

St Joseph's Catholic Primary

Inspection report

Unique reference number	112929
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	378608
Inspection dates	26–27 June 2012
Lead inspector	Doris Bell

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	155
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Longden
Headteacher	Paul Scott
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Doris Bell

Additional Inspector

Paul Heery

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team observed seven members of staff during 17 lessons, covering approximately six hours of teaching. As well as observing full or part lessons, inspectors spent time observing sessions where pupils were learning letters and sounds. They also heard pupils read, watched them being taught in small groups and individually, analysed their work, and discussed their learning and school life with them. Meetings were held with senior and middle managers, and representatives of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including: information relating to the attainment and achievement of all groups of pupils, the school improvement plan, governing body minutes, and evidence of monitoring and evaluation. They also spoke to parents and carers, and analysed 60 parental questionnaire responses, together with the responses to the questionnaires returned by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

In this smaller-than-average-sized primary school, the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those for whom English is an additional language, is average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at 'school action plus', or have a statement of special educational needs, is also average.

The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. It has achieved Healthy Schools status, Fair Trade status, the Activemark and the Green Flag Eco award. The school has its own before- and after-school clubs. A privately-run nursery operates on the school site. It is inspected separately.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because weaknesses remain in assessment, including marking, and in some aspects of subject leadership, including the management systems relating to the monitoring of the progress of groups of pupils within and across year groups.
- Pupils achieve well. Attainment has risen to above average overall since the previous inspection. It was better in English than in mathematics in 2011. The school analysed why, took action, and early indications from this year's data are that the pupils have made good progress in both subjects.
- Good teaching and a well-planned curriculum contribute to good progress. However, pupils do not understand the links between their individual targets and class targets, and marking does not help because it rarely shows pupils what they need to do to improve.
- The pupils' good behaviour assists their progress. Pupils enjoy learning, and attendance is above average. They feel very safe in school, and all parents and carers say the school keeps their children safe. Most also agree that behaviour is good. Comments such as, 'This is a good place to be' and, 'The school was always helpful and caring, but now it's alive', are typical of those received.
- Good leadership and management have moved the school on in the past three years, by ensuring that teaching is led well and performance managed effectively. Subject leadership is much improved, but it does not include all aspects of monitoring. The school is meticulous in assessing and tracking the progress of every pupil. However, it does not have a clear enough overview of achievement over time or for different year groups, because it does not collate and record the information sufficiently well to show this. This makes it harder for leaders to identify and address issues rapidly.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Embed assessment and marking systems fully throughout the school by:
 - tightening assessment procedures to give leaders and managers a clear, strategic overview of achievement over time and within year groups
 - ensuring marking relates to targets and always provides clear guidance for pupils as to the next steps in their learning
 - helping pupils to see how their individual targets feed into class targets
 - developing pupils' ability to assess their own and each other's work.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - extending the role of key subject leaders to include all aspects of monitoring, and increase their ability to improve progress in their subjects
 - ensuring that assessments of individual pupils' progress are collated more effectively to help leaders identify and respond to issues within and across year groups more rapidly.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

In most years, children start school with the skills expected for their age. Their good progress ensures they are prepared well for their work in Year 1, and that attainment is above average at the ends of Year 2 and Year 6. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well in class and they, too, make good progress, thus closing gaps in their learning by Year 6. The pupils are supported well in class by well-briefed teaching assistants, who know what the pupils' targets are, and help them to achieve them. Pupils for whom English is an additional language also make good progress. Inspection findings match the views of parents and carers, most of whom say their children make good progress.

Reading attainment is above average in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils enjoy visiting the library, and reading quietly at different times, including in the Friday 'Reading Café' where, in turn, classes read with their parents and carers. Pupils use several strategies to help them read new words, including their good knowledge of letters and sounds, saying, for example, 'I can figure words out on my own. I sound them out, then I try different sounds for the letters if the word doesn't make sense at first.'

Pupils mostly write well, with a good sense of audience and purpose. Reception children often opt to spend time writing. Older pupils use their writing skills well in a range of subjects, although not consistently so in all classes. Sometimes, worksheets limit opportunities for writing, or pupils forget to use their targets, and careless mistakes detract from the quality of their writing. Work is mostly well-presented, handwriting is legible, and spelling usually accurate. The focus on accurate letter formation and good sentence structure from the earliest age contributes to the pupils' overall good progress.

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Pupils enjoy mathematical learning because it is given a real-life context. The supermarket shopping activity in Reception was a good example of this, as was the Year 6 pupils' investigation into the relationship between head height and overall height. As well as helping pupils in Year 2, the 'mathletics' sessions enable pupils in Year 6 to clarify their own thinking as they take on the role of teacher, ask helpful questions, and avoid just providing answers. Pupils in both year groups find the sessions useful and enjoyable, and they promote good relationships across the age groups.

Quality of teaching

Inspection findings show teaching is good and most parents and carers are positive about this. Reading is taught well, and reading skills are successfully promoted in different subjects. Disabled pupils and those with special education needs are taught well. Teachers ensure activities are closely matched to the pupils' targets, and that teaching assistants support the pupils effectively in lessons. However, occasionally, support staff do not make as strong a contribution to the pupils' learning in whole class sessions.

Lessons are usually well structured, with good pace. They engage and motivate pupils, resulting in good behaviour and good progress. Opportunities are sometimes missed to reinforce subject-specific language. For example, in one lesson, pupils' understanding of terms such as 'adverb' and 'adjective' was not fully developed, and in another, their inability to recall what 'vertices' were slowed their progress when working with coordinates. The exciting range of activities planned for Reception children, indoors and out, contributes to their good progress. Some good links are made between literacy and mathematics. For example, the Year 2 comprehension work allied to problem solving in mathematics fostered learning in both areas. Whole-school topics are used well to promote learning across different subjects. For example, in order to create their own Olympic logos, pupils in Year 4 used computers to investigate the flags of different countries, and to research where the Olympics had been held previously, and when.

Teaching successfully encourages pupils to be reflective and caring, to think of others and to be secure about their own place in the world. Teachers successfully encourage pupils to work independently and together. For example, pupils in Year 6 rose to the challenge to 'get inside the head' of a sporting character by helping each other to create a character prior to taking the 'hot seat' and answering questions as the character. The careful management of their learning ensured they gained a greater understanding of characterisation.

Pupils know their individual targets but are not secure about how to reach them, or how they relate to class targets. Marking does not help because it rarely provides pupils with clear guidance on how to improve, and it is not linked to either target. There is little evidence in pupils' books of their assessing their own or each other's work, although this happened in some lessons, most notably in Year 6.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are courteous and respectful. They form good relationships with each other and with adults. Interruptions to lessons as a result of poor behaviour are extremely rare. However, pupils do become distracted when kept on the carpet for too long without being actively involved, and this occasionally leads to some off-task or less cooperative behaviour. Nevertheless, pupils work well independently and together. They understand and appreciate how the systems of rewards and sanctions encourage good behaviour and learning, and report that they rarely witness poor behaviour. They manage their own behaviour well, often sorting out potential issues by using the 'friendship group'. The Year 2 pupils' work on how to build bridges should friendships become spoilt shows these aspects are taught well. Pupils are also confident that, if necessary, they could ask any member of staff for help. Pupils know their views are valued. The school council is involved in school improvement planning, respect for the environment is fostered through the eco group, and the school encourages pupils to help others by raising money for various charities at home and abroad. The before- and after-school clubs offers good support for parents, carers and pupils.

Attendance is above average. Pupils report that this is a 'happy school', where they feel very safe and are taught how to keep themselves safe. All parents and carers say that their children feel safe at school. Most of those who responded to the inspection questionnaire, and all to whom inspectors spoke, said there is a good standard of behaviour at the school. Pupils know what bullying is, including its different forms. They readily talk about why, for example, persistent name-calling, forcing someone to do something they don't want to do, or hurting them, is wrong and should never be tolerated, and they know what to do should any such incidents occur. They very much appreciate the box where they can 'post' concerns anonymously if they so wish, confident that someone will deal with them. Their good behaviour was very evident on sports day, where they happily celebrated the success of others, even if their own team had lost.

Leadership and management

All leaders and managers support the headteacher's drive for improvement, and teamwork is strong. They are ambitious for the school and want pupils to do well. Good partnerships with parents, carers and external agencies contribute to the pupils' good progress. Achievement, the quality of teaching, and the quality of leadership and management have all improved since the previous inspection. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, including the monitoring of teaching by the headteacher. The governing body knows the school well. It supports and challenges it effectively. The school improvement plan has the right priorities and they are supported by performance management objectives and carefully-selected professional development opportunities that are successfully improving teaching and learning. All of this demonstrates the school has the capacity to improve further.

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Subject leaders work closely and collaboratively with colleagues but their monitoring lacks sharpness and they are not sufficiently involved in lesson observations to make a real difference in the classroom. They can describe what assessment and marking procedures should be but it is clear from pupils' work that the agreed systems are not consistently implemented throughout the school. The detailed analysis of individual pupils' progress is not drawn together to give a clear overview of how well different year groups are doing over time, although work has started on doing this. The provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs ensures the pupils' good progress. A few parents and carers commented that they were not sufficiently involved in the reviews of their children's individual education plans. The inspection team found that the school does invite parents and carers to attend reviews, but it does not record those views, or the views of the pupils themselves, sufficiently well.

Safeguarding systems meet current requirements. The school is particularly vigilant when pupils go to the field or playground. It takes every reasonable precaution to ensure their safety and well-being on the large, spread-out site. The well-planned curriculum meets pupils' needs and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. It is enhanced by a good range of visits, visitors and well-attended extra-curricular clubs. This inclusive school successfully promotes equality of opportunity and tackles all forms of discrimination effectively. Pupils are successfully taught to value and respect themselves and others, to reflect on their actions, and to work well together.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



28 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary, Matlock, DE4 3FT

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school, and for talking with us about what you do there. We found you go to a good school where you achieve well, because teaching is good, and you behave well, listen to your teachers, and want to succeed. Your good attendance helps in this, and shows how much you enjoy coming to school to learn and to meet your friends. We were pleased to note how much you appreciate the many interesting things you do in topic work as part of the recently introduced creative curriculum.

You clearly understand that there are many different types of bullying, but report that none has occurred for some years. It was good to see that, particularly through the friendship group, you help each other to resolve any conflicts that might arise, and that you feel any member of staff would help you should you need to go to them for help. You also told us that you feel very safe in school and that the school keeps you safe. All of your parents and carers said the school keeps you safe, and most also said that behaviour is good. We found that there are some things the school could do to help you achieve even better. They are to:

- ensure all teachers take the same approach to assessment and marking, and that they help you understand how your different targets relate to each other, and show you how to assess and improve your own and each other's work
- ensure those who lead different subjects know how to monitor and improve teaching and learning within them.

You can help by continuing to do your best at all times, and by taking heed of what your teachers tell you to do to improve your learning. We hope that you will enjoy learning in the future, as much as you do now, and we wish you well.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell
Lead Inspector

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