



St Joseph's RC Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111693
LEA Hartlepool
Inspection number 278750
Inspection dates 2 May 2006 to 3 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Graeme Clarke

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Musgrave Street (off Tower Street) Hartlepool TS24 7HT
School category	Voluntary aided	Telephone number	01429 272747
Age range of pupils	3 to 11	Fax number	01429 272747
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Chair of governors	Mr David Milburn
Number on roll	176	Headteacher	Miss Margaret Hodgson
Appropriate authority	The governing body		
Date of previous inspection	1 February 2000		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller than average school serves a wide area of Hartlepool with mainly below average social and economic advantage. Many pupils come from Roman Catholic families and most are of white British heritage. A small minority are from other ethnic backgrounds, mainly the Philippines. An average number take free school meals. An average proportion has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has the Activemark for sport and the Healthy Schools and Gold awards for pupils' personal development.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school that it provides good education. The headteacher's very effective leadership sets an exemplary tone for learning, and promotes the school's Catholic ethos and a clear philosophy that every child does matter. Children begin nursery with abilities that are below average. Most make good and some make excellent progress because of good teaching in the nursery and reception (Foundation Stage), and reach above average standards. Year 2 pupils make good progress and achieve well. Year 6 pupils also make good progress and attain significantly above average standards overall. In 2005, Year 6 English and mathematics results were significantly above average although science results dipped from above average in 2004 to the national average.

Teaching and learning are good overall; although in some satisfactory lessons, pupils are not always told what they have to do to improve their work and this slows their progress to satisfactory. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They really enjoy school. Attendance is average. The school provides excellent care and support and promotes outstandingly good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Taking into account the excellent use of resources, pupils' backgrounds and starting points, their progress, attainment and personal development by Year 6, the school gives good value for money. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and governors accurately gauge most aspects in their evaluation of the school's work, but modestly understate its accomplishments in promoting children's personal development. The school successfully addressed all issues from the last inspection and is now dealing with the concern about standards in science that stemmed from recent national test results. The capacity for further improvement is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the range and quality of opportunities for pupils to learn through practical science.
- Improve the use of lesson objectives in discussion with children so they know what they have learned and where to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Children enter nursery with skills in personal development, communication and mathematical development that are below average. They make really good progress in the Foundation Stage. Many do very well by the time they begin Key Stage 1 to reach above average standards in personal and mathematical development. Their communication skills are closer to average. Children's good progress continues and last summer they achieved well in the Year 2 tests, given their starting points. They attained average standards, although results were below

average at the highest level in writing and mathematics. This is in marked contrast to the significantly above average overall standards attained in the previous two years. Current Year 2 pupils are on course to attain as well as Year 2 pupils did prior to 2005. Pupils make good progress through Key Stage 2. In 2005, overall standards at the end of Year 6 were significantly above average. Although results did not meet the school's challenging targets in mathematics, they did in English and exceeded them for higher attaining pupils in both English and mathematics. Science results fell to average in 2005. The school has identified why pupils did not do as well as hoped and is making the necessary improvements, for example there has been an increase in the amount of practical work. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those for whom English is not their first language, and gifted and talented pupils all make good progress and achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. The school's strong Catholic ethos helps children to develop a keen spiritual awareness. They are reverent during assemblies and wholeheartedly take part in activities that involve prayer and reflection. They behave impeccably. They are thoughtful and considerate of others and show sensitivity and respect for other people's lifestyles. Lunchtime is a pleasant social occasion and many children make healthy choices for their meal. Children feel safe and secure and know who to turn to if they need help. They enjoy school, are eager to learn, take part in extra activities, particularly sport, and gain the many rewards that recognise achievement in all aspects of school life. Attendance has recently fallen to average because of extended holidays taken by a small number of families. Children make an extensive contribution to the wider community through their charitable work, and to their own community through their influential school council. Children's very good basic skills prepare them extremely well for their future economic well-being. They work very well together in teams. They willingly accept responsibilities; for example, older children enjoy acting as 'playground friends' when they play with younger children.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good quality teaching and learning stem from excellent relationships between teachers and children which help to make learning enjoyable and develop self-confidence. Children find learning activities challenging, interesting and fun, and are eager to learn. Teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively together to provide well-directed support, especially for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most lessons are good but some are satisfactory. An outstanding personal development lesson used the story of Helen Keller to develop Year 5's spiritual

awareness. The best lessons are well planned and teachers share the purpose of the lesson with children. However, in the satisfactory lessons teachers do not always make clear to children what they want them to learn. They do not refer sufficiently to purpose of the lesson to help children know how well they are doing and to consolidate their understanding. Teachers mark children's work diligently and give plenty of praise and encouragement, but less often advise on how to improve. Teachers use information about children's performance to set everyone a target for numeracy and literacy each term, but some cannot remember them because they are not often referred to in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good quality curriculum meets children's individual needs and interests, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those pupils whose first language is not English. The one exception is that limited practical experience in science holds back children's progress and standards. The well-planned Foundation Stage curriculum ensures children progress in all areas of learning through both indoor and outdoor activities. A well-planned programme of personal, social and health education supports children's development very strongly. Gifted and talented children take part in a stimulating range of additional, challenging activities. A strong emphasis on developing basic skills, especially writing, and exploiting the new ICT facilities, is leading to improved standards. Innovations, such as 'faith weeks' and art and design and technology links with local industry, enrich children's experience. They benefit from visits and from the many visitors to the school. Children make the most of a wide range of extra-curricular activities, especially in sport and music.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support. A very strong Catholic ethos and a highly committed staff team ensure all children flourish, feel safe and are well looked after. Much is done to help parents to know how they can help their children to learn; for example, through family learning sessions in the new ICT suite. The school makes the very best use of local authority provision to supplement its provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those children whose first language is not English. Individual educational plans are detailed and ensure best use of help available. Effective arrangements help children transferring between classes or schools settle into the next stage of their education.

Underachievement is identified quickly and extra support is provided promptly. All staff are fully trained about child protection procedures. Rigorous attention is paid to risk assessment and ensuring a safe and healthy environment.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management throughout the school play a crucial part in promoting the Catholic ethos and the very positive climate for learning that all children thrive in and enjoy. The headteacher and governors diligently share their perceptions of children's education and all aspects of school life, although governors recognise that their first-hand knowledge of the school is not as full as it could be. Governors work well in partnership with the headteacher to evaluate the school's work, and foundation and key stage leaders enhance this process. Their judgements of the school are mostly accurate, although they modestly understate children's very high standards of personal development. Parents are delighted with the school, especially with their children's progress, and are pleased that their children enjoy school and feel safe. Parents are very satisfied with the reports about their children's performance and the information about school life and administration they receive. One parent's comment encapsulates their views, 'I could not wish to find better. The school and staff have my full confidence and my thanks for all they do'. The headteacher very effectively demonstrates clear leadership, commitment and determination to improve the school more and more. She has ensured progress in dealing with issues to improve achievement recently identified, although more so in reading, writing and mathematics than in practical science. The school has successfully addressed all issues raised at the last inspection, in particular to use assessment information for identifying areas for development and support, and to develop children's ICT skills. The capacity for further improvement is good.

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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?	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	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	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?	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?	1	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	1	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

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To the pupils of:

St Joseph's RC Primary School

Musgrave Street (off Tower Street)

Hartlepool

TS24 7HT

4 May 2006

Dear Children

Mrs Salter-Smith and I really enjoyed visiting your lovely school on Tuesday and Wednesday this week. Thank you for helping us when we came into your classrooms and your assembly to see you at work. You were very polite and helpful. We were very impressed with the work that you do. We especially liked the assembly that Miss Hodgson led. We could see that she made you think, and we also liked the way you took part so enthusiastically when celebrating your successes. We enjoyed talking to you when we met those of you on the school council and some of you at lunchtime. It was great to see how much you enjoy coming to school.

St Joseph's is a good school with a very friendly atmosphere. You are being taught well and you make good progress with your work. You are really well behaved, have good manners, and work hard. You are safe and happy because all the adults in the school look after you very well. Miss Hodgson, the other teachers and all the staff are very proud of you. Miss Hodgson is a very good headteacher. We've talked with the governors and Miss Hodgson and asked them to find ways to give you more practical work in science. We think that with a little more help in science lessons to find out about the world we live in you should know and understand more and be able to get higher marks in science than children got last year. We've also asked your teachers to make the purpose of their lessons and what they expect you to learn clear to you at the beginning, and then to talk with you about what you have learned and how you can do better next time.

With best wishes to you all

Graeme Clarke

(Lead inspector)