

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106944
Local Authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	324493
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Andrew Clark

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	201
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr K O'Connell
Headteacher	Mrs C Battersby
Date of previous school inspection	3 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Green Lane Rawmarsh Rotherham South Yorkshire S62 6JY

Age group	5–11
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2009
Inspection number	324493

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. It serves an area of significant social and economic disadvantage and the percentage of pupils eligible to a free school meal is well above average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds with a small percentage from African and Asian families. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average.

The number of pupils on roll has risen since the last inspection following the closure of a nearby school. Half the teaching staff, including members of the senior leadership team, are new to the school.

The school has achieved Basic Skills Quality Mark, Activemark Gold and a Healthy Schools award.

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 and improving school which has undergone a period of some significant change. Staff are fully committed to promoting all aspects of pupils' personal development. 'My child can't get to school quick enough', is typical of the views expressed by many parents. Pupils' achievement is good because the pupils are taught well and are now set challenging targets. The headteacher and her deputy headteacher provide a clear vision and all-encompassing direction for the school and self-evaluation is good.

Children start Reception with skills that are well below those typical of children their age, and particularly low in early communication, language and numeracy. They leave Year 6 with standards which are average. Achievement is good throughout each stage. The school has worked hard to improve the systems of tracking pupils' progress and setting them targets since the last inspection, and this has helped the more able pupils to make better progress. Their progress is good but would be even better if they were given more opportunities to take the initiative in their learning. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is particularly good. They often make more progress than anticipated towards challenging targets because of the high expectations and good levels of training of all who work with them and also because of the school's inclusive ethos. The small percentage of pupils with English as an additional language achieve well.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good with outstanding features. Their behaviour is exceptional and there have been no exclusions. Pupils feel safe, respected and free from bullying. They enjoy school and attendance levels are average. Pupils keep physically fit through physical education lessons and the school has been successful in several inter-school team events. Their understanding of healthy living is good. Pupils make an outstandingly positive contribution to the local community through many fundraising, recycling community projects and church linked activities. They develop a good knowledge of other cultures through links with Goa and a well-planned programme for religious education and personal development.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. It ranges from satisfactory to outstanding. Relationships and the management of behaviour are excellent. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT), games and role-play to engage and inform pupils. Occasionally, the work is not challenging enough for the most able pupils. Highly trained teaching assistants make a strong contribution to all pupils' learning. The curriculum is good with outstanding features such as provision for personal development and planning for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Increasingly good links are made between subjects to make learning relevant, but opportunities are not always taken to embed skills learned in literacy and numeracy in other subjects. Care, guidance and support are good. The procedures to identify and support the most vulnerable pupils are outstanding and underpin their strong progress. High standards of pastoral care and the strong caring ethos contribute very effectively to pupils' personal development. The quality of marking is now good and pupils are becoming increasingly involved in assessing and improving their own work. However, this is not consistent enough to ensure the highest standards are consistently reached.

Leadership and management are good. The school acted promptly to address many of the issues from the last inspection despite the changes following the merger with another school. Middle managers have a good impact on development and school improvements are well planned. The governing body contributes significantly to the positive and caring ethos and provides critical

support. There is a strong family ethos with mutual respect being a major feature of the school community. This establishes a good basis from which the school has developed its contribution to community cohesion in the local community and in the wider world. There are suitable plans to further develop wider aspects. The promotion of equal opportunities is good as it supports the most vulnerable pupils very well and combats any gender stereotyping. The school has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision is good and helps children to achieve well. Children's skills on entry to the Reception (Foundation Stage 2) are well below those typical of children their age, especially for language, literacy and mathematics. By time they enter Year 1, a significantly increasing proportion are working at the expected levels, although still below average. Their personal and social development is very good. There is a trend of improving standards. Children's skills are improving well because of focused systems to track progress and set targets, and to teach letters and sounds and problem solving. Good teaching enables children to make progress in most areas of learning. Children settle happily and get off to a good start because of the wide range of interesting activities and the warm welcome provided by staff. There is a buzz of learning throughout the sessions. All staff have high expectations, provide well planned and purposeful activities and promote good social skills. As a result, children gain positive attitudes to learning and rapidly develop confidence. The stimulating indoor areas encourage children to make choices and learn to share. There has been very good improvement to outdoor provision, although its use to promote all areas of learning is still developing. Leadership is good. Assessments are accurate and used well to plan future learning. Children's welfare is promoted very well and there are very good links with parents who particularly appreciate the opportunities for 'family learning' sessions and 'stay and play' at the start of each day.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the skills pupils learn in literacy and numeracy lessons are practised and developed through all subjects.
- Give pupils, especially the more able, increased opportunities to use their initiative in their learning and assess and improve their own work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter Year 1 with skills which are below age expectations. By Year 2, standards are closer to, although still below average and by Year 6 they are average. The vast majority of pupils achieve well and reach the challenging targets set for them. There was a decline in results of national assessments by Year 2, particularly in writing in 2008. This was largely a reflection of a significant number of pupils who joined the class during the year and the vast majority of pupils achieved well against their earlier learning. The school has taken effective steps to improve the teaching of writing. However, it does not make enough use of the opportunities to reinforce writing or numeracy skills when teaching other subjects. There has been a good trend of improvement in standards by Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good and sometimes outstanding gains towards their goals because of high quality support and the very inclusive ethos of the school. However, pupils are not involved enough in assessing

and improving their own work and this, sometimes, limits the more able pupils from making as much progress as they could.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. School provides many opportunities for calm reflection alongside artistic and technological experiences which encourage pupils to develop high levels of self-awareness and curiosity about the world around them. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. Their understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and the part that a balanced diet and regular exercise plays in their growth and development is good as is their understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They develop a very good awareness of the dangers of drugs and alcohol through role-play and other activities. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is first-rate. Their positive contribution is outstanding. Pupils readily take on a very wide range of responsibilities from regular lunch and register duties to taking care of younger children, acting as school and class councillors, 'road safety', 'travel plan officers' and playground buddies. They are involved in 'Street Pride' initiatives to keep their local area tidy and several recycling activities. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is in line with the national average.

Relationships are outstanding with pupils showing great respect for each other regardless of gender or ability. Pupils feel respected and cared for. They have a good understanding of the school's mission statement, 'Love one another as I have loved you' and strive to fulfil it.

Older pupils demonstrate maturity, very good self-discipline and a strong work ethic, providing role models for younger pupils. Achievement in literacy and numeracy is good. The skills, confidence and increasing independence that pupils develop ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education and for the future in the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. A key strength running through the school is the high expectations for hard work, productivity and accuracy. This leads to good progress in basic skills such as handwriting and spelling in English and calculation skills in mathematics. Teachers make much better use of assessment information to match work closely to pupils' needs. This is particularly so for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities where detailed individual learning plans provide the basis for highly trained and well deployed teaching assistants to support their learning. Teachers effectively share the purpose of lessons with pupils. They increasingly involve them in assessing and improving their own work, although this is not yet consistent enough. Teachers make good use of role-play to bring learning to life. They use ICT as an integral part of learning. On a few occasions, the lessons do not give pupils, especially the more able, enough opportunity to use their initiative and apply the skills they have learned.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

There is a good balance of creative, physical and academic work that promotes pupils' enjoyment and achievement. The provision for learning basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and ICT skills is

good. The school is making increasing links between subjects to make learning relevant and exciting, but planning in all subjects to ensure that literacy and numeracy skills are reinforced is not developed well enough. The pupils have the opportunity to learn French, which helps their cultural and international understanding. The curriculum promotes pupils' cultural learning well through links to Goa and activities in the local community. The performing arts club provides pupils with a chance to showcase new skills to family and friends. Other extra-curricular activities are well attended and, although a range of activities has been offered, pupils prefer to take up the sporting opportunities. Residential and other visits promote initiative and team building and further build on the confidence and personal development of the pupils. The curriculum supports the development of pupils' self-confidence and is well adapted to the individual needs of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Everyone in school is fully committed to ensuring pupils are safe, happy and ready to learn. The school has an holistic approach to providing care, guidance and support which effectively promotes very good personal development. Systems for ensuring the health, safety and well-being of pupils meet statutory safeguarding requirements. There is exceptional pastoral care, especially for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and other vulnerable pupils because of the very good knowledge all staff have of their needs and the quick responses to pupils' concerns. The pupils also benefit from the extended care the school offers through its breakfast and after- school club.

Teaching assistants, volunteers and input from the Rotherham Learning Support Service are effectively deployed and provide pupils with skilled support and guidance.

The tracking of pupils' progress has improved well since the last inspection and provides the basis for good guidance for most pupils to improve their work. However, teachers do not always inform more able pupils precisely enough on what they can do to assess and improve their own work. Parents value the close relationship and open nature of the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, her deputy headteacher and the governing body provide a clear direction for improvement and strong values. These have sustained and improved the school through a period of changing staff, rising numbers and substantial building work. School improvement planning is good and based on increasingly secure processes to monitor and evaluate provision. New members of the senior leadership are beginning to have an impact on development in their areas of responsibility. The school has made good use of national and local projects to improve leadership and develop learning. Very good administrative support contributes to the school's smooth running. There has been a good improvement to systems to set targets and provide challenge to pupils since the last inspection. The governing body provides challenge and support to the school in equal measure and contributes significantly to its all-encompassing ethos. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good with a clear action plan for further improvement. The school's commitment to equality of opportunity is evident in the access pupils of all abilities have to the full range of learning opportunities. Parents are supportive of the school and welcome opportunities to be involved in the community.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Rotherham, S62 6JY

Thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school this week. I would like to tell you about the things we found out about your school.

This is a good and improving school. You make good progress in your lessons and meet your targets. You reach average standards. Some of you could do even better if you were given more opportunities to use your reading, writing and numeracy skills in all subjects and to take more initiative in your learning, especially those of you who find learning easier. Pupils with learning difficulties make especially good progress because of the way they are helped to learn.

Your personal development is good with outstanding features because you are very happy at school and eager to learn. Your behaviour is excellent and you play and work together very happily. You have a good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy, and you take full advantage of the healthy school lunches, fruit snacks and regular strenuous physical activity in physical education. Children in Foundation Stage 2 quickly become independent and confident.

You take many responsibilities and make an outstanding contribution to running the school and to the local community, through the school council, road safety, travel plan and your fundraising for churches and for children in other countries. You enjoy school and are proud of it. You know how to be tolerant and care for others who are different from you. You develop good learning skills so you are well prepared for secondary school.

The headteacher, staff and governing body run the school well. You are well taught and are given many fun things to do in your lessons. There are exciting visits and good sporting activities, in which most of you take part. The staff look after you very well and measure your progress carefully. Your teachers provide good support to help you to improve your work. You could do even better if you were more involved in assessing and improving your own work.

We have asked the school to help you use your reading, writing and numeracy skills more in all subjects. We have also asked them to allow you to assess your own work more and take more initiative in improving it.