

Our Lady and St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106942
Local Authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	336774
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Andrew Clark

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mark Janvier
Headteacher	Mrs Angela Heald
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons and observed seven teachers. The inspectors held meetings with governors, staff, and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including policies, the school improvement plan and an analysis of the school's records of pupils' progress and attainment. The inspection team analysed 106 completed questionnaires from parents and carers, as well as those completed by pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- how well the quality of teaching meets the needs of the more able pupils
- the effectiveness of leadership at all levels in securing improvement.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The vast majority of pupils are White British. The school has achieved Healthy School's Status, Activemark Gold and Global Schools award.

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and over half the teachers were appointed to the school after the last inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It is improving well. The headteacher provides a clear, calm sense of purpose following a period of significant staff change and temporary leadership. The senior staff team are increasingly involved in driving forward improvements and they contribute well to largely accurate self-evaluation. However, they are less effective in monitoring the quality of pupils' learning. The school is well supported by the governing body. Pupils make satisfactory progress and their personal development is good because of the rich curriculum and positive care and guidance they receive. The school recognises the need to more sharply focus its monitoring activities on pupils' learning, in order to further improve the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make. As a result, the school's current capacity to improve is satisfactory.

Children make a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage and then make satisfactory progress to leave Year 6 with average attainment. The progress of more-able pupils is inconsistent because their independent learning skills are not sufficiently developed. Pupils say that they feel safe. Behaviour is good. Pupils participate in a wide range of physical activities before and during the school day and have a good understanding of healthy living. Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is above average. They are confident and mature.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are often imaginative and practical, which pupils enjoy. However, there are inconsistencies in how well teachers use assessment to ensure that work is challenging for all abilities and that pupils know precisely what to aim for during the lesson. Well trained teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning.

The curriculum is well planned to develop pupils' basic skills in relevant and meaningful ways through all subjects. The school works closely with other schools and specialist support agencies to provide good care and guidance, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils. The school has a close partnership with parents and carers, which contributes well to pupils' positive attitudes and many aspects of their learning. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school. 'The headteacher and staff should be very proud of what they have achieved with the pupils. They are like one big happy family,' is very typical of the views parents and carers express.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress of all pupils, by:
 - making better use of assessment to provide precise and challenging learning

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objectives for pupils of all abilities to achieve

- ensure there are opportunities for more able pupils to develop and practise their independent learning skills.
- Improve the effectiveness of senior staff team, by:
 - monitoring more rigorously the quality of pupils' learning in lessons
 - simplifying the 'developing excellence plan' by providing fewer and sharper priorities, so that it is clearer upon which areas all staff should focus their actions.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils are thoughtful and conscientious workers. They set their work out carefully and persevere in completing tasks. However, they do not show enough independence in organising their own work because tasks insufficiently require them to do so. As a result, pupils, especially the more able, do not always make the best progress they could. Attainment in Year 2 and Year 6 is broadly average, although a minority of more-able pupils fail to reach the standards of which they are capable. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the few with English as an additional language, make at least expected progress because of skilled intervention from teaching assistants and programmes that meet their needs well. Pupils make increasing use of a range of strategies to improve their basic skills in English and mathematics, such as 'learning walls' and regular homework. However, pupils are not always clear enough about how to improve their own work.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are well behaved, thoughtful and considerate towards each other. Very careful tracking, which triggers well planned support, significantly helps pupils with identified emotional and social difficulties to control their own behaviour. Pupils have a good understanding of issues facing different faiths and cultures, as a result of effective work in religious and social education and first-hand links with schools in Entebbe in Africa. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy learning. They play a role in interviewing new staff and providing information to the governing body. They have good understanding of how to keep safe in a variety of circumstances and how they can contribute to their own well-being. Pupils' future workplace skills are less well developed aspects, as they do not have enough opportunities to show enterprise or to take the initiative in their work. Pupils make good use of the 'anonymous box,' managed by the school council, to express their concerns.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching observed during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to outstanding, and the school's own monitoring shows an increasing proportion of good teaching. However, the overall quality of teaching is only satisfactory because of inconsistencies in the challenge for pupils of different abilities. In the best lessons, teachers generate excitement and interest through practical tasks, during which pupils solve problems and apply their skills and knowledge imaginatively. In these lessons, teachers share clear and precise objectives for pupils of different abilities, set out clear criteria for success, and use a wide range of strategies to support and challenge all abilities. However, in less effective lessons, teachers do not always make it clear enough to pupils what they are expected to achieve and how to get there. In these lessons, pupils do not have enough opportunities to organise and plan their own work and they are over-directed. Teachers make accurate assessments of pupils' progress, but they do not consistently use this information to ensure that all groups are challenged to make the very best progress they can.

The curriculum is particularly exciting because it has been designed following consultation with pupils, in order to most closely match their interests. Themes and topics often begin with a stimulating visit, or visitors to the school. These create meaningful links between subjects, and well-planned programmes to develop literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils make good use of information and communication

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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technology (ICT) in many aspects of their work. This strength has been significantly enhanced by improvements to the building and resources, including a new ICT suite. There is effective tracking of the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and good use is made of specialist staff to support and promote these pupils' needs. This is complemented by the good support given to pupils and their families who are in vulnerable circumstances.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The changes following the last inspection left staff morale low and an imbalance of responsibilities amongst senior staff. The headteacher has instilled a sense of purpose and determination amongst everyone involved in school life, which is increasing the pace of change and ensuring improvement. She is always available to staff and parents. The senior staff team is organised and increasingly efficient. The school is supported well by the governing body. It took a leading role in creating effective policies to underpin much of the school's work, enabling the headteacher to focus on improving the quality of education. However, there are currently too many priorities within the 'developing excellence plan', which limits its effectiveness. Lessons, progress data and pupils' work are regularly observed and analysed for a wide range of purposes by staff and governors. However, lesson observations tend to focus too much on the activity of teachers, rather than the impact on pupils' learning.

Health and safety is managed well and there are strong procedures for safeguarding pupils. The school is proactive in breaking down barriers to learning, especially for the most vulnerable pupils, ensuring satisfactory equality of opportunity. The school has an effective action plan for developing community cohesion, based on strong partnerships with local schools and good global links. Pupils' understanding of sustainability is well established. The governors provide robust financial management and fulfil their statutory requirements. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start and develop a thirst for learning. There are good systems to support children and their parents and carers when they first start nursery that help children settle in quickly. Good welfare arrangements and very positive relationships ensure that children feel safe and secure. Imaginative and fun-filled activities help children to make particularly good progress in early reading and writing. Children are proud of their achievements. They enjoy exploring the wide range of stimulating learning activities, both indoors and out, often carrying out their own investigations and learning how to solve problems. The school is aware of the need to ensure that Reception children have more access to physical activities outside than they do at present. Adult-led group sessions are well planned to move children on in their learning.

Staff skilfully intervene to boost children's self-esteem, support their language development and to get them thinking hard. The committed staff team have clear roles and are constantly seeking ways to improve provision further. As a result, children grow in confidence and make good progress. There is a positive trend of improving standards and, as a result, overall children enter Year 1 with average skills and are well prepared for future learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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Views of parents and carers

Over half the families replied to the questionnaire seeking their views. They are almost wholly supportive of the school's work and feel they are well informed and the school involves them well in children's learning. They particularly comment on the useful daily communication and reading diaries. A very small minority of parents and carers have concerns about their child's progress, how to support them with their learning and the effectiveness of leadership and management. The inspection team largely agrees with parents' and carers' positive views, but also the inspection outcomes proportionately reflect their concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Our Lady and St Joseph's Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 106 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 178 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	58	38	36	5	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	69	65	34	32	3	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	59	56	38	36	5	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	62	58	38	36	5	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	66	62	36	34	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	60	57	37	35	7	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	69	65	33	31	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	62	58	39	37	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	59	56	43	41	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	51	48	51	48	2	2	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	51	48	45	42	7	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	55	52	42	40	5	5	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	70	66	33	31	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



8 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady and St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Rotherham, S63 7HG

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed talking to you. You go to a satisfactory school. You say you feel safe and appreciate the good care that all adults show to you. You told us that many of your lessons are fun and you enjoy the clubs you take part in. You know how to live healthily and take part in many sporting events. You make a good contribution to the way that the school is run through taking on many responsibilities, such as school councillors and helping younger children. You are also very proud of the support you have given to children in Africa, through your fund raising and the letters you have shared.

The headteacher and staff work well together to help you to learn and to make things better for you. They take good care of you. The youngest children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The standard of your work is average and some of you could make even better progress. You study many exciting topics which often start with an enjoyable visit or an interesting visitor. To help your school become even better, I have asked your headteacher and governors to:

- give you more opportunities for you to organise and manage your own work and to, therefore, make even better progress
- make sure that when school leaders observe your lessons they concentrate more on how well you are learning, and also that they have fewer things to try to improve all at once.

You can help by always trying your best and enjoying school.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Andrew Clark

Lead Inspector

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