

St Joseph's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103473
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	363677
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2011
Reporting inspector	David Speakman

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	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kirsty Hill
Headteacher	Gerry O'Hara
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors saw 10 lessons or parts of lessons and observed six teachers. Meetings were held with senior leaders, representatives of the governing body and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including monitoring, evaluation and assessment records, policy documents, the school improvement plan, teachers' planning and samples of pupils' work. A wide range of documents and records was scrutinised in relation to the safeguarding of pupils. Inspectors took into account the results of questionnaires returned by 122 parents and carers, 32 pupils and 31 members of staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Is there is any variation in the quality of teaching and learning across the school and does it affect the progress pupils make at different stages?
- Do pupils understand how well they are doing and how to improve their work in the light of developments in the use of assessment?
- What impact has recent curriculum development had on the extent to which pupils are interested in, and enjoy learning?
- Bearing in mind the school's context, does it do enough to help pupils understand the world around them and to give them a balanced view of life outside their own community?

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who are at the early stages of learning English. All pupils are Roman Catholic. The percentage of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than in other schools and the proportion with a statement of special needs is broadly average. The Sunshine Club provides before- and after-school care each day during term and is managed by the governing body. The headteacher joined the school at the time of the previous inspection and the deputy headteacher in the following year. The school has been awarded the Sports Activemark.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

St Joseph's Primary School is an outstanding school. It is exceptionally well led and managed and enables its pupils to achieve excellent outcomes. Consequently, the school gives outstanding value for money.

Since joining the school, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have put into place important developments that have led to significant improvement in key areas of provision and outcomes. They have implemented robust procedures for monitoring each pupil's progress, which leads to the identification of pupils in danger of not meeting their targets. Highly effective intervention support is put in place so that pupils get back on track. This has led to a rise in standards at the end of Year 6, which are now high. A similar initiative has been implemented to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Senior leaders observe lessons on a regular basis. Feedback and improvement targets are given to teachers and areas for whole school development are identified. This monitoring has led to improved teaching. Any inadequate teaching has been eradicated and most teaching is now good or better. Because of the scale and pace of improved provision and outcomes, the school is judged to have an excellent capacity to sustain further improvement.

Attainment in English and mathematics has been consistently above the national average since 2006. Standards have been steadily rising since the previous inspection and are now high in English and mathematics. Progress at Key Stage 2 has been steadily rising over the last three years. It was satisfactory in 2008 and outstanding in 2010. Current Year 6 pupils have made similar progress through Key Stage 2, with most pupils exceeding the challenging targets set for them.

An important improvement has been the development of rigorous assessment procedures to monitor pupils' progress. These have generally been implemented effectively and have helped to raise standards. However, assessment procedures, including marking of work, do not fully involve pupils in evaluating their own progress or provide them with a secure understanding of how they might improve their own work. Similarly, adults' observation of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not yet used as well as they could be to provide a base for planning the detailed next steps in learning.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. They find work very interesting, especially the changes brought about by the introduction of topics in the creative curriculum. This development and other curriculum provision means that the range of learning

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opportunities is excellent. Pupils feel very safe in school. This is supported by the school's excellent safeguarding procedures and the outstanding care, guidance and support shown by the school. Pupils have an exceptional understanding of what constitutes an unsafe situation and all spoken to can identify someone to go to if they are concerned. Behaviour is excellent and makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning and the extent to which pupils are happy in school.

Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education through developing very good core skills in language, mathematics and information and communication technology. Wider opportunities include enterprise events and the chance to work collaboratively, which prepare them further for the wider world. However, pupils show limited understanding of life outside their own immediate experiences. Opportunities to develop this aspect of their knowledge and understanding through the school's approach to community cohesion is still not fully developed and links with other schools, both locally and further afield, are in the early stages of development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teachers' use of assessment procedures by:
 - involving pupils in the evaluation of their work in order to enhance their understanding of what they have to do to further improve its quality
 - using adults' observations of children's achievements in the Early Years Foundation Stage to plan detailed next steps in learning so tasks are more clearly focused on individual needs.

- Improve links with other schools in the local and wider communities to improve pupils' multicultural awareness and their knowledge of life outside their immediate area.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Attainment on entry to the Reception Year is broadly typical for children of this age. Standards at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are above the national average and at the end of Key Stage 2, they are well above. Because learning and progress are good at each key stage and attainment is high, achievement is outstanding. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, make similar progress to other pupils due to the focused support which matches their particular needs well. Attendance and punctuality are good.

Pupils fully engage in learning opportunities. In a highly effective Year 2 science lesson, pupils thoroughly enjoyed exploring the school grounds, searching for mini-beasts. They displayed high levels of interest, and were so engaged in the activity, that their behaviour was excellent. Pupils showed great respect for the creatures they found whilst observing them. Pupils work well both independently and in

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collaboration with others. The very well-equipped information and communication technology suite enables pupils to work independently, which Year 5 pupils did very well when designing their topic title pages. They showed great independence and imagination in this piece of work. Those pupils designated as 'trainers', pupils primed beforehand to help others having difficulty, did so very reliably and showed pride in being chosen for this responsibility.

Behaviour is excellent, both in lessons and at other times in the school day. Even when activities are lively in nature, such as in a practical music lesson, pupils show great self-control and manage their own behaviour. This is typical of the notable strength in pupils' moral and social development. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although their cultural awareness is an area for further improvement.

Pupils make a good contribution to school life. They show great initiative when undertaking the wide and varied responsibilities on offer. They are proud to be involved in peer mediation and act as librarians, play buddies and take on a range of other tasks. Pupils show a good knowledge and understanding of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They understand a range of health issues and uptake of sporting activity is high. The school has the Sports Activemark and is well on the way to finalising its portfolio to achieve National Healthy School status.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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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How effective is the provision?

Teachers use learning objectives well to explain the purpose of lessons. These are understood by pupils, so that they have a clear knowledge of what is expected of them. The marking of pupils' work is generally good but does not always provide developmental comments to help them improve. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. Explanations are clear and teachers provide pupils with interesting and well-developed learning routes. A strong feature of teaching is the use of varied learning styles. Effective combinations of full-class listening, group and pair work and independent work add interest and variety to learning. Teachers use questioning skills well to assess understanding, extend pupils' reasoning skills and deepen their understanding. Teaching assistants work well with individuals and groups, particularly pupils identified for specific support, to develop their understanding and give them the confidence to achieve.

An issue at the time of the previous inspection was to make the curriculum more interesting and exciting. This has been fully achieved and pupil and parental feedback confirms that pupils enjoy their learning experiences a great deal. The school curriculum balances key skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology exceptionally well with a creative dimension through topics and opportunities for learning in real-world contexts. Pupils are included in establishing learning pathways in the planning of topics such as 'War' and 'Sustainability'. The curriculum is adapted where necessary to provide intervention for individuals and groups. Senior leaders show a determination to ensure that staffing enables this flexibility and they contribute exceptionally well by working alongside class teachers in Years 5 and 6 to accelerate pupils' progress.

Curriculum enrichment enhances learning very well. Visits, visitors and special curriculum days and events are much enjoyed by all pupils. The varied programme of extra-curricular clubs and activities enriches a curriculum that contributes well to pupils' skill development. Specialist rooms support learning exceptionally well. A new information and communication technology suite, an art/technology room, music room, and extensive grounds add an extra dimension and quality to learning opportunities.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Pupils' emotional, medical and academic needs are exceptionally well supported. Adults show attention to detail, such as carrying a class medical box containing inhalers and other specific and more general resources around when the class moves to another area of the school. There are good facilities for pupils to be securely cared for before and after school at 'The Sunshine Club'. The club offers a wide range of activities including art and craft, board games, construction toys, computer access, books and outdoor sports. All activities are well supervised. Parents are happy with the level of care shown by the school for their children as one commented, 'All my four children have benefited from the excellent care, not only academic but also emotional and social that St Josephs provides. I cannot thank the staff enough for the care of our children.'

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school is exceptionally well led by the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy and other staff with specific responsibilities. In a short time, they have had a significant impact in a number of key areas of the school's performance, contributing to the outstanding overall effectiveness of the school. They have been responsible for establishing very effective tracking systems to monitor individual, class and year group progress. Teachers are held accountable for the progress of pupils in their class. The quality of teaching is regularly monitored. Professional development has equipped staff with the skills and knowledge to assess and monitor pupils' progress. The accommodation and classroom resources have been enhanced greatly to support good quality teaching and learning.

The headteacher has been effectively supported in his work by the governing body. Its members have a good level of involvement in the school and are involved in making important strategic decisions. The Chair of the Governing Body is more involved through regular informal contact with headteacher. Other members ensure that the school complies fully with statutory requirements. There is a cycle of policy review and all are up to date. The governing body is fully aware of its commitments and challenges the school to account for its performance, asking leading questions. Challenging targets are set for the headteacher in his performance management, which have helped the drive for continuous improvement.

The school has a clear understanding of its socio-economic, religious and ethnic context and has taken a series of planned actions to respond to this. There is recognition of the lack of diversity in the profile of the school population, and actions to increase pupils' experience of a more diverse ethnic community include growing links with other schools locally and overseas. Nevertheless, pupils do not yet communicate with others in a contrasting community. There is a strong push towards developing pupils' multicultural awareness but this is mainly through a faith approach. Widening this approach is currently developing quickly through the creative curriculum, where pupils are gaining a wider spectrum of community awareness. Extensive links with the local community include links with the local Church, other schools and many charitable organisations, but links involving pupils on a global scale are not as well developed.

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The school has an inclusive ethos and all pupils are encouraged to be part of the school family. This is clear in events such as school assembly. The school uses a range of strategies and interventions to support identified pupils and all groups achieve equally and is prepared well to tackle any instances of discrimination if they occur. Safeguarding is outstanding. All adults who have unsupervised contact with pupils are fully checked for suitability. Child protection is exceptionally strong and highly effective. Health and safety of the site and risk assessments of school activities are fully in place. Members of the governing body are fully trained in aspects relating to safeguarding and monitor this carefully from within the school, the safeguarding governor being a non-teaching member of staff.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children come into the Reception Year with attainment typical for their age. Recent data show that attainment on transfer to Year 1 is above the national average in all six areas of learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage profile for previous years shows a similar picture. This means that children's progress and achievement are good. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress due to early identification of their particular needs. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. The coordinator has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement through consultation with an advanced skills teacher, which has led to a full in-house review.

The learning environment is developing well and free-flow between the inside and outdoor areas works effectively. A good range of learning activities is provided including, reading, writing, counting, painting and role-play, all of which support the good acquisition of basic skills. Staff work as an effective team in supporting and

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directing children’s learning, whilst still encouraging them to make their own choices at appropriate times. Observations are made of children’s activities, but these are not always used to change provision to push individual children further from their starting points.

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

Views of parents and carers

Just over a half of parents and carers sent in questionnaires and this response is greater than that usually found. Parents and carers have positive views of the school and there was agreement with most statements in the questionnaire. Written comments and questionnaires outlined a small number of concerns, particularly relating to information about children’s progress, helping parental involvement in their children’s learning, healthy lifestyles, handling unacceptable behaviour, taking account of parental suggestions or concerns and staff absence.

Inspectors looked carefully at these issues. There are three consultation evenings for parents and carers each year. In addition, a highly effective web based up-to-date record of each pupil’s progress and attainment, is available confidentially to parents and carers. Some commented about the improvement in communication under the leadership of the headteacher. The school holds curriculum evenings which are well attended and consults over the creative curriculum topics, thus helping parents and carers to support their children’s learning at home. There has been positive feedback in relation to topics. There is a good uptake of sport and pupils demonstrated a good understanding of how to stay healthy. Behaviour is very well managed and that seen during the inspection was mainly excellent. There have been no exclusions in the school’s recent history. The headteacher appreciated parents’ and carers’ concern over staff absence and this is being dealt with in a professional and confidential way.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Joseph's RC 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 122 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	50	58	48	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	77	63	44	36	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	47	39	62	51	8	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	39	63	52	9	7	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	50	41	61	50	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	34	68	56	12	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	40	33	68	56	9	7	1	1
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)	40	33	62	51	8	7	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	39	63	52	10	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	36	59	48	13	11	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	25	70	57	15	12	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	53	43	57	47	8	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	57	47	61	50	2	2	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 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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



13 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's RC Primary School, Sutton Coldfield, B75 6PB

Thank you for the welcome we experienced when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed meeting and talking to you in lessons and in the group discussions. Your views were really helpful and it was clear that you are very proud of your school. Your pride is well deserved because you go to an outstanding school.

You all make good progress and the standards in your school work by Year 6 are much higher than those found in many other primary schools. These have improved greatly over the last three years and standards are high again this year. Those of you who receive extra support because you find learning more difficult make good progress as well. We noticed you have a sensible and mature approach to school life, that you enjoy school a great deal and behave exceptionally well. Adults make sure that the school is a very safe and pleasant place for you to attend each day.

The school is exceptionally well led and managed and the headteacher and his staff are always looking for ways to improve it even more. To help with further improvement, we have asked your teachers to involve you more in the evaluation of your own work so you have a better idea of what you have to do to improve its quality. We have asked adults in the Early Years Foundation Stage to use their observations of children's achievements better to plan their detailed next steps in learning. We have also asked the headteacher to improve links with other schools in the local and wider communities to improve your awareness of how people outside your immediate area live.

Well done in helping your school to achieve this outstanding outcome. We are confident that you will do all you can to help to maintain this quality.

Yours sincerely

David Speakman
Lead inspector

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