



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106944
LEA Rotherham
Inspection number 277666
Inspection dates 3 July 2006 to 4 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Jane Hughes CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Green Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Rawmarsh
Age range of pupils	5 to 11		Rotherham, South Yorkshire S62 6JY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01709 710270
Number on roll	198	Fax number	01709 719272
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Fr K O'Connell
Date of previous inspection	22 January 2001	Headteacher	Mrs C Battersby

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school within the Diocese of Hallam. A larger than average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals or has a statement of special educational need. A smaller than average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, come from minority ethnic groups or speak a language other than English. The school has achieved the following awards: Active Mark Gold (2004); and the Achievement Award (2001, 2002).

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. It provides good value for money. Inspectors agree with aspects of the school's own evaluation but judge it more effective and to have stronger teaching, learning and leadership than the school's more modest judgements. Standards by Year 6 are significantly higher than average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils achieve well, particularly so in English by Year 6, because teaching is strong with some outstanding practice. However, younger pupils do not do as well in writing, nor do older pupils in mathematics at the higher levels. Quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good, although the outdoor area is very cramped. This limits learning experiences for Reception children. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Parents say that their children thoroughly enjoy school. Most parents are very supportive. Nevertheless, a minority refuse to bring their children to school regularly and this slows their learning. Elements of spirituality shine through the school. Pupils write, 'school is a lovely place to be'. The rich curriculum inspires pupils' curiosity and encourages them to be active learners. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive skilled help and make good progress. There is all-embracing care for pupils, coupled with effective support and guidance. Even so, pupils do not always have a clear understanding of what they need to do next to improve their work. Partnerships with other organisations are first class. This is a happy school with the 'Every Child Matters' vision at its heart. Governors play an effective role in the school which has improved well since the last inspection and shows good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

Focus on:

- persuading even more parents to bring their children to school regularly so they do not miss important learning
- raising standards in writing, particularly in Key Stage 1, and in mathematics at the higher levels in Key Stage 2
- ensuring a consistent approach to setting individual targets for pupils so they are clear about how to improve their work
- improving outdoor play provision for Reception children so they can regularly access all outside areas of learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. Most arrive with some experience of nursery education and with skills broadly similar to those expected for their age, although lower in communication, language and literacy. They achieve well in the Foundation Stage, particularly in terms of their language, social and creative skills. By Year 6, pupils' attainment is much higher than average. Standards in English are particularly high and reflect pupils' strong determination to meet daily challenges given by teachers. Pupils make particularly

impressive strides in some aspects of their learning. For instance, they made significantly faster than average progress in English in 2005 and the school was in the top 5% of schools nationally for progress in English. The school is less successful in guiding more pupils to reach higher levels in mathematics in Key Stage 2, a recognised area for development. Although the standards pupils reach by Year 2 are just above average in reading, and significantly so in mathematics, standards in writing have been well below average for two years. The school has maintained a clear focus on improving writing and increasing pupils' enjoyment of English generally. This is slowly improving attainment and achievement as seen in current work and this year's assessment results. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those with particular gifts and talents, and minority ethnic groups achieve equally well because the school offers them skilled support from teaching assistants and outside specialists.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good with some outstanding elements. Parents say 'children love coming to school', as reflected in the regular attendance of many. However, despite sterling efforts from mentors and the local authority, some parents still refuse to bring their children to school regularly. Pupils are fiercely proud of their school, saying it is friendly with little bullying. Older pupils eagerly describe the physical and social challenges they faced during a residential trip to Filey. There are some striking examples of pupils' spiritual development. One commented, 'this is a very calm and peaceful school'. Pupils show sensitivity to others, aided by strong personal, social and health education. They clearly understand how to keep safe and know the benefits of healthy diets and regular exercise. Confident when speaking to an audience, they know their opinions are valued. Pupils have some opportunities to take responsibility and influence school life, although there is no school council. Reward schemes provide just the right incentives for these courteous pupils to behave beautifully. They know school is helping them to become useful citizens - academically, socially and spiritually. Older pupils organise sports day, learning to work together. Younger pupils mature quickly and mix freely with older pupils who look after them so well.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good; some features are outstanding. Pupils make good progress because teachers plan lessons carefully and pupils are given clear guidance on what is expected of them. Challenging teaching helps pupils to develop into confident learners, keen to do their best. Imaginative activities reinforce pupils' learning. For example, Year 4 pupils acted a scene where Henry VIII dispatched Catherine Howard with great speed and relish! An excited group of Reception children 'hunted' mini beasts, complete with rucksacks, sun hats and 'policemen's spy glasses'.

Outstanding teacher explanations and instructions characterise Year 6 lessons. Some, more ordinary, lessons offer a slower pace and lower levels of challenge. Opportunities are missed for pupils to assess their own and each other's work and to develop a greater understanding of the next steps they need to take in order to progress. The school recognises this as an area for development. There are examples of detailed marking in pupils' books but these good practices are not consistent throughout the school. Teaching assistants contribute effectively to the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in supporting the learning of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The good teaching is very firmly rooted in supportive relations between staff and pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum embraces the principles of 'excellence and enjoyment' and promotes pupils' health and safety well. The school has reviewed curriculum provision to develop closer links between subjects. There is good provision in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) and skills are taught progressively. Pupils have many opportunities for games and sport in school time and as extra-curricular activities. The school has achieved the Sport England Gold Active Mark and is working towards a Healthy Schools award. The world of work is brought into classrooms by visitors and through visits out-of-school. Curriculum provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and these pupils are well supported. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned for each area of learning. Great attention is given to providing interesting activities to extend young children's knowledge and understanding. Facilities for learning outdoors are limited and this significantly restricts the range of activities continuously on offer through the school day.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good with some outstanding elements. Pupils feel safe and parents say their children are 'well nurtured, well educated and very well supported'. There are first class opportunities for vulnerable pupils to seek guidance. Pupils who are experiencing change in their lives have the 'rainbow group' for sharing feelings and developing self-confidence. 'Cook and eat' sessions teach pupils essential life-skills and teamwork. Pupils who consistently work hard and behave well are rewarded through the 'always club', a well-loved incentive. Close links with other schools help pupils settle in or move on with minimal anxiety. Mentors encourage regular attendance and cement firm links with parents. The school tracks pupils' development carefully, although guidance about academic progress lacks consistency and is under review. Systems to ensure the health and safety of pupils, child protection protocols and risk assessments are all in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management are good rather than 'satisfactory' as in the school's judgement. The leadership's written view of the school equates closely to that held by inspectors, despite differences in some grades. For example, in practice, the headteacher and senior staff know how good teaching is, where the best practice lies and what needs to improve. Senior leaders have brought about significant improvements to pupils' achievement, most notably in English by the end of Year 6. The headteacher works very well with the deputy headteacher and senior staff to maintain the strengths of the school and to stimulate further improvement. Leaders are gradually remedying areas of slower progress, such as higher level mathematics attainment for older pupils. Subject leaders are knowledgeable and increasingly influential as they pass on skills to colleagues and improve the quality of teaching and assessment. The school aims for pupils to achieve their personal best and to become increasingly confident, disciplined and enquiring learners. Undoubtedly, it meets these aims. Staff collect much data to help them track pupils' progress through the school. Even so, the school already recognises that it is not yet slick enough in its use of this data to pinpoint exactly where pupils are and what they need to do next. Parents say that their views are noted and acted upon. Conscientious administration, lunchtime and caretaking staff support the work of the school well. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's priorities and fulfil their statutory duties diligently. They occupy an increasingly prominent profile within school. The charismatic parish priest successfully leads governors in their role as guardians of the school's caring yet challenging ethos.

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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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	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	1	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	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	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 being so friendly and telling us all about your school during our recent visit. We enjoyed listening to all your thoughts. You will see from this letter and our report that we agree with many of them. These are some of the things we liked the best:

- all the adults look after you really well especially with the 'rainbow' group and 'always' club
- you behave beautifully and treat each other with respect
- lessons are generally fun and help you make good progress
- classrooms and corridors are full of eye-catching displays of your work
- teachers and other adults listen carefully to your opinions
- playground pals take their job very seriously and make playtimes more fun.

To help your school as it continues to improve, we have asked the adults to do the following things:

- persuade even more of your parents to bring you to school regularly
- help you improve your writing and help some older pupils to do even better in mathematics so they reach higher levels
- give you clearer targets so you all know how to make your work even better
- make sure Reception children have a better outdoor play area.

You are right to be proud of your school! Carry on working hard and looking after each other so well.