

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Brighouse

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107559
Local Authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	324592
Inspection date	16 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Kathryn Dodd

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	249
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	Mr D Godlington
Headteacher	Mrs Mary Hodges
Date of previous school inspection	9 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Finkil Street Hove Edge Brighouse West Yorkshire HD6 2NT

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	16 September 2008
Inspection number	324592

Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' achievement and the standards they reach, particularly in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) and in writing across the school; the quality of the teaching and learning; the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels, particularly in relation to monitoring the school's performance and self-evaluation. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, nationally published assessment data, the school's records of pupils' progress, observations of lessons, breaks and assembly and the school's plans for further improvement. Discussions with pupils, staff and governors were held and questionnaires returned by parents were considered. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Almost all of the pupils at this average sized school are from White British family backgrounds. Most pupils are from the Catholic community in the surrounding villages. Only about one third of pupils who attend the Nursery transfer into the Reception class. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. Although the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is above average. The school has been accredited with a range of awards, including the Healthy Schools Award, Activemark, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Investors in People and the Financial Management Standard.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school has an accurate view of its own effectiveness and provides good value for money. Some aspects are outstanding, such as pupils' personal development and well-being and the quality of education provided in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The way in which every pupil is cared for, nurtured and fully included in all that is on offer is a strength of the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are exceedingly positive. Pupils behave extremely well, show commendable attitudes to learning and speak very knowledgeably about how to keep safe and healthy. Pupils are very confident that, if they have any concerns, there is always someone on hand to help. They state clearly that they thoroughly enjoy school. Older pupils are wonderful role models for the younger ones and delight in helping new starters to settle in.

Pupils of all ages make a strong contribution towards their school and local community, particularly through the church. They talk sensitively about the plight of others less fortunate in communities around the world, and are enthusiastic about their efforts to support them, for example through fundraising. These wonderful personal qualities gives pupils an encouraging platform upon which to develop their academic achievement even further, and prepare them to become confident young adults of tomorrow. Parents express their overwhelming support for the school. They are very confident that their children receive a good quality education in a particularly warm, caring and 'family' environment. Many comment on how this reflects the exceptional leadership of the headteacher, as well as the total commitment and dedication of staff to their children's welfare and achievements.

Enthusiastic teaching, very positive relationships, effective use of computerised whiteboards and the careful and sensitive deployment of skilled teaching assistants all make a strong contribution to pupils' good progress from their varying starting points. Pupils are well cared for and all safeguarding requirements are fully met.

As a result of good teaching and learning and an effective curriculum, between Years 1 and 6, pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress. In recent years, the standards reached in national tests at the end of Year 6 have been above and sometimes well above average. Although teacher assessments show that in 2008 standards were average, pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to reach above average standards. In English, standards in reading exceed those in writing. Although pupils make satisfactory progress in writing, accelerating progress in this subject has become a key focus. Recent changes, such as keeping a closer eye on pupils' progress, greater involvement of pupils in understanding how to improve and a wider range of programmes aimed at boosting their learning, are all contributing to an improving picture. Even so, progress in writing still continues to be hampered because some opportunities for practising writing skills, as part of work in other subjects, are being missed.

Pupils' good overall academic achievement and their outstanding personal development are the result of good quality leadership, management and governance. The headteacher's infectious enthusiasm for ensuring that each individual pupil can achieve his or her best in a particularly safe, warm and inclusive setting, is highly evident. The professionalism, commitment and dedication of all staff make a strong contribution to the school's success and have helped to steer the school successfully through a recent period of staff change. The newly established senior leadership team, governors and other staff are all embracing with enthusiasm

opportunities for professional development and welcome the strength in direction. With a more stable staffing and management structure in place, efforts to establish a clearer, more consistent and effective way of collecting information about pupils' attainment are starting to pay dividends. At present, however, the skills of some staff in using and interpreting this information are still developing and, as a result, the work given to pupils does not always tightly match their varying learning needs. Consequently, pupils' progress can be uneven. Nevertheless, despite working together for only a short period of time, there is a clear sense of common purpose among staff. Everyone shares in the vision for an even brighter future. Highly effective partnerships beyond the school, particularly with parents, contribute to the good quality of education on offer. Improvement priorities, such as raising standards in writing, are well chosen and carefully planned. This, along with the good improvement since the last inspection, demonstrates that there is a good capacity to continue to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

When children start in the Nursery, their skills are broadly typical for their age. The skills for a minority of children are sometimes below average in aspects of their communication and language skills. Exceedingly warm and caring relationships between adults and children, along with the particularly bright, lively and well resourced learning environment, ensure that children quickly develop a real hunger for learning, settle into school routines without difficulty and feel safe. Teachers and support staff work together very closely to find out how well children are progressing. They use their ongoing records particularly well to make sure that the activities and teachers' questioning help children to build securely on what they can already do. Adults make the most of every opportunity to help children to learn to get along well together, talk about their learning, to grow in confidence and to behave really well. As a result, children's personal, social and emotional development is exceptional. The Foundation Stage leader makes a major contribution to improving provision, which has strengthened further since the previous inspection. She, along with a committed, enthusiastic and well established team continually searches out any new opportunities for boosting learning where it is needed most, such as in writing. By the time children start Year 1, they have made outstanding progress, especially in their personal development, and the majority exceed the goals set nationally for their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide increased opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in a range of subjects, so that progress in English, particularly in writing, accelerates.
- Strengthen the use of information about pupils' attainment so that their learning needs are met consistently well across all classes.

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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?	1
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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	1
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, Brighouse, HD6 2NT

Thank you so much for the extremely warm welcome you gave me when I inspected your school. I thoroughly enjoyed my time with you and you helped me to see why you enjoy school so very much. You were all really keen to talk to me and answered my questions very considerately and respectfully. Your behaviour was extremely good and you showed me how mature and sensible you are in your lessons and around school. All the adults care a great deal about every one of you, but you are also very kind and caring towards one another. I was particularly impressed with how well the Year 6 pupils 'buddy' up with Reception children. Not only does this help the new starters quickly to feel very safe in school, but it also helps you to enjoy school even more. You get lots of chances like these to make your school community a happier, safer and healthier place to be. I was also pleased to find out just how much you know about people less fortunate than yourselves in communities around the world. You do a great deal to help them through your fundraising efforts.

Your parents told me just how pleased they are that you attend St Joseph's. I agree with their view that your school is a good school. The standards that you reach at the end of Year 6 are higher than in many other schools. The standards that you reach in reading, however, are higher than they are in writing. This is because the rate at which you get better in your writing is not as fast as it is in reading. Even so, your above average overall standards and your excellent attitudes to learning are the reasons why you are well placed to succeed at secondary school. There are, however, some things that could be even better. This is why I have asked the school to make sure that:

- teachers and other staff use the information they collect about what you know to give you work that is just right for you, so that you all learn as quickly as you can
- you have more chances to practise writing as part of your work in other subjects, so that do you as well in writing as you do in reading.