities offered and making their own suggestions. These qualities contribute well to the skills needed for their future well-being.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
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	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

<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.

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Throughout the school relationships between staff and pupils are warm and positive. Established teachers know their pupils very well and new staff are quickly learning about their pupils' academic needs because they plan opportunities to check pupils' understanding and to identify any misconceptions. In a literacy lesson about older styles of writing pupils made good progress because the teacher provided excellent opportunities for speaking and listening, encouraged pupils to use their imagination, set tasks which were well matched to their abilities and modelled the learning required. In a cross-curricular lesson on a Tudor theme pupils made good progress in their social and moral development, as well as making gains in historical understanding. This was as a result of the teacher's effective use of pace, information and communication technology, opportunities that encouraged pupils to reflect and for them to listen to music and to sing. Teachers' marking is both encouraging and developmental. All pupils who completed questionnaires felt that adults explain to them how to improve their work. Where weaker teaching was observed the levels of challenge were not well matched to the academic needs of pupils, either in the tasks set or in the questions used to explore pupils' understanding.

Almost all pupils who completed the questionnaire say that adults care about them. Teachers and the support and welfare staff work cohesively to ensure that pupils receive good care, guidance and support. The work of the recently appointed learning mentor is already well established and having an impact, particularly in supporting the welfare of pupils in Key Stage 1, helping pupils to manage their emotions, comforting those in distress and developing opportunities for parents and carers to work in partnership with the school. The same good level of care promotes effective transitions for pupils when they join the school and when they are preparing for the next stage in their education.

*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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher knows the school's strengths and weaknesses well. This accurate self-evaluation is underpinned by a range of monitoring strategies. The information gained is used to ensure staff know what needs to be improved and to support and challenge them in seeking improved outcomes for pupils. Vacancies remaining on the governing body mean that governors have not been able to fully develop their own monitoring roles. Nevertheless, they do hold the school to account, ensure that safeguarding procedures are in place and work effectively alongside the headteacher,

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for example on recruitment and staffing issues. Equality of opportunity is aptly promoted for pupils because the care and support they receive help them to be ready to learn. In addition, the headteacher checks that staff are increasingly using assessment information to meet pupils' needs and to check learning outcomes. However, teachers' practice is still inconsistent because opportunities for sharing best practice are not always taken.

The school's cooperative working with local partners means that the school is a cohesive community and it is strengthening its links across the local neighbourhood through a range of initiatives. It has plans in place to further promote community cohesion by developing pupils' understanding of differences in global societies and to enhance this work through curriculum adaptation.

*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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children are settled and happy in the child-friendly Nursery and Reception learning environments. They confidently make choices about their learning in free-play as they move between the indoor and outdoor spaces. Children have a growing understanding of simple rules which helps them to develop skills to work alongside others. They practise their writing skills in a range of activities and by the end of the Reception year some children write simple words using their phonic knowledge, whilst others are beginning to form recognisable letters. In Nursery children climb and run with confidence and control in the outdoor space and are fascinated by the worm tracks in the wormery and the cocoons that have formed from their caterpillars.



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Planning shows a suitable range of learning opportunities and adults are well deployed to support children's development. Work in the indoor areas is well planned and resourced, but the outdoor spaces are used less imaginatively. Formal adult-led activities are practically organised to allow for targeted learning support. Despite this, some of these activities are too long to sustain all children's interest, and questions and tasks are not always successful in challenging children's thinking, particularly the more able. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has been unsettled and this has resulted in unreliable tracking of children's progress in the past. Support and development for new staff has resulted in more secure assessment of children's needs and a clearer picture of children's progress is emerging. There is an accurate awareness of relative weaknesses in the Early Years Foundation Stage and strategies to overcome these are in place and beginning to have a positive impact on outcomes for children.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

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

**Views of parents and carers**

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are happy with their children's experience at the school. All agree that their child enjoys school and most feel that the school keeps their child safe, helps their child to have a healthy lifestyle and meets their child's particular needs. These aspects reflect inspection findings, particularly with regard to the strong care, guidance and support provided by the school. A small minority of parents and carers disagree that their child is making enough progress. Some parents and carers expressed concern about the impact of staffing changes, and the way they have been managed, on their child's progress. Inspectors agree that there have been significant staffing changes. However, school leaders and managers have worked effectively to overcome difficulties. Consequently, the progress pupils are now making is satisfactory overall and the staff team is more secure. Inspection findings do not support the views of the minority of parents and carers who felt that the school does not help them to support their child's learning or deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour.

### 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, Lancaster 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 39 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 216 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	64	11	28	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	46	18	46	2	5	1	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	36	15	38	7	18	3	8
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	44	11	28	10	26	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	16	41	14	36	6	15	1	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	36	10	26	14	36	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	38	23	59	1	3	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)	13	33	18	46	7	18	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	33	22	56	3	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	21	17	44	11	28	3	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	28	16	41	3	8	4	10
The school is led and managed effectively	12	31	13	33	4	10	7	18
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	44	14	36	3	8	3	8

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.**



7 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Lancaster, LA1 2DU

Some of you will remember that I came to visit your school last year. Your school had been told previously that it needed to improve and I came to check how it was doing. You welcomed me warmly then and you did the same when I brought a team of inspectors to look at your work and that of the school recently. I enjoyed my visit. You showed good maturity when asked for your views about the school and how well you are doing. I have judged that your school has improved and now provides you with a satisfactory education. The main points in the school report are that you are:

- cared for, guided and supported very well
- respectful to, and have good relationships with, your classmates and teachers
- safe in school, feel safe and enjoy school
- progressing in your learning and reaching higher standards.

Now that the headteacher and the team of teachers and support staff have helped the school to improve, I want them to make it even better. I have asked them to help you reach even higher standards in your work by improving the teaching further and changing some of the topics you learn about. I have also suggested that some of the other teachers with responsibilities should work with the headteacher to check on how well you are doing in different subjects and to help you learn more about people, places and different lifestyles outside your local area.

You can help to achieve these improvements by ensuring you come to school regularly and on time and by continuing to try hard and behave well. Good luck with your efforts! I hope you achieve what you wish for.

Yours sincerely

Sonya Williamson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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