

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Newton Aycliffe

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 114266 |
| Local authority | Durham |
| Inspection number | 378828 |
| Inspection dates | 21–22 June 2012 |
| Lead inspector | Frank Cain |

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 | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 180 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Sean O'Keefe |
| Headteacher | Grainne Duffy |
| Date of previous school inspection | 14 September 2006 |
| School address | Garburn Place Newton Aycliffe DL5 7DE |
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Introduction

Inspection team

Frank Cain
Steven Goldsmith

Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited 12 lessons or parts of lessons taught by seven different teachers and they also looked at pupils' work. They listened to pupils read and talked to them about how much reading they do. Discussions took place with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documents, including those relating to safeguarding, the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation records, minutes of governing body meetings and the school's own assessment data. The inspector analysed questionnaires from pupils and staff as well as those from 48 parents and carers.

Information about the school

St Joseph's is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of girls on roll is much lower than found nationally. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. There is an increasing proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and of those who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. The school meets the current floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school is federated with another local primary school and they share a common governing body. The school has undergone many staffing changes in the last three years.

The school has Healthy Schools status and renewed the Basic Skills Award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

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

Key Findings

- St Joseph's is a good school. It is not outstanding because progress is less strong in Key Stage 1 and mathematics, and behaviour outside the classroom is not consistently good.
- Achievement is good, because pupils make good progress from well below average starting points, and leave with above average overall attainment. Attainment and progress in mathematics are not as good as in English.
- In most lessons teaching is good, enabling pupils to make good progress. This is confirmed by the analysis of pupils' work and talking with pupils about how much they learn in lessons. In the best lessons, the work set is imaginative and children understand what they have to do to succeed. Pupils say they would like more information on how well they are doing and how they might improve their work in mathematics.
- Behaviour in class is usually very positive and pupils' attitudes towards learning are good. This helps pupils to make good progress in their lessons. At break and lunchtime on the playground, where there was less structure, pupils' behaviour is less good.
- The leadership and management of the school, including that of teaching and the management of performance, are good. New appointments have strengthened the leadership team. The governing body has made changes to its structure so that it has a greater impact on the learning and progress that pupils make. While most parents and carers have positive views towards the school, some indicated that they are given information from the school at too short notice.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment, particularly in Key Stage 1 and in mathematics, by:
 - providing more regular mental exercises to enhance pupils' mathematical skills and the speed and accuracy with which they calculate
 - always setting imaginative tasks that fully meet pupils' needs
 - consistently giving pupils more detailed individual feedback on what steps to take next to improve.
- To improve pupils' behaviour outside the classroom, especially on the playground, so that it matches the overall good behaviour evident in classrooms.
- In partnership with parents and carers develop more effective ways of communicating timely information.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the school with well below expected skills and make good progress so that their attainment is just below that expected by the time they enter Year 1. Although pupils' progress is improving in Key Stage 1, it is not as rapid as in the Early Years Foundation Stage or in Key Stage 2. Pupils' consistently good progress through Key Stage 2 enables them to reach above average overall attainment by the end of Year 6. Their attainment and progress in English is stronger than in mathematics.

There is an increasing proportion of children entering the school who speak English as an additional language. Many of these speak very little English but make extremely rapid progress because of the excellent support of parent helpers and teaching assistants. Staff encourage the lower-ability children especially well, for example, to explore 'cause and effect' when observing clockwork fish in a water tub. Different groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, also make good progress. A delighted parent commented that her child talks every day about what she is learning. Inspectors endorse parents' and carers' overall view that their children achieve well.

In the lessons where pupils make the best progress, they listen well and respond to the teacher's high expectations. In a Year 2 drama lesson, pupils were thoughtful and understood well how different characters in a story felt. In an art and design lesson, in included pupils from Year 2 to Year 6, where the teaching was particularly good, pupils were fascinated by the 'still life' pictures of fruit shown to them, and enjoyed arranging the fruit in different ways to make a pleasing picture.

Pupils make good progress in improving their reading skills throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in reading is average and by the end of Year 6 it is above average. Pupils are keen readers and they read confidently, breaking down words so that they can say them easily. Weaker readers are quickly identified and well targeted support is successfully put in place to enable them to catch up. Pupils keep a log of the

books they read and one pupil said he liked reading because, 'I can use my imagination more.'

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers, as well as pupils, indicate that the teaching in the school is good and inspection evidence confirms this. Pupils rightly say many lessons are fun. Teaching is best in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 2 where pupils make the most progress.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers use the outdoor area effectively to promote children's communication skills. They ask challenging questions of the children that encourage thoughtful answers. Teachers make good use of role play to promote social development and are good role models for children's social development. Children are encouraged to cooperate and they take turns when using equipment.

Older pupils are provided with rich experiences throughout the curriculum, often of a practical nature and which capture their interest. Tasks are adapted well to pupils of different abilities, allowing all pupils to achieve success as well as enjoying the lesson. As a result of work tailored to pupils' ability, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs learn well. They are supported effectively by teaching assistants, who guide and show things to pupils, rather than doing it for them. Regular, well-focused lessons on how to sound out letters and words (phonics) are taught effectively by both teachers and support staff. This ensures pupils' good progress in reading. However, in mental mathematics the same intensity is less in evidence.

Although pupils' work is marked regularly and helps pupils to achieve particularly well in English, pupils confirm that they would appreciate more detailed feedback on how to improve their mathematical skills. In Key Stage 1, the tasks set are sometimes less imaginative and not as closely matched to pupils' needs as in other key stages.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Inspection findings support the view of the majority of parents and carers who think their children are safe in school and that behaviour in class is typically good. Some pupils, parents and carers indicated that there are some problems with types of bullying. This, pupils pointed out, was mostly in the form of name-calling, not in class, but on the playground. Pupils are aware of different forms of bullying and why it might take place. They feel that issues involving physical bullying are very rare and that they can turn to a member of staff if it does occur. The school carefully records incidents of poor behaviour.

In class, pupils are generally well behaved and they are helpful to and considerate of others. Their involvement and engagement in lessons, as indicated by the good progress they make over time, is clear evidence of their positive attitude towards learning. Pupils are polite towards each other in class saying, 'excuse me' when moving around the room. Staff manage pupils' behaviour well, and from the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards actively model good behaviour. In the dining hall and when pupils move about the school they are generally thoughtful of others.

Pupils are well aware of safety issues and how to keep themselves safe. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are aware that there is a nest of bees close by and know not to

go too close. A child in the construction area took off his toy safety goggles when putting blocks into place. When asked why, he said, 'I don't need them for this job...it's safer.' Pupils are particularly well informed about the dangers associated with using computers and mobile phones. Attendance is average and improving.

Leadership and management

Professional development for teachers is good, as it is primarily focused on areas identified by the school for improvement. Leaders rigorously review how effectively teachers meet the targets set to improve their performance. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially with regard to the outdoor area. The effectiveness of leadership and management has been enhanced by the federation arrangement, joint training has helped to improve the quality of teaching and having a joint governing body has brought increased expertise to governance.

Members of the governing body have a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The governing body challenges the school's performance rigorously. It has strengthened leadership of teaching and learning by establishing links between individual governors and specific subject areas, which allows members to have a clearer view of the quality of teaching and of pupils' progress. The governing body ensures that safeguarding arrangements meet current statutory requirements. Visitors are monitored well and badged on entry and the pupils confirm that the site is very secure. While the majority of parents and carers support the school, some are concerned that they are often given information at very short notice.

There are opportunities for cross-curricular work and topics are used effectively to harness pupils' enthusiasm and interest across all year groups. Pupils write enthusiastically about the popular visits out of school, for example, to farms, museums and the seaside. The well-liked activities held on Thursday afternoons are open for all pupils, include activities such as art, computing and indoor cricket. The curriculum provides pupils with many opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Pupils 'adopt' countries to study and they responded extremely well to the disaster in Japan. They instigated fundraising and presented the money to managers from the local car factory for distribution.

Leaders and managers effectively promote equality of opportunity. Their aim to tackle discrimination rigorously is satisfactorily achieved because they have yet to fully eliminate some name-calling on the playground. Those pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are catered for well and so make good progress.

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

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|----------------------------|---|
| 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.



25 June 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School,
Newton Aycliffe DL5 7DE**

I want to thank all of you for the extremely friendly welcome that you gave us when we inspected your school. We found the time we spent talking with you, your teachers and other adults extremely enjoyable and rewarding. You go to a good school. We were impressed by your keenness to learn. You make good progress and the standard of your work, by the time you leave in Year 6, is above that of pupils in most other schools, because you are taught well. Some of you said that you would like more advice in how you could improve your work in mathematics and we agree with this.

The school is well led and managed. Most of you feel safe and secure and we found that behaviour was usually good in lessons but not always so in the playground. The majority of you said that staff dealt quickly with any cases where behaviour was a problem.

In order to help you make even better progress and to improve the school further, we have asked the leaders, teachers and the governing body to:

- spend more time helping you to understand how well you are getting on with your work
- improve your skills in mathematics, especially by giving you more practice in mental mathematics
- improve some of your behaviour when you are on the playground.

I am sure you will all want to help make your school better by working hard and playing together well and respecting others.

Yours sincerely

Frank Cain
Lead inspector

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