

St Joseph's Washington RC School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108850
Local Authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	356438
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Gill Gleghorn

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	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mark Jakeway
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Jary
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 11 lessons taught by 11 different teachers and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents including policies, monitoring records, the school improvement plan, records of pupils' progress and the school's safeguarding procedures. The inspection team received and analysed 34 questionnaires from parents and carers as well as a number of questionnaires completed by pupils and staff.

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

- The extent to which the school is succeeding in improving pupils' progress, particularly in writing.
- Whether assessment and tracking are robust in tackling underachievement and improving progress.
- How well the quality of teaching contributes to learning.
- The extent of the effectiveness of monitoring by all leaders.
- The extent of pupils' awareness of different cultures in the United Kingdom and wider world.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. Most of its pupils are of White British backgrounds. The school's population is stable. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The school has been awarded Healthy School Status. Since the last inspection a new headteacher has been appointed and took up post in September 2010.

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

This is a satisfactory school. It is showing signs of improvement and has good features in the care it provides for its pupils. Parents and carers agree. One commented, 'I feel my children are cared for and valued as individuals'. Partnerships beyond the school, good community links and a range of interesting activities impact positively on pupils' personal development.

Pupils enjoy school and want to achieve well because of the good relationships they have with their teachers. They make satisfactory progress and given their starting points to school, their achievement is satisfactory. The rate of progress varies between classes. By the end of Year 6, attainment is similar to the national average. Teachers' use of assessment is improving but there are some inconsistencies in how well individual needs are met and this can slow their rate of progress. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall as the pace of learning does not always challenge pupils to reach their potential. Behaviour is good and pupils have a positive attitude to learning.

Pupils benefit from the good level of care and support. The curriculum is good at developing personal skills and knowledge of how to keep safe and healthy, and enables pupils to access a range of opportunities which widen their understanding of their immediate community. Too few opportunities are provided to develop pupils' understanding of the cultural diversity within the United Kingdom and other countries. Pupils show confidence through their positive interaction with visitors, with whom they are extremely polite and communicative. They volunteer to take on responsibilities eagerly because they wish to be partners in improving their school.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, within a short time, has identified key actions to improve aspects of the school's performance. Self-evaluation is mainly accurate and linked to school improvement planning. Monitoring systems, however, are not yet rigorous enough in consistently evaluating pupils' progress or in monitoring the impact of teaching and learning on raising attainment and improving progress. The satisfactory progress made against the actions identified at the last inspection, coupled with the school's generally accurate self-evaluation, gives the school a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and increase the rate of pupils' progress by:
 - using assessment information effectively to ensure tasks are differentiated and challenge all pupils

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- maximising the time available in lessons to increase the pace of learning.
- Sharpen monitoring and evaluation in order to improve the pace of improvement by:
 - improving the rigour of monitoring of teaching and learning so that all teachers work to a good or better standard
 - ensuring that pupils' performance is systematically tracked so that, when progress slows, it can be rectified.
- Provide opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of the diversity of cultures and communities within the United Kingdom and the wider world.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

Pupils enjoy learning and respond well in lessons. They behave well, have good attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. They listen intently and readily take on challenges when provided. They concentrate hard when motivated and work equally well in groups or on their own. Even so, their progress is no better than satisfactory because teaching is inconsistent. As a result, progress varies across the school.

By the end of Year 6 attainment has been broadly average in recent years. Actions taken by the school over the past year have resulted in rapidly improving standards in English, especially writing, and improving standards in mathematics. The school's most recent assessment data show an improvement at Key Stage 2 with an increase in pupils' attainment in all subjects. From their slightly above average starting points pupils make satisfactory progress to reach standards which are currently above average in English and broadly average in mathematics. Achievement is therefore satisfactory for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils are aware of the importance of a healthy diet and taking exercise through activities such as skipping, dance and football. This is reflected in their involvement in sporting activities. The ECO Club members are proud of their involvement in growing their own vegetables and promoting healthy eating. The active school council makes a positive contribution through suggesting improvements for the school playground and planting bulbs in the surrounding community. Pupils' charitable work supports others less fortunate than themselves. Their well-developed social skills but average basic skills and average attendance equip them sufficiently well for future life.

Pupils' spiritual, social and moral development is good. The school is aware of the need to further develop their understanding of the multicultural nature of the world.

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

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

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching varies. It is satisfactory overall. Where it is more effective, it is because teachers use assessment more skilfully and ensure that the pace of pupils' learning is good. Lessons are livelier and have a clearer sense of purpose. Pupils know that much is required of them and they respond eagerly; they know their learning targets. This was observed in a mathematics lesson where more-able pupils enjoyed the challenge of sequencing fractions and decimals. At times, though, teachers underestimate what pupils can do and set only moderately challenging work. Explanations can be lengthy and teachers do not adapt lessons enough so that pupils can work at the right speed for their different abilities. The new systems for assessment are helping to improve progress, particularly in writing, where perceptive marking provides pupils with guidance and opportunities to improve their work. Support from classroom assistants is satisfactory. They are not always directed effectively to contribute more to pupils' progress.

Strengths in the curriculum lie in the promotion of pupils' personal development through the wide range of enrichment activities such as Irish dancing, cricket and tennis. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the range of interesting events and visits and particularly enjoyed the visits to Beamish and a local art gallery. The annual residential visit to Derwent Hill provides the opportunity for Year 6 to learn new skills and raise self-esteem. New approaches to writing have improved all pupils' progress and attainment along with the improved opportunities to practice basic skills across the curriculum. These are not yet fully embedded. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is promoted through planned intervention

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programmes and additional classroom support. Partnerships with the church, community agencies, and neighbouring schools expand pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own locality. At present, however, pupils have too few opportunities to broaden their understanding of the diversity of life in modern day Britain and the wider world.

The school's care and support for pupils is good. The good relationships ensure pupils trust staff and will approach them with any concerns. Procedures for looking after pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable are secure and include good links with outside agencies. Attendance is improving as a result of the effective procedures adopted by the school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear vision and is committed to raising standards and improving provision for all pupils. Recently introduced procedures for the assessment and tracking of pupils' progress have impacted on improving pupils' progress, particularly in writing. However, accurate assessment of the school's performance through regular monitoring and evaluation is not yet sharp enough to improve standards at all levels for all pupils. Senior leaders are becoming more involved in identifying priorities for improvement in their key areas of responsibility through specific action plans.

The governing body is supportive and kept informed of school developments. Governors are involved in the school in their roles as special interest governors and are astute in monitoring the school finances. However, governors have been less effective in monitoring outcomes to check that the school is performing as well as possible.

Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. The governors and staff are well trained and ensure pupils are safe, although a very small minority of staff are not fully aware of some minor aspects of the school's safeguarding procedures and policies.

The promotion of equal opportunities and the tackling of discrimination are satisfactory. The school is aware of the need to evaluate the performance of all pupil groups more closely to be absolutely sure that no group is underperforming.

The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. The school is a cohesive community and pupils enjoy the benefits of the good local links such as the 'Plot to Plate' project.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children start Nursery with skills slightly above those expected for children of their age. Detailed planning and good organisation ensure that children settle quickly into their new routines. By the end of the Reception Year they achieve well. They are confident learners and enjoy their time in school. Children make good progress because provision is good.

Teachers plan interesting activities within a well-structured programme enabling children to have access to a wide variety of stimulating activities, indoors and outdoors. Staff support them well to play and learn together. They carefully collect a range of information about children, observing them as they learn and play and use this information to identify the next steps in learning.

Each child has a key worker who ensures that they settle well and develop confidence to take advantage of the opportunities offered to them. Children are kept safe and their needs are well met supported by effective partnerships with parents and a range of external partners. Policies and procedures are consistently applied and this contributes to the security of the setting.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. The newly-developed unit is well established and the team work well together to ensure a successful setting where children engage 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

A minority of parents and carers returned the questionnaires to express their views of the school. Almost all parents and carers who returned a questionnaire support the work of the school and the way it helps pupils to feel safe and enjoy a healthy lifestyle. The replies praised, in particular, how much their children enjoy coming to school and the commitment and approachability of staff. Inspectors found that that the school takes good care of its pupils.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Joseph's Washington RC 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 34 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 230 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	76	7	21	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	26	76	8	24	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	50	16	47	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	56	13	38	2	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	20	59	14	41	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	56	14	41	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	44	16	47	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)	21	62	11	32	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	62	13	38	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	53	13	38	2	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	32	20	59	0	0	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	13	38	19	56	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	68	10	29	0	0	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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">■ 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.



24 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Washington RC School, Washington, NE38 7HU

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave me and my colleagues when we came to inspect your school and for the part you played in the inspection.

Your school is satisfactory and showing signs of improvement. Adults care for you well and your behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. You told us that you feel safe and enjoy school, particularly the sports clubs and activities provided. Teaching is satisfactory, as is your progress. This year there have been improvements which we would like to see more of across the school. We have asked your teachers to help improve your work by:

- making sure that lessons are more challenging and pacy
- making sure all of you make the best possible progress across the year through more frequent monitoring of your work
- ensuring your progress is matched to the best teaching your school can provide.

I have also asked that you have the opportunity to learn about other people's lives, in our own country and in other parts of the world.

You can help by carrying on being the delightful children you are and continuing to do your best.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Gill Gleghorn

Lead inspector

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