



St Joseph's Catholic High School, Business & Enterprise College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112401
LEA Cumbria
Inspection number 278923
Inspection dates 21 November 2005 to 22 November 2005
Reporting inspector Gill Salter-Smith

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Harrington Road
School category	Community		Workington
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Cumbria , CA14 3EE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01900 325240
Number on roll	589	Fax number	01900 325241
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Ian Denny
Date of previous inspection	1 October 1999	Headteacher	Mr Tom Ryan

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 21 November 2005 - 22 November 2005	Inspection number 278923
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller than average Roman Catholic comprehensive school for girls and boys aged 11 to 16 is located in an urban area of Workington, West Cumbria. The school serves pupils from a wide area including areas of significant social deprivation, although the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. Pupils, who are almost all of white British background, enter the school with average standards. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. The school has been a specialist college for business and enterprise since September 2003. The school gained the School Achievement Award in 2003 and was the most improved school in Cumbria in 2004.

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 is a good school that knows its strengths and weaknesses well. Pupils' achievement is good and they reach above average standards. They are well taught and the school takes good care of them. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. It creates a caring Catholic community that supports every pupil, enabling them to do their best and thrive within a clear moral, social and Christian framework. Pupils develop a keen spiritual awareness and are sensitive to the needs of others. They enjoy coming to school, their behaviour attendance and punctuality are good, and they have positive attitudes to learning. The curriculum meets most pupils' needs well. It includes excellent opportunities for trips, visits and clubs out of lesson time, and an outstanding course in national vocational qualifications (NVQ) hospitality and catering.

Good leadership and management focus correctly on raising pupils' achievement by improving teaching and learning. However, systems for checking work in subjects are inconsistent and not yet rigorous enough. Results in mathematics at general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) demonstrate underachievement, and the proportion gaining the highest grades in a number of subjects is below average.

The school's specialist status as a business and enterprise college has helped to raise standards, particularly in information and communication technology (ICT), and provide good opportunities for lifelong learning within the local community. The school has improved significantly since the last inspection and there is good capacity to improve further. Value for money is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics in Years 10 and 11.
- Improve the achievement of highest attaining pupils in GCSE across subjects.
- Ensure all subjects and teachers use the good assessment information available to plan lessons and to help pupils to know their targets and what to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter the school with average standards. They reach above average standards overall and their achievement is good. GCSE results in 2004 were above average and were particularly good in English, physical education and religious education. There were no significant differences between girls and boys. In 2005 the school exceeded its challenging targets for GCSE by a considerable margin. The best results were in English literature, science, religious education, history and general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) ICT. Results in mathematics and English language dipped significantly but changes in staffing and improved leadership have halted the decline. The proportion of pupils gaining the highest grades, A* and A, at GCSE is below average but has improved.

In national tests taken by Year 9 pupils in 2004, pupils gained above average results overall and in English and science. Results in mathematics were average. There were no significant differences between girls and boys. In the 2005 results, standards were maintained in English and science and improved in mathematics; higher attaining pupils achieved particularly well in mathematics and science and the school exceeded its challenging targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and are very well supported.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They have very positive attitudes to learning and value their teachers. Relationships are very good throughout the school. Pupils enjoy their education and become independent and confident. The attendance rate is above average. Pupils feel safe and secure and know that adults listen to them. Bullying incidents are rare and there is little, if any, racism in the school; any incidents are dealt with quickly. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils thoroughly embrace the Christian ethos of the school and happily take part in many activities to celebrate their faith. In religious education lessons pupils learn about, and come to appreciate, other cultures very successfully. Healthy living and eating are promoted well and good emphasis is put on physical fitness. Pupils' strong sense of awareness of the needs of others is developed in many ways, for example by charity fund-raising and community service. Pupils develop a sense of responsibility through various roles including prefects, being part of the 'buddy' scheme, taking part in peer mentoring and the school council. Pupils are prepared effectively for the world beyond school. They benefit from a well-developed course of work-related activities and take part in many enterprise activities, provided as a result of the school's specialist status.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and a small amount was outstanding. In the best lessons, teachers provide tasks that interest, motivate and challenge all pupils and discipline is well maintained. Expectations about what pupils can achieve are high and lessons proceed at a brisk pace. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, lesson plans do not identify how long each activity should take. Consequently, some lessons end prematurely with no time for a proper evaluation of how well pupils have learned. Planning does not always acknowledge the prior attainment of different groups of pupils and higher attaining pupils sometimes waste time waiting for other to catch up. Teachers provide good role models for pupils and treat them with respect. Relationships are positive and they succeed in motivating pupils to want to learn. The school has good systems for gathering and recording information from pupils' test and examination results. In Years 10 and 11, this

information is used well to set individual targets for GCSE and in most subjects pupils know what to do to reach them. However, this good practice is not yet fully replicated in Years 7 to 9.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets most pupils' needs well so that they achieve well. The excellent NVQ Level 2 course in hospitality and catering, delivered in partnership with the Lakes College, was introduced after consulting local industry on what qualification was most appropriate and is a great success. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the course and are making good progress. It helps them to plan well for their personal futures, and many intend to progress to Level 3 when they leave school. A good range of academic courses is offered. Although vocational courses are being developed, there are not yet enough suitable courses for lower attaining pupils. Out of lesson time, the school provides an excellent range of activities, trips and visits, particularly for sports and music. Opportunities for residential experiences are outstanding. The curriculum is particularly effective in promoting pupils' personal development; drugs and sex and relationships education programmes provide valuable guidance. Specialist school status has helped to provide good opportunities for enterprise.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support provided by the school is good. Pupils are confident that the staff will take quick action to help them with problems. Parents are very supportive of the school's work and appreciate the care the school takes of their children. Procedures to safeguard pupils are rigorously implemented. Arrangements to help pupils move from primary to secondary school, and later into post-16 education or training, are very good. Pupils who find it difficult to settle into secondary school are well cared for and the school is developing a system that assists pupils with behaviour difficulties. Pupils with particular personal difficulties are helped by the effective 'healing for inclusion' programme. Good links with external organisations safeguard the welfare of pupils. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good. Pupils' progress is carefully checked, helping them to do well, although in Years 7 to 9 pupils themselves are not sure how well they are doing in every subject.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good and have brought about considerable improvement since the previous inspection. The headteacher designate is strongly committed to further improvement. He has a clear vision of what he wants to achieve for the school, a vision he has articulated well to pupils, parents and teachers. He is ably supported by an effective leadership team whose experience and strengths

complement each other well. They have accurately evaluated the school's strengths and areas for further improvement and have correctly identified teaching as the key to raising standards further. Development planning to achieve their goals is good. Systems are in place to check the quality of education provided. However, practice in some areas of the school's work is still inconsistent, for example in clear and detailed lesson planning. Subject and pastoral leaders are good and well focused on raising standards. Some subjects use the information available on pupils' test results very well to plan work and set targets. In other subjects, however, its use is haphazard and not well planned. Teachers are regularly observed in their work and benefit from continuing professional development and opportunities to share best practice. Governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses well. They question senior leaders on areas of concern and help to maintain the school's focus on raising standards, for example, in mathematics. Finances are well managed and the school has successfully reduced a considerable deficit over a period of time.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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23 November 2005

Dear Pupils

Many thanks to you all for the friendly welcome you gave to us when we visited your school. It was a great pleasure to meet so many of you and talk to you about the school and your work. We were impressed by your courtesy, politeness and good manners. We enjoyed the opportunity to see you at work in lessons. We certainly appreciated the extra time and effort your teachers gave to help us carry out the inspection.

It is important that you know what we think about your school. We consider that St Joseph's is a good school and that it is getting better. The staff have your best interests at heart and they work hard to help you to enjoy school and do well. They make sure that you are happy in school and well protected. You do well in your tests and examinations because you are keen to learn and you are well taught. You choose from an interesting range of courses from the age of 14 and we know that you agree with us that the NVQ Level 2 hospitality and catering course is very successful.

Your school is a strong Catholic community which gives you clear moral, social and Christian guidance on how to conduct yourselves and live your lives. Because of this most of you have developed an exceptional appreciation of the needs of others, and a strong respect for faith and the spiritual side of life.

There are a few things that we have asked the school to do to help you all to do even better than you are doing now. We have asked the school to:

help all pupils to get better results in mathematics at GCSE

help those pupils capable of the very highest grades at GCSE to achieve them

make sure that the very best teaching takes place in all lessons so that every pupil is fully challenged to do their best.

You can help by continuing to work hard and trying your best. We hope that you enjoy your time at St Joseph's school and continue to do well.

Yours faithfully

Gillian Salter-Smith, Joe Clark and Judith Straw

Annex B