

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Carterton

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123191
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	359385
Inspection dates	14–15 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Alison Grainger

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	81
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vacant
Headteacher	Breda Bowles
Date of previous school inspection	14 November 2007
School address	Lawton Avenue Carterton OX18 3JY
Telephone number	01993 841240
Fax number	01993 844522
Email address	head.3556@ocnmail.net

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	14–15 September 2010
Inspection number	359385

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 1234 234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, one of whom evaluated the school's safeguarding arrangements only. Seven lessons, taught by a total of five teachers, were observed. Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body and key staff. Other informal discussions took place with pupils, parents and carers. The school's work was observed and documentation, such as the records held on pupils and the school improvement plan, was scrutinised. Account was taken of the 43 parental questionnaires received.

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

- the effectiveness of provision, particularly teaching, in meeting pupils' individual needs and supporting their progress throughout the school
- pupils' attendance and the effectiveness of action to tackle low attendance
- how well pupils take initiative and responsibility and their awareness of cultural and ethnic diversity in the United Kingdom
- the extent to which leaders and managers, including the governing body, succeed in improving provision and pupils' outcomes.

Information about the school

St Joseph's is smaller than the average sized primary school. The school has had an unsettled time since its last inspection. The headteacher in post at that time left at the end of the term following the inspection. Two acting headteachers were in post prior to the present headteacher taking over responsibility in September 2008. The current deputy headteacher joined a year ago and some other staff changes have taken place. Pupil numbers have reduced as a result of changes taking place at the Royal Air Force Base at nearby Brize Norton. The school has restructured from five to four classes this school year. The governing body is presently in the process of appointing a new chair.

Most pupils are White British. About one tenth of pupils are travellers of Irish heritage and a few pupils are from other minority ethnic backgrounds. The movement of pupils in and out of the school other than at the usual times of joining or leaving is high. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is a little above average. Most of these pupils have learning difficulties or social, emotional and behavioural problems. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award for two years running.

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

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It is improving steadily. Parents, carers and pupils are pleased by the changes made over the last two years. Pupils who are members of the school council are sure that their school is being taken in the right direction by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. They say, for example, that they know that senior leaders are doing a good job because they seek and value the pupils' opinions. One parent told inspectors that 'the improvement is 100% and this should be credited to the current head who has pulled our school around.' The school suffered a period of decline prior to its recent positive development. Attainment dipped and behaviour deteriorated. Behaviour is currently satisfactory and getting better. It is good on occasions in lessons when teaching really engages and challenges all the pupils in the class. Pupils are presently making satisfactory progress across the school, with examples of rapid gains in some classes.

The start given to children in the Reception Year is much better now than at the last inspection. This area of the school's work has developed considerably over the last year. Children settle exceptionally well as a result of the gentle and supportive environment provided by the staff team. Children behave well and are making good progress in their learning. On occasions, teaching is outstanding in the Reception Year and there are also instances of exceptional teaching in Years 5 and 6.

Instances of exceptional teaching are characterised by a very sharp focus on what each pupil needs to learn next. This means that the more able are 'pushed on' and others receive the right balance of support and challenge. Time is used very efficiently and pupils are required to use their own ideas and take real responsibility for their learning. These features ensure that pupils are motivated, learn quickly, and behave well in the most effective lessons. However, pupils' progress is only satisfactory overall, because there is not enough high quality teaching. Too much teaching is only satisfactory and some is barely adequate. The strengths evident in the most effective teaching are often missing in other lessons. Added to this, explanations are not always sufficiently clear, pupils do not always know what they are aiming to achieve or when they have got there, and whole-class sessions are often too long. Across the school, the marking of pupils' work is satisfactory. However, its effectiveness in moving learning forward is diminished by pupils not being given the necessary opportunities to respond to the advice on how to improve their work.

Pupils say that their enjoyment of school is increasing. They like and trust the adults in school and appreciate the many clubs provided in addition to daily lessons. However, the attendance rate is low for a significant minority of pupils. There has been a little improvement recently but the school recognises that more needs to be done to work

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

with parents and carers especially to prevent individuals from becoming frequent absentees.

Self-evaluation is accurate and senior staff know what needs to be done next. Senior leaders and the governing body correctly recognise that the recent good improvements require building on and that the pace of the school's development has to be accelerated. Currently, the school's capacity to sustain improvement is no better than satisfactory because too much responsibility rests with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Not all staff are sufficiently involved in pushing the school forward and in being accountable for pupils' progress. Some action has started to disseminate the best practice but the school is still at an early stage in using its strongest teachers to develop provision, particularly the quality of teaching, across the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Work closely with parents and carers to raise the attendance rate and to prevent individual pupils from becoming frequent absentees.
- Improve the quality of teaching in order to accelerate pupils' progress and raise their attainment, ensuring that teaching is good in at least 60% of lessons by May 2011, by:
 - making sure that all teachers focus sharply on the next steps in learning for each pupil, consistently challenging the more able and giving the right balance of support and challenge to others
 - making sure that pupils know what they are aiming to achieve in each lesson and how successful they are in reaching their learning goals
 - providing clear explanations at all points in lessons and ensuring that whole-class sessions are not too long
 - giving pupils opportunities to respond to the written feedback provided on their work.
- Strengthen the school's capacity for and the pace of its improvement, by:
 - sharing good practice, particularly in teaching, in order to develop provision and tackle weaknesses
 - ensuring all staff are involved in actively driving improvement and are fully accountable for pupils' progress.

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

Attainment is just within the broadly average range and there is a legacy of underachievement still to be rectified among the older pupils in the school. The picture is better lower down in the school, where the past weaknesses in provision have not impacted on pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Overall, pupils' achievement in relation to their starting points and capabilities is satisfactory and is relatively better in the younger year groups. In a science lesson, pupils of all abilities in Years 5 and 6,

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

including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, rose exceptionally well to the challenge of solving a real-life problem related to moving a heavy box. They eagerly made suggestions and showed considerable independence in devising a fair test. Their use of correct scientific language and the application of their mathematical skills in this lesson, drawn out from them by focused teaching, ensured that they learnt at a rapid pace.

On some occasions when teaching is relatively less effective, learning proceeds more slowly. Many pupils, particularly boys and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, find it hard to maintain a good level of involvement when required to sit through long whole-class introductions. If explanations are not clear enough, they are also slow to settle to individual or group tasks. Nevertheless, given that behaviour has sometimes been poor in the past, it is a credit to the pupils that behaviour now remains satisfactory even when they are not well motivated by the teaching.

Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the school and wider community, for example raising funds for charities. They have the potential to contribute more to their school's improvement. This was evident, for example, when one pupil explained to an inspector what the teachers could do to make their marking more effective! The moral and social aspects of pupils' personal development are improving as pupils are expected to take more responsibility for their behaviour. Pupils respond with respect and sincerity to opportunities for prayer in whole-school assemblies. Their understanding of cultural and ethnic diversity within the United Kingdom is satisfactory overall and mostly derived from their experiences outside school and a 'multi-cultural week' within school.

The attendance rate has been low and falling in recent years, recovering a little during last school year. Nevertheless, pupils' currently satisfactory and improving progress, together with the desire most have to learn, results in their preparation for their future lives being satisfactory.

Pupils' adoption of healthy lifestyles is good as indicated by the school's achievement of the Healthy Schools award. Pupils enjoy swimming, physical education lessons and clubs such as football and tag rugby. The re-introduction this term of healthy hot school lunches is greatly appreciated by the pupils who also choose healthy snacks at break times.

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.

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

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	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

The most effective teaching is based on a clear understanding of what each pupil needs to learn next in order to make good progress. It is also underpinned by a focus on developing pupils' independence and initiative as learners. The overall effectiveness of teaching is reduced, however, by too much that focuses more on what the teacher will do in each lesson than on what the pupils will learn. In these lessons, teachers talk for too long which sometimes clouds explanations. Pupils are not told clearly what they are aiming to achieve or how to know when they have got there. Because they are not fully motivated and have to spend too much time listening to their teacher, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do not work well enough in these lessons without adults continually checking up on them.

A strength within the satisfactory curriculum is the improved focus over the last year on group teaching to help selected pupils who are struggling or who have fallen behind in the past to catch up. Reasonable opportunities are now being provided for pupils to undertake research and this is another aspect of the curriculum that is moving forward. Strengths are apparent in the care, guidance and support for pupils. Pupils feel safe at school as a result of the positive relationships they enjoy with staff. Pupils, such as those from forces families, who join the school other than at the usual time are helped to settle well. A good development is the nurture provision for vulnerable pupils, including those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The headteacher shows a high degree of vigilance in following up unexpected and frequent absences and has good support from a governor in this area. The introduction of rewards for good attendance has been received enthusiastically by pupils. However, even more needs to

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

be done to work unstintingly with parents and carers to raise attendance and prevent individuals from becoming frequent absentees.

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	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The strong leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, is driving the school forward. Not only has the decline in the school's effectiveness been halted, but also the school is better in some areas, principally the provision for Reception children, than at the last inspection. The governing body has been instrumental in ensuring some significant improvements, particularly in the safeguarding of pupils. The school site is much more secure than previously. All safeguarding arrangements met government requirements at the time of the inspection.

Members of the governing body show a high level of commitment to the school and are supportive of it. They are not as fully involved as they might be, however, in checking up on the school's effectiveness. Some appropriate plans are in place to increase this aspect of governors' involvement, such as through a nominated governor meeting with the school council.

Staff rely too much on senior leaders to make improvements. Not all staff embrace changes designed to benefit pupils and not all are sufficiently accountable for pupils' progress. Currently, the key subject areas of English, mathematics and science and provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are led by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Reception class provision and religious education are the only major areas led by other teachers. As a result, capacity for sustained improvement is only satisfactory.

Equality of opportunity is promoted satisfactorily as seen in the improved and currently reasonable rate of progress of all groups of pupils. Discrimination is also tackled adequately as shown by improved provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Partnerships with other local schools are good. In particular, these partnerships have allowed the school to develop provision for its most vulnerable pupils and support for families to an extent that it would not have been able to do on its own. They have also increased the extra-curricular opportunities available to more able pupils and those who are vulnerable. All in all, community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily. The school recognises that there is more to do in developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultural and ethnic diversity through the curriculum.

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

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	3
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

Children settle very quickly and move on in leaps and bounds in their learning in the Reception Year. The adults continually assess children's learning needs and move swiftly to ensure that direct teaching takes account of these. Children's self-esteem and independence develop rapidly as they are encouraged to initiate activities which are then supported, but not controlled, by the adults. One child, for example, decided to build a ladybird house and asked the teacher to help him write instructions for this. Almost all children are now moving to Year 1 with attainment well within the levels expected for their age and some are attaining more highly than this. They are well prepared for their future education. The Reception teacher drives improvement well. He is highly evaluative and reflective and succeeds in identifying what could be improved. He has noted, for instance, that there is scope to make even better use of assessment information to plan the adult-led activities.

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

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

Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers who made their views known to inspectors are pleased with all aspects of the school. Inspectors spoke with 29 parents and carers and a parent governor who endorsed the positive views shown in the 43 responses to the questionnaire.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	67	14	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	77	10	23	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	21	49	16	37	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	49	14	33	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	20	47	18	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	53	14	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	51	14	33	3	7	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	15	35	20	47	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	49	15	35	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	35	17	40	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	37	22	51	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	26	60	16	37	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	60	15	35	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.



16 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Carterton OX18 3JY

Thank you for helping me when I visited your school. I enjoyed visiting your lessons, watching an assembly and talking with you. I found that your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. As those of you who are members of the school council told me, it is improving steadily. You are right to be proud of your Healthy School award. You have a good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy. I am pleased that you are enjoying the new hot and healthy school meals.

You are making satisfactory progress as you move up through the school. Children in Reception are getting off to a good start and there are times when those of you at the top of the school are making rapid progress. I have asked the adults to work on improving the teaching so that all of you move on at a quick pace in your learning.

Many of you have good attendance. It was wonderful to see that one class had achieved 100% attendance at the start of the new school year. However, the attendance rate in your school is low overall. I have asked the adults to work closely with your parents and carers to make sure that you all attend regularly.

As you told me, your headteacher and deputy headteacher are making your school a better place. You are starting to give your ideas to help with this. I have asked the adults to make sure that they are all helping the school to improve as quickly as possible.

While I have judged your behaviour to be satisfactory, I know that the behaviour has improved. There are times now when behaviour is good, and even outstanding, in lessons. You can help your school to improve by working hard, telling your teachers if your work is too easy or too difficult, behaving well and having good attendance.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alison Grainger

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.