



St Joseph's RC Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106254
LEA Tameside
Inspection number 277520
Inspection dates 12 July 2006 to 13 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Robert Robinson CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Market Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Mossley
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire OL5 0ES
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01457 832360
Number on roll	134	Fax number	01457 832360
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Michael Fleming
Date of previous inspection	4 December 2000	Headteacher	Mrs S Partington

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. Almost all children are of White British heritage. Children attending the school come from mixed socio-economic areas. Attainment on entry to the Nursery varies from year to year though it is generally about average. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'I would recommend this school to anyone'. 'A great place to be educated'. 'An excellent school. highly motivated staff'. These parental comments sum up parents' highly positive view of the school. They also support the inspection findings that this is an outstanding school. The school's evaluation that it is good is far too modest. Standards are high and children achieve very well. This is because the leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff are outstanding.

The quality of teaching is outstanding because it consistently enables children to make very good progress in their learning. The curriculum is effective with a strong emphasis on developing children's basic skills with very good enrichment through visits, visitors and out of school activities. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good, although the accommodation limits outdoor education in the Nursery and Reception. Children's personal development is outstanding. Children really enjoy coming to school and they respond very well to the good care, guidance and support they receive. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. The school provides excellent value for money. It has improved since the last inspection and has the capacity to continue to do so because of the strengths in the leadership and management.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the accommodation for children in the Nursery and Reception.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The achievement of all groups of children is outstanding. Standards in Year 6 and Year 2 are significantly above average, as has been the case since the last inspection.

Children make very good progress because the school is led and managed exceptionally well.

Attainment on entry to the Nursery varies from year to year because of the small number of children in each age group. Generally standards on entry are about average. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and reach at least expected levels in all the areas of learning by the end of Reception.

In Years 1 and 2, children build well on their previous learning. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average as was the case in the national tests in 2005. In Years 3 to 6, children make very good progress so that they attain highly in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. In the 2005 national tests, standards were above average. Standards of the present group of children in Year 6 are exceptionally high in each of these subjects. Results of the 2006 national tests show that all pupils, including children previously identified as having learning difficulties, gained the level expected of their age in English, mathematics and science and a very

high proportion achieved the higher level. The school's very demanding targets for these children were exceeded.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Behaviour is excellent. Children enjoy learning, attend regularly, work extremely well together and take great pride in their school and each other. Children are very well mannered and polite. They are confident and constructively and willingly express their opinions. The school council consider that St Joseph's is 'a happy and safe place where education is good'. Relationships between children and also with staff are excellent. Children gain a good understanding of their own and other cultures. Their views are actively sought and acted upon. Older children take on responsibilities to help in the smooth running of the school and show great care and consideration for others. For example, they take turns to be playground prefects and look after younger children. Children appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular clubs. They are proud of their sporting achievement and the number of cups and trophies they have won. Children know how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They are very well prepared for future learning because of their very good acquisition of basic skills and their outstanding attitudes to learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching in the lessons seen was consistently good or better leading to children making outstanding progress during the time they are at the school. Lessons are planned very well and the organisation of learning is most effective. Very good support is provided to all children. Teaching assistants help children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities very well to take a full part in lessons. Teachers and other staff manage children very well and, as a result, they are extremely well behaved. Children are very responsive and keen to succeed, particularly in challenging investigations. Literacy skills are practised well in other subjects. Information and communication technology, such as the use of interactive whiteboards and classroom computers, enhances interest in learning and speeds up progress. Teachers' quick-fire questioning ensures a brisk pace of learning. Very good relationships between children and teachers encourage children to answer confidently. Occasionally, children work unnecessarily in gender groups.

The marking of children's work is thorough and clearly celebrates good achievement and suggests how they can improve. The introduction of individual targets in writing has benefited children's learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum effectively meets the needs and promotes the interest of all children. A strong emphasis is given to developing literacy and numeracy as well as skills in information and communication technology. Topics linked to art and design, design and technology, geography and history enrich enjoyment of learning. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good as the curriculum is carefully planned to develop children's skills in all areas of learning. Best possible use is made of the inadequate outdoor area. The needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are met very well, resulting in many catching up and reaching nationally expected standards by the end of Year 6. The curriculum is enriched by visitors and educational visits, including a residential, as well as by a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Children's maturity and understanding of healthy lifestyles are developed well through effective emphasis on personal, social and emotional development and citizenship education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support for children are good. Child protection procedures are robust and all members of staff receive regular training. Risk assessments ensure that health and safety matters are generally well organised. Members of staff know the children very well so pastoral guidance is very effective. Good systems are in place to monitor children's academic progress throughout the school. The tracking of children's progress is thorough from entry to the Nursery to the end of Year 6. Targets are set for individuals and these are shared with children and parents. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified at an early stage and their progress is monitored closely. Links with outside agencies are very effective, especially for those children with disabilities. Children state they feel safe and happy in school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership and management of the headteacher and other senior staff are outstanding. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work closely together to provide the best possible education for the children. The headteacher has built a high performing team and monitors their performance closely. Members of staff new to the school are inducted very well. The deputy headteacher shows a very good example to others in the quality of his teaching and his commitment to out of school activities. Senior managers constantly strive to improve provision at the school. Their evaluation of the school's performance is well thought out and reasonably accurate. Judgements are modest because the senior management do not sit back on their laurels but seek to do better. For example, in the 2005 national tests, although standards in English were significantly above average, senior managers were not satisfied with the results in writing. An action plan was prepared and the English coordinator and deputy

headteacher sought out suitable training to gain additional help to improve the teaching of writing. Following the training, the information was passed on to other staff and an action plan agreed. The initiatives were highly successful, resulting in much higher standards in the recent national tests.

Governance is good. The governors are kept very well informed about all aspects of the school. Some governors work alongside staff to develop their understanding of the school. Others assist staff by organising extra-curricular activities such as a French club. They have recognised the need for further training on their roles and responsibilities following significant changes of governors. They are involved actively in school improvement planning such as developing the outdoor facilities for children in the Foundation Stage.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I enjoyed my visit and I want to share with you what I think about your school.

What we liked most about your school

- You are taught very well so that you make very good progress in your learning and achieve high standards.
- You are very polite and friendly.
- You behave extremely well and work hard in lessons and all get on so well together.
- You really enjoy school.
- The headteacher, staff and governors look after you well and know how to make your school better.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Improve the outdoor area for children in the Nursery and Reception.

I appreciated talking to you about your work and watching you learn. I wish you well for the future.