

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117465
<b>Local Authority</b>	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	312624
<b>Inspection date</b>	4 December 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Cosway

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	225
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Philip McDonald
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Linda Sheppard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 June 2003
<b>School address</b>	Ainsdale Road South Oxhey Watford Hertfordshire WD19 7DW
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 4285371
<b>Fax number</b>	0208 4210568

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date</b>	4 December 2007
<b>Inspection number</b>	312624

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The following issues were investigated: the pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and learning, the curriculum and how well the school's leadership promotes high standards and personal development. Evidence was gathered from observation of lessons, the pupils' work, discussion with them and with staff, along with a scrutiny of school documents and parent 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 form, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

St Joseph Roman Catholic Primary School is close to average size. The school population represents a mix of social backgrounds, but pupils are mainly White British. Attainment on entry is below average, overall. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is close to the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational need, is in line with the average nationally.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school judges itself to be good, and the inspection confirms this. Some aspects of the school's work are outstanding. It is improving rapidly under the guidance of its new headteacher. The quality of education is never less than good in any class and this is the main reason why pupils make such good progress.

The attainment of most children is slightly below average on entry. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have a secure mastery of literacy and numeracy skills and currently attainment is just above average. At the end of Year 6, standards are above average and all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the gifted and talented, have achieved well. They make especially good progress in English, where their achievement is outstanding. Standards are well above average in English because of their excellent reading skills, and above average in mathematics. In 2007, attainment in science was close to the national average and a few pupils underachieved. An increased focus on science has led to improvement this year and standards are rising. In 2007, the school exceeded its targets for Year 6 pupils. It is on track to exceed its even more challenging targets in 2008.

Parents are almost unanimous in their praise for the school. It was undersubscribed three years ago and regarded by the local authority as in need of significant support. It is now very popular and standards are rising rapidly. The many enthusiastic comments made by parents accurately reflect the school's strengths. They praise the new headteacher, whose outstanding leadership has brought about significant improvements, following a string of acting headteachers. She has improved the systems for school self-review, which are now excellent, and has an extremely good understanding of assessment data. This has enabled her to focus clearly on the needs of the school, with a very strong emphasis on what needs to be done to raise standards. She has brought in new tracking programmes so that pupils' progress can be measured really accurately and has improved target setting and the intervention systems, so that pupils who need additional help are supported effectively. In a short time, under her leadership the school has made good progress since the last inspection and is very well placed to improve further. Her excellent management ensures that staff are all working to a common purpose and morale is high. She is supported well by her new leadership team. Leadership and management are good overall. Governors are effective and now have a greater understanding of their role thanks to the training they have received. Subject leadership is developing well and is good overall.

Another aspect of the school praised by parents is the pupils' personal development: 'I am very pleased with the children's attitudes and behaviour.....they are caring and love coming to school.' This aspect of the school's work is outstanding. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They are responsible, tolerant, extremely well behaved and have a very good understanding of world cultures and faiths, as well as Christian values and culture. Spirituality and the values of love and understanding support all that the school does. The pupils learn well because they are safe and happy. They know that they are cared for and valued and all are made to feel welcome within an inclusive and supportive learning community and all have an equal chance to succeed. They describe the school as a warm and friendly place, like a second family. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities to act as helpers and 'buddies' to younger children, and carry these out extremely responsibly. The work of the school council is very productive and pupil participation has a very real influence. For example, pupils' ideas and suggestions have changed the physical education uniform and they are now helping to determine

the school's mission statement. Attendance is satisfactory but the school is working effectively to improve this.

Teaching and learning are good, as parents appreciate: 'We are very pleased with the teaching that our child receives.' 'The school is a busy, buzzing learning environment and our son's enthusiasm for school is the best it has ever been.' Teachers plan interesting and challenging lessons that lead to pupils concentrating and working hard. Relationships are excellent, so that pupils are confident to express their ideas, knowing that they will not be criticised if they are wrong. The teachers use assessment well to ensure that pupils are working at the correct level to meet their needs and the teaching assistants give good support to pupils who need additional help. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and sustain a good pace so that they learn quickly. Their classroom management is excellent and, as a result, no time is wasted because of the need to correct inappropriate behaviour. They set targets for the pupils but there are insufficient short-term targets concentrating on the next small steps that pupils need to make in their learning.

The good care, support and guidance systems are also praised by parents: 'All the staff are helpful and friendly.' 'My son received extra help which helped him with his lessons and his confidence.' All statutory safeguarding requirements and procedures are in place. Parents are given good help and information to assist them in supporting their children's learning and the reports they receive on their children's progress are detailed and clear. The pupils report that there is no bullying and though arguments between children sometimes happen, these are quickly resolved. They feel safe and supported by staff. Good health education ensures pupils understand how to lead healthy lives. They readily explain the reasons for taking regular exercise and enjoy eating healthily. They receive excellent preparation for their future from the many opportunities to work together and take responsibility for their learning. The pupils make good contributions to the local community. They understand the reasons for school rules and value highly the rewards given for good work and considerate behaviour. Pupils care for each other and are very helpful and supportive of those classmates with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities.

The curriculum is good, with a wide range of clubs and visits, as well as a strong emphasis on the teaching of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. The curriculum for science is being extended to allow more time for pupils to do practical work.

The classrooms are well-kept and welcoming, with very good displays that both celebrate pupils' work and give useful information that helps them to succeed. Around the school, many attractive displays promote the values of the school and the importance of learning. All this helps to foster the positive learning climate that is making this a successful school that gives good value for money.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of education in the Foundation Stage is good and this leads to children achieving well. A good range of varied and appropriate activities ensures that children enjoy learning and quickly acquire the skills they need. Most have reached the early learning goals by the end of their time in Reception. The Foundation Stage is led well. There are effective assessment systems and appropriate teaching approaches that help to develop children's confidence and independence.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in science through improvements in the tracking of pupils' progress and increased opportunities for pupils to be involved in practical work.
- Ensure that all teachers tell pupils what they need to do to raise the level of their work and set them specific, short-term targets.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

### 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
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

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

### 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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 the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

5 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, South Oxhey, WD19 7DW

Thank you very much for making me so welcome at your school. You were all friendly, polite and helpful and I enjoyed meeting so many of you. It was very interesting seeing you at work in your classrooms. I particularly enjoyed watching the way you worked together in pairs or small groups and were so ready to help each other. I would like to say special thanks to the members of the school council who told me about what it is like to be a pupil at St Joseph's.

Your school provides you with a good education. You feel safe and cared for because the school looks after you so well. It supports you well with your learning: many of you told me how helpful and kind your teachers are. You make good progress and, by the end of Year 6, reach higher standards in literacy and numeracy than in pupils in many other schools. You behave extremely well and enjoy your learning because teaching is good and you have interesting lessons.

The teachers in charge of the school are leading and managing it well. Your headteacher is determined that you will get the very best education.

I have asked the school to make sure that teachers tell you what you need to do to improve your work and use this to set you targets for the next piece of work. I also want the school to do more to help you to learn in science and gain a good grasp of scientific ideas and facts.

Once again thank you for your help. Work hard and make the most of your time in this delightful school.

Yours sincerely

Paul Cosway

Lead inspector