



# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Murton

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 114276  
**LEA** Durham  
**Inspection number** 279352  
**Inspection dates** 14 November 2005 to 15 November 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Delia Hiscock

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Church Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Murton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Seaham, County Durham
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 5261795
<b>Number on roll</b>	83	<b>Fax number</b>	0191 5261795
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Father John Clohosey
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 October 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Joanne Jones

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 14 November 2005 - 15 November 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 279352
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

## Description of the school

St Joseph's is a small Catholic primary school in the village of Murton, close to the coastal town of Seaham. It provides full-time education for 83 children between the ages of 4 and 11. The number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is close to the national average. A small proportion of children are eligible for free school meals and a tiny number are from minority ethnic backgrounds. All of these children speak English as their native language. When children start school, their skills are broadly average. The school has gained the Basic Skills and the Active Gold awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Joseph's is a good school that offers good value for money. Parents and pupils think highly of the school. Staff and governors have a good understanding of the school's effectiveness. They accurately judge teaching, the curriculum, care and leadership provided to be good. That said, pupils' personal development is judged to be outstanding; a view confirmed by the inspectors.

The huge improvements since the previous report and in raising standards in mathematics and science in particular, demonstrate the school's determination and capacity to move forward. Partnership work with parents, the church, nearby schools and the community ensures that pupils' well-being is outstanding. This is because of a very positive ethos, good level of care and a profound commitment to include all pupils in the activities provided. Children get off to a good start in Reception because the quality of education provided is successful. Consistently good teaching across the school enables all pupils to achieve well and sometimes, very well.

Inspection agrees with the school that pupils' progress is good. Standards are higher than in similar schools but vary from year to year because of differences in the number of pupils and ranges of ability. Inspection findings point to good achievement overall but there are still some weaknesses in writing. That said, pupils' learning is assessed well, and they have a good grasp of what to do to improve their work.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve further pupils' writing by developing their understanding of the different styles of narrative and the early formation of correct handwriting skills.
- Provide a dedicated outdoor area for Reception to enrich the quality of activities so that children achieve even more.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

All pupils make good progress throughout the school whatever their starting points. Reception children make good progress and achieve all the expected learning goals by the end of the Reception year and some surpass them, particularly in mathematical understanding.

Inspection agrees with the school that infant and junior pupils, including those with high ability, make good progress overall. The challenging targets set for pupils are met and in many instances, exceeded. They achieve standards that are much higher than in similar schools in science because their progress in the subject is outstanding. In many instances, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress from their low starting points. Test results for 2005, (as yet not validated) indicate that standards in Year 6 improved on those attained in 2004 even though no pupils achieved the higher level in writing. That said, indications suggest that standards in English are above average. Teachers are working successfully on improving pupils'

writing because they know that reading is stronger. Pupils' skills for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are developing successfully, preparing them well for their future needs.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Inspection judgement matches the school's view that pupils are very well prepared for life in the future. They thoroughly enjoy coming to school and are eager to join in activities. This is reflected in the much improved attendance rate, now at the national average. Pupils' outstanding behaviour, positive attitudes to work and mature relationships with others, all help create an excellent learning environment in which all thrive and succeed. They are encouraged to adopt a healthy and safe lifestyle and are very aware of the benefits of a healthy diet and exercise. The range of physical activities makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' awareness. Through the endeavours of the school council, pupils are much involved in decision-making about their school life. They are right to be pleased with their contribution to the school, the wider community and to those who struggle in life. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well. Pupils become responsible, confident individuals who care deeply about others. This is because they have the scope to reflect on a variety of issues and learn to think of others in assemblies and class discussions. They are aware of the range of diversity and range of cultures in Britain today and speak with a respect and responsibility beyond their years.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good and matches the school's honest view of itself. Teachers prepare lessons consistently well, plan activities that are carefully matched to the pupils' needs and give clear explanations that help them to learn quickly. Pupils know that they are expected to learn and listen intently. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively to promote learning and engage interest. High expectations of behaviour mean that pupils try their best. Very good use of praise rewards their efforts and boosts their self-esteem. These features mean that pupils build well on their good achievement in each year. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities often achieve very well because they receive very effective guidance and support from teaching assistants. This helps them to overcome any barriers to their learning.

Accurate assessments are made of pupils' progress and information that tells teachers where they are at. The school's new arrangements to track progress are set to inject greater rigour into these systems to ensure that all work consistently to their full capabilities. The best marking informs pupils of what they have done well and how

they can improve their work. Most are clear about their targets for future learning and are expected to improve their work as a result. That said, with pupils' diligent efforts, these features contribute well to their successful learning.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

Inspectors agree with the school's view that it provides a good curriculum that complies with national requirements and effectively meets the needs of its pupils. There are some outstanding features that enrich pupils' experiences and promote enjoyment; these include provision for physical activities, the variety of after school clubs and community involvement. Successful approaches that have improved the curriculum include:

- investigating and problem solving
- learning to speak French
- new experiences in art.

The good emphasis on learning skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT assure that pupils use them well. That said, the school has improved pupils' writing effectively and rightly plans to improve skills even further. The school strives also to address the lack of an outdoor area for Reception so that the scope of experiences can be widened and children might achieve even more than they do. The importance of keeping safe and healthy and making sensible decisions when faced with risks feature highly in discussions. Pupils are keen to get involved in what's on offer. As one child commented: 'it's already as good as it could be'.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The level of care, guidance and support provided for pupils is good. The shared work of teachers, support staff, parents and outside agencies to ensure pupils' well-being is reflected in their good achievement and outstanding personal development. Good assessment arrangements ensure that teachers keep an eye on pupils' academic and personal progress. Pupils feel they are well supported in their learning and most know what they need to learn next. Safety in school is important and any pupil who has learning difficulties and/or disabilities, has a worry, or is vulnerable, is supported exceptionally well. Pupils know who to turn to. They feel valued by all staff. Child protection procedures and risk assessments are successfully applied by all staff. In fact, all Year 6 pupils were unanimous in commenting: 'there is no bullying in the school. If it happened we would help them'. This is because pupils have the opportunities to express their views, take responsibility and make decisions about their school community.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's view of itself that leadership and management are good. The headteacher has built an effective team and conditions for learning in which pupils thrive and achieve well. Equality of opportunity is central to the work of the school. There are valuable links with parents, other schools and the community. Above all, the school 'family' shares common values and has high expectations. This valuable support for pupils expands the expertise the school can draw upon to enrich learning. The school's evaluation of itself is honest and has taken good account of the views of pupils, parents and the local authority.

Governors carry out their responsibilities with commitment and diligence. Staff training is linked to priorities in the school improvement plan and the whole school pulls together to improve and support each other where needed. This is why standards have been sustained. Writing and assessment continue to improve even further. Success in achieving improvement is all the better for the team spirit in place. The successful management team promotes pupils' personal development and well-being very successfully. These features illustrate the school's strong commitment to improving performance and reflect the school's good capacity to move forward. Management acknowledge that there is more to do to develop writing and to provide an outdoor area for Reception children to get them off to an even better start than the good one they have now.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	1	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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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16 November 2005

Dear Children

As you know, I visited last week to find out if your school is giving you the education that you should receive.

Thank you very much for welcoming me to your school so warmly. I really enjoyed talking with you, finding out about all the things that you like most and seeing your work. I am delighted to tell you that I have come to the judgement that you have a good school. There are some things that I particularly liked. These are:

the good teaching and the way that you are very hard working in lessons

the way you enjoy learning so much

the excellent way the school helps you to become mature and responsible youngsters who think a lot about others

the way you are always trying to improve your writing

your excellent behaviour and kindness towards each other and your teachers.

I would like to tell you what I have asked your teachers to improve, to make your school even better for you:

your teachers are pleased with the way that you are improving your writing. Now I would like them to help you to use some of the exciting ways that authors write different kinds of stories. You can help by spotting the features that make up adventures, ghost stories, fairy tales and lots more. This would help the teachers to plan your work for you

I have also asked the school to carry out their plans to build a special outdoor area for Reception children so that they can explore lots of new experiences for themselves.

Thank you so much for helping me with the inspection of your school. I hope that you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make St Joseph's a good place to be.

Yours sincerely

Delia Hiscock

Lead Inspector for your school

Annex B