

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Wetherby

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108020
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	324689
Inspection date	4 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Robert Robinson

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)	224
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	Mrs A Hewison
Headteacher	Mr D Williams
Date of previous school inspection	12 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Barley Fields Road Wetherby West Yorkshire LS22 6PR
Telephone number	01937 582163

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	4 February 2009
Inspection number	324689

Fax number

01937 581924

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The following issues were inspected: pupils' achievement and standards; teaching and learning; and the impact of leadership and management. The inspectors gathered information from lesson observations; examination of pupils' work; responses to parental questionnaires; interviews with staff, pupils and governors; and scrutiny of documents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessment, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized primary school. The socio-economic circumstances of the area are more favourable than average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average as is the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Almost all pupils are White British. A low proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and none of these is at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The school has gained the Activemark and Healthy Schools awards. Substantial changes of staffing have taken place since the previous inspection. The present headteacher took up his appointment in September 2007.

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 provides a good education with good equality of opportunity for all. Pupils' achievement is good as is their personal development, care, guidance and support, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Good leadership and management, good teaching and a well-designed overall curriculum all contribute to pupils' consistently high standards at the end of Year 6.

Pupils' progress, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is good from Years 1 to 6. Standards at the end of Year 2 have been above average in reading, writing and mathematics since the last inspection. Standards at the end of Year 6 are consistently exceptionally high in English, mathematics and science. However, fewer pupils reach the higher level (Level 5) in writing than in reading and in the other core subjects. Good attention is given to developing writing skills in literacy lessons and targets have recently been introduced to challenge pupils. The opportunities to improve writing skills in other subjects are increasing, notably the development of different styles of writing in religious education. Here, open-ended tasks provide very good opportunities for pupils at all levels of ability to extend their writing skills. Other subjects are not planned sufficiently to provide these good writing opportunities on a frequent enough basis. In particular, the written tasks are often not extending sufficiently the writing skills of higher attainers.

In the best lessons, careful planning makes sure the work meets the needs of all pupils and builds well upon their prior learning. Where teaching is satisfactory, the planning is too brief and tasks for higher attaining pupils are not challenging enough. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well. Relationships between pupils and staff are generally good. Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils, particularly in information and communication technology (ICT) and for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The leadership and staff have recently agreed a policy for teaching and learning and this is helping to develop consistent practice throughout the school. The marking of pupils' work has been enhanced and is now linked effectively to pupils' targets. Comments celebrate success and suggest suitable next steps for learning.

The leadership and management team, spearheaded by the headteacher, has moved the school forward rapidly while maintaining high standards. Teamwork is firmly embedded in the school and senior and subject leaders have a good understanding of their roles. However, subject leaders are not consistently including challenging targets in their action plans to ensure progress is as strong as it could be in the non-core subject areas. Governors play their part in the success of the school through using their expertise to support and challenge the leadership. They ensure that the school meets government requirements for safeguarding pupils. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. Links with the local church are strong. The headteacher and staff have developed satisfactory links with local schools and sporting organisations. These are providing additional sporting opportunities for pupils. Links with organisations outside the school are satisfactory. Plans are in place to have closer links with another local authority school with a high proportion of pupils of minority ethnic backgrounds to extend pupils' cultural awareness and understanding of different national communities. International links are being forged, such as with an African school, though these are presently at an early stage of development.

Parents are highly delighted with all aspects of the school's work. Their aspirations for their children are met. They are particularly impressed by recent improvements in communications and the enhanced sporting and after-school activities. Typical comments include, 'We are happy with St Joseph's and the very caring ethos and practice,' and, 'Great communications which are very much appreciated'. The school has good capacity to maintain its track record of high standards because of the recent upgrading of management systems, its sustained improvement since the previous inspection, the commitment of the leadership and staff, and the strong support of pupils and parents.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start to schooling in the Early Years Foundation Stage because the provision, teaching and leadership are good. Children's welfare needs are met well. They are happy and confident; this is appreciated by parents. In the Nursery, children quickly gain an understanding of school routines. Good links with parents ensure that induction procedures are effective. From an above average starting point children achieve well. Children's skills and knowledge by the end of the Reception year are higher than normally expected, particularly in communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development. In most sessions, there is an appropriate balance of teacher-led and child-initiated activities. Lessons are planned well. Occasionally, opportunities to quicken the learning of higher attaining children are missed because too much time is spent teaching the whole class together, particularly in aspects of communication, language and literacy. A warm, caring, bright and stimulating learning environment contributes to children's good progress. The Reception facilities have been improved since the last inspection. The classroom has been refurbished and leadership and staff are planning to enhance the provision through stimulating and attractive role play areas and displays. Increasingly, staff are extending the linking of indoor learning with that outdoors. Effective systems for checking children's attainments ensure that next steps for learning are well planned. Children behave well and are keen to learn. They are well prepared for the next phase of education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that written tasks for the more able pupils challenge and extend their writing skills.
- Increase the responsibility of subject leaders for ensuring that subject planning includes challenging targets to improve progress even more in all areas of learning

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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?	3
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	1
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	2
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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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	3
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?	3
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**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. St Joseph's gives you a good education. Your headteacher has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve your school. The school is run well by the headteacher, staff and governors. The school cares for you well.

Your achievement is good because you are taught well. You get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. You achieve well and attain skills and knowledge higher than expected. In Years 1 to 6 you make good progress. Standards by the end of Year 6 are consistently well above average in English, mathematics and science. However, the proportion of you reaching Level 5 in writing is lower than in reading and other subjects. I have asked the school to ensure that those of you who are more able are challenged to extend your writing skills.

I was impressed by your good behaviour and interest in lessons. You enjoy learning and appreciate all the school provides. You are particularly pleased with the increased sporting opportunities and extra-curricular clubs.

Your headteacher, staff and governors have done much to improve the school so that it continues to help you reach high standards in English, mathematics and science. Staff and governors are working together as a team. I have asked the school to increase the responsibilities of subject managers to ensure that you progress even more in all areas of learning.

I appreciated talking to you about your work and watching you learn. I trust that you will keep doing your best and working with the headteacher and other staff to help them to continue to improve the school. I wish you well for the future.