

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 106944 |
| Local authority | Rotherham |
| Inspection number | 377499 |
| Inspection dates | 21–22 May 2012 |
| Lead inspector | James Kidd |

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

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| 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 | 191 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Fr Kieran O'Connell |
| Headteacher | Mrs L Pink / Mrs C Battersby |
| Date of previous school inspection | 4 March 2009 |
| School address | Green Lane Rawmarsh Rotherham S62 6JY |
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Introduction

Inspection team

James Kidd
Lindsay Hall

Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 15 lessons or part-lessons, taught by seven teachers. They held meetings with two groups of pupils, the learning mentor, the Vice Chair of the Governing Body, pastoral and academic staff and senior leaders. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at internal and external pupil progress data, pupils' workbooks, the school's 'developing excellence' plan and documentation in relation to child protection and safeguarding. They also scrutinised 66 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is below that usually seen but is increasing over time. There is a well below average number of pupils with English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils supported at School Action Plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. The school meets the current government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. St Joseph's is a nationally-accredited Healthy School, holds the Activemark (Gold) award for its work in physical education and also has the Financial Management in Schools Standard.

There have been several staffing changes since the previous inspection, including the establishment of joint leadership arrangements, resulting in a co-headship since September 2011. The two headteachers have both worked at the school for a number of years.

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 | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | 2 |
| Leadership and management | 3 |

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is improving steadily and pupils, parents and carers and staff speak positively about how the raising of pupils' confidence, aspirations and self-esteem is central to everything it does. The school is not yet good because, although improving, and with strong elements in Years 1 and 6, achievement and the quality of teaching are satisfactory overall. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Children enter Reception with below age-related skills. Although pupils reach broadly average attainment in English and mathematics by the time they leave, the levels of progress across the school are inconsistent and achievement is, therefore, satisfactory overall. Progress and attainment in writing in Key Stage 1 are beginning to accelerate, but are not yet in line with national expectations.
- Teaching varies in quality across the school. It is satisfactory overall, but there are examples of good and outstanding practice. On occasions, there is insufficient challenge in lessons and pupils are not always aware of how to improve their work. Teaching assistants provide good support for those who often find the work difficult.
- Pupils are proud of their school, behave well in class and at breaks and lunchtimes. The vast majority of parents and carers are positive about the support their children receive and believe they are safe in school. One comment was typical of many: 'I am incredibly pleased with the ethos of the school and with the commitment of everyone to the children in their care.'
- The shared headship is working effectively and the co-headteachers have identified areas for development with accuracy. Sound leadership of teaching and management of performance are leading to ongoing improvement in all areas of the school's life. It is too early, however, to see the full impact of the relatively new leadership structure and, therefore, the school has satisfactory capacity to sustain its improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to accelerate pupils' progress and attainment, especially in Key Stage 1 in writing, by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to share their ideas with others before they begin their tasks
 - ensuring that writing opportunities engage all learners and encourage them to want to write.

- Eradicate inconsistencies in teaching quality across the school to move teaching to the next level of performance by:
 - ensuring that challenge in all lessons enables pupils to reach the levels of which they are capable
 - ensuring that work and activities in all lessons meet the learning needs of all pupils
 - reducing the amount of teacher-talk in lessons to give pupils time for independent learning and finding things out for themselves
 - giving pupils more opportunities to use new technology as a tool to promote their learning
 - ensuring that pupils have a clear understanding of their next steps in learning.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

In the majority of lessons, pupils are keen to learn and approach their work with enthusiasm. When given the opportunity, pupils are delighted to work in pairs and in groups, to act as extra resources for each other's learning. When there is too much teacher-talk, or when levels of challenge do not encourage pupils to think more deeply, they are more passive and do not show the same interest in their learning or have the time to research for themselves. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the achievement of their children.

Children's skills on entry to Reception class are below age-related expectations overall. By the end of the year, they are sharing and playing happily together and are more than willing to show visitors their work. Pupils' achievement across the rest of the school is satisfactory overall, but is inconsistent within and across the key stages. Improving writing skills in Key Stage 1 has been identified as a priority by the school. As a result of concerted effort, pupils' progress and attainment is beginning to accelerate, but they remain below those in reading and mathematics. When given opportunities to share their ideas with their classmates before they put pen to paper, they demonstrate much creativity in their writing. When these opportunities are not forthcoming and when writing tasks do not engage them, they are less willing to write. However, all groups of pupils achieve satisfactorily in reading, writing and mathematics across Key Stage 1. Pupils' reading skills are below average by the end of Year 2 but are improving year-on-year. Many pupils have difficulty with intonation

and the recognition of more complex words. Achievement for all groups across Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall, but progress accelerates markedly in Years 5 and 6. The results for the 2011 Year 6 cohort were the best for several years and pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to reach their challenging targets. In both Years 5 and 6, many pupils are articulate, can give extended comment in class and have numeracy skills which are average at least and, on occasions, above that usually found. Attainment in all subjects, including writing, is broadly average by the end of Year 6.

The school does all it can to ensure that all groups of pupils benefit from everything it has to offer. As a result of well-planned and sharply focused support from teaching assistants, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs learn as well as their peers and their achievement is satisfactory.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers believe that teaching is good. Whilst supporting their positive views about the close support their children receive in the classroom, and the strong impact of teaching on their moral and social development, teaching is satisfactory overall. There are examples of outstanding practice, but the quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school. In an outstanding Year 6 literacy session, pupils were engrossed in their work and challenged to aim for the highest standards. They benefit from ongoing and accurate assessment of their progress and from the use of complex subject-specific vocabulary, 'temporal connectives', for example. Similarly, in an outstanding Year 1 writing lesson, work engaged pupils' interest and was directly related to their individual learning needs. In both lessons, pupils were often quite surprised at what they were able to achieve.

In a minority of lessons, work and activities do not enthuse pupils and they do not, therefore, engage well enough in their learning. Teachers sometimes talk for too long and therefore do not give pupils enough time for independent learning. There is sometimes a 'one size fits all' approach and pupils receive work which is not based closely enough on their prior learning and needs. This sometimes leads to a lack of concentration and focus on the tasks in hand. Most lessons begin with a clear exposition of the learning to be covered and pupils are sure about what they need to do to succeed. However, when there is a lack of clarity about what is to be completed, or when marking does not give sufficient advice on how to improve, pupils are less sure about their next steps in learning and what they need to do to reach their targets. Marking varies from exemplary practice which strongly supports pupils' learning, to little more than a cursory comment. Pupils are accurate in their view that they do not have enough opportunities to use new technology as a learning tool.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are challenged and supported well by the talented team of teaching assistants. As a result, these pupils are fully engaged in lessons and are often able to give perceptive comments in whole-class question-and-answer sessions.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils have a high regard for their school, for their classmates and for the adults who work with them. They are courteous to visitors and are delighted to show them their work. They behave well in lessons and around the school site. They feel safe in school because, in their words, 'Adults look after us and are always there when we need them.' Pupils are proud of their work as school councillors and 'playground pals' and enjoy looking after younger pupils and making sure that no-one is lonely at breaks and lunchtimes. They show their strong social conscience when they comment that they would like the school to partition the playground, to avoid any accidents between older and younger pupils. They would also enjoy even more opportunities to act as 'peer mediators', to promote and reinforce the peaceful resolution of any conflict. They are proactive in their support for a range of charities and value the opportunities they have to reflect on their feelings and behaviour, for example, pupils considered closely the thought for the week, 'I try to accept forgiveness from others.'

Almost all parents and carers who returned the questionnaires believe that their children are safe and comment, 'The school has a very friendly atmosphere and our children are happy and settled here.' The school works hard, and with success, to engage parents and carers in the learning of their children. Pupils speak highly of the work of the learning mentor, who has a seminal impact on raising the confidence and self-esteem of pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. She provides strong support for families, and pupils have the utmost confidence to approach her when they are experiencing difficulty.

Pupils have a good awareness of the nature and dangers of bullying in all its forms. They say bullying is a rarity in school but that when it happens it is dealt with swiftly, sensitively and effectively by staff. Pupils are invariably punctual to school and although attendance is average, it continues to rise securely.

Leadership and management

The dedicated co-headteachers and the perceptive members of the senior leadership team lead by example and ensure that the school remains, in the words of parents and carers 'A friendly and welcoming place, in which our children are safe.' The effect of the relatively new leadership structure is more apparent in the upper Key Stage 2 classes and it is too early to gauge the full impact of its work in all areas of the school. However, as a result of sound leadership of teaching, and the continuous and precise evaluation of performance, the co-headteachers have accurately identified the key areas for school improvement and capacity to improve is satisfactory. There is a strong emphasis on relevant professional development, linked closely to educational priorities, for teaching and support staff. One spoke for many saying, 'The leadership is supportive of us all and the training courses we attend increase our effectiveness and enrich our personal development.' Teamwork amongst teaching, support and administrative staff is a major strength of the school.

The governing body has a satisfactory impact on school performance. Members are supportive, but also hold the leadership to account with the requisite rigour. Along with the senior leadership team, they recognise that pupils' writing skills in Key Stage

1 are not high enough and that the quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and has a positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The thought-provoking assemblies and the life skills programme enable pupils to reflect on their place in an ever-changing society and also to consider universal values. For example, pupils give examples of Olympic values and speak with confidence about the importance of friendship, determination and respect for others. The well-managed breakfast club is an important element of school life and this, too, has a positive impact on pupils' personal development. The development of the whole child, equality of opportunity for all and the rejection of discrimination are integral to the school's aims and ethos. Child protection and safeguarding policies and practice are fully up to date and meet current requirements.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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 | 54 | 42 | 2 | 2 |
| Primary schools | 14 | 49 | 32 | 6 |
| Secondary schools | 20 | 39 | 34 | 7 |
| Special schools | 33 | 45 | 20 | 3 |
| Pupil referral units | 9 | 55 | 28 | 8 |
| All schools | 16 | 47 | 31 | 6 |

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Attendance | the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance. |
| Behaviour | how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Floor standards | the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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: | inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. |
| 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. |
| Safety | how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning. |

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 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Rotherham, S62 6JY

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team so warmly when we came to your school recently. A special 'thank you' goes to those of you who came to talk and to read to us. You were keen to ask us what we thought about your school, so here is the letter outlining our findings.

St Joseph's is a satisfactory school, but it is improving all the time. You generally make satisfactory progress in your work, but progress is much better in the upper Key Stage 2 classes and pupils in Year 6 reach the standards we would expect them to reach. The teaching you receive is satisfactory overall, but there are examples in the Reception class of good teaching and there is also some good and outstanding teaching in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. You behave well in lessons and around school and are very polite to visitors. You teachers and all the other grown-ups look after you well and you feel safe in school as a result. Some of you thought it would be a good idea if the school divided the playground so that larger pupils did not bump into smaller ones!

Your co-headteachers work well together and with all the other staff. They would like to make St Joseph's even better for you. We would like to support them in doing this so we have asked them to help you improve your skills in writing in Key Stage 1 by giving you more opportunities to talk about what you are going to write and giving you work which really interests you. We have also asked them to make all the teaching you receive good or even better by giving you work which challenges you and which encourages you more to find things out for yourselves. We have also asked them to give you more opportunities to use computers and to make sure you that you always know what you need to do to improve your work.

Thank you again for being so kind to us. We enjoyed watching you learn.

Yours sincerely

James Kidd
Lead Inspector

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