

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107342
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	309385
Inspection dates	10 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Fiona Gowers

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	151
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Shaw
Headteacher	Mrs Mary McAndrew
Date of previous school inspection	July 2004
School address	Crownest Road Bingley West Yorkshire BD16 4HQ
Telephone number	01274 564883
Fax number	01274 564883

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated in detail the following issues: Achievement and Standards; the quality of teaching and learning; and the effectiveness of leadership and management at different levels through the school. Evidence was gathered from the school's own self-evaluation; published national assessment data and the school's own assessment records; policies and minutes; observation of the school at work; interviews with members of staff, pupils and governors; and analysis of parents' questionnaires. 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 and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This smaller than average Catholic primary school is situated in a mixed socio-economic area. Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. The school has received Investors in People Award, Investors in Pupils Award, Healthy Schools Award and Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This school gives pupils an outstanding education. The majority of parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, typically commenting, 'My child has been privileged to attend such a wonderful school. I would have no reservation in recommending it.'

All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve exceptionally well because of excellent teaching and learning and a stimulating curriculum. Standards by the end of Year 6 are consistently well above average in mathematics, English, science and information and communication technology (ICT) with most pupils exceeding their very challenging targets. Standards fluctuate a little from year-to-year because of significant variations in the range of attainment within classes. However, achievement remains very high. The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff have very high expectations of pupils' achievement and conduct and pupils rise to the challenge! A group of pupils agreed they learn really well, because, 'Teachers make lessons fun. The work is challenging, but it's not so hard that we can't do it!' Lessons have a very clear focus and include a wide variety of activities that stretch pupils' thinking and add to their interest and enjoyment. For example, working with a partner enables pupils to, 'bounce ideas of each other', the use of games and investigations and the opportunity to present work in different ways keep pupils' interest levels high and motivates them to work very hard. Academic guidance is highly effective. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to assess their own learning, continually striving to do even better to reach their targets. Specialist ICT, music, science and sports teaching also help to maintain excellent attainment. The support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the more vulnerable pupils is exemplary. The development of personalised learning programmes and the very sensitive support provided by teaching assistants helps these pupils to achieve as well as others and ensures that they are fully included in all the school has to offer. This school is very well placed to meet the needs of the whole range of learners.

The curriculum is outstanding. This is a school readily prepared to explore new ideas and 'take chances' for the benefit of pupils. The curriculum is regularly reviewed and modified to ensure it continues to meet pupils' academic, personal and social needs very well. The school has adopted a new approach, by increasing the focus on creativity to add interest, enjoyment and challenge to pupils' work. Pupils are encouraged to explore ideas and work things out for themselves. As a group of older pupils explained, 'We try and link things together when we learn. It helps us remember things and understand them better.' For example, during a 'Rivers' topic, pupils discussed how they could find out why flooding occurs and about the consequences of flooding. They helped each other learn, by sharing their findings in different ways: using ICT, designing posters and diagrams and giving talks. ICT is used extremely well across the whole curriculum and also to support the learning of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and to stretch and challenge the more able. Pupils greatly enjoy a wide range of enrichment activities designed to suit all capabilities and interests. These range from the choir appearing on television and at festivals, to participating in the local 'Where I live' art exhibition. Pupils clearly know how to stay fit and healthy, readily taking part in the many sporting activities on offer, such as golf, cricket, trampolining and football.

A telling example of the excellent quality of care, guidance and support evident in the school, is the motto 'Love, Care, Share', which was designed by the pupils. Everyone contributes to creating an extremely positive environment. This helps pupils feel very happy and secure. Safeguarding procedures are in place and attendance is consistently well above average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and, together with strong relationships, helps them to grow in confidence. Pupils are thoughtful and reflective and show high levels of care and concern for others. From a very young age pupils are encouraged to voice opinions, listen to others and share ideas. Consequently, pupils work very effectively with each other. For example, older pupils enjoyed working in groups to plan a 'television style' presentation to advertise a new product. Pupils designed and made the product, recorded a radio advert and produced a Powerpoint presentation and a website. The emphasis placed on group work, discussion and problem solving is making an outstanding contribution to pupils' social development. This is best summed up in the words of the children, 'St Joseph's is setting us up very well for the future.'

The school's continued success stems from outstanding leadership and management. The headteacher is an inspirational leader and is very well supported by a skilled leadership team. The school's leadership recognises, fosters and values the contribution of every member of staff. Consequently, individual staff members are very keen to develop key specialist areas and to take the lead on new initiatives to enhance the work of the school. A very strong team spirit is established, where everyone readily cares for and supports each other. Leaders and managers have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and are continually seeking ways to make further improvements. Standards in writing are currently significantly above average, but the current school focus to improve achievement in writing still further, illustrates its desire to be better still. Systems to check on the quality of teaching and learning are very effective and help maintain rapid rates of progress, as well as outstanding levels of pupils' personal development and well-being. The governing body makes a very strong contribution to school improvement and enjoys strong links with the church and the local community. It is very knowledgeable and well informed and has the expertise to check how well the school is achieving its goals. St Joseph's has excellent links with local authority services, the Catholic Diocese and other education providers. It plays a leading role in its work with other schools. In light of such strengths and successes the school clearly shows it has excellent capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

When they join the Foundation Stage children's skills vary considerably, but they are generally slightly above national expectations. Children settle very well into school because of high levels of care and support provided by the staff and by school buddies. Children enthusiastically take part in a very wide range of stimulating activities, both indoors and out. The area buzzes with purposeful activity, as many activities are based on 'real life' experiences. Children proudly explained they had watched their own caterpillars transform into butterflies. This experience motivated them to work very hard on related activities. Children also enjoyed working together in the role-play 'train station', explaining with great excitement that they were going

on a real train the following week. Given so many exciting activities children flourish, make rapid progress in all areas of their learning and develop very positive attitudes. The Foundation Stage leader provides very effective leadership. Very close links with Key Stage 1 staff and the development of 'hands on' activities in the shared area, ensures a very smooth transition to Year 1. Parents appreciate all the Foundation Stage has to offer, typically commenting, 'My child has settled really well and made remarkable progress.'

What the school should do to improve further

The school's leadership has clearly identified what it needs to do to sustain improvement. Consequently, there are no further issues to add.

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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?	1
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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of boarding provision	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff , are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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



11 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Bingley, BD16 4HQ

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to your school because everyone was so welcoming and friendly. St Joseph's is an outstanding school. Your headteacher, governors and all the staff are an excellent team and work tirelessly for your benefit. Your school provides you with a very good education, which I know you enjoy. You make really good progress with your work and reach very high standards when you leave at the end of Year 6. This is because you receive excellent teaching and have many exciting learning activities. You told me that you particularly enjoy the sporting activities, working on the computer and singing in the choir.

You behave very well and work very nicely with each other. You try very hard to keep your motto, 'Love, Care, Share'. You told me how much you enjoy coming to school and I could see how happy you are at St Joseph's. Adults look after you very well so you feel very safe and comfortable asking them for help. The school is very good at giving special help to those of you who need it.

Your headteacher and other adults in school know exactly what needs to be done to make sure St Joseph's continues to be an outstanding school. You can help by continuing to come to school regularly and working so hard.

I wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Gowers
Lead inspector