

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	137422
Local Authority	Not applicable
Inspection number	386095
Inspection dates	13–14 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Hazel Callaghan

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

Type of school	Academy Converter
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	0–11years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	471
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr. Michael C. McCafferty OBE
Headteacher	Bill James
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2007
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Age group	0–11years
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Inspection number	Error! Reference source not found. 379265

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 22 lessons, taught by 22 teachers. Meetings were held with the senior leaders, members of the governing body, other staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation including the school development plan, tracking of pupils' attainment and progress, various policies and documents related to safeguarding as well as reports written by the school and those about the school. Questionnaires from pupils and staff were examined along with the 249 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- How the school monitors the progress of different groups and ensures they achieve as well as their peers, particularly the boys in Key Stage 1 and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- How teaching and the curriculum enable all pupils to make at least good progress and how teachers use pupils' own interests to stimulate and enhance learning.
- The school's aims for the future and how it intends to maintain high standards and ensure excellent progress for all pupils.

Information about the school

St Joseph's Primary is a larger than average school. The large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from various minority ethnic groups is broadly average, the largest groups being of Indian heritage and those from Other White backgrounds, such as Polish and Portuguese. A small proportion of pupils are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above average while the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. There are three elements to the school's Early Years Foundation Stage provision. The school cares for children aged 0–4 years in two settings: the pre-school which runs sessional care for up to 30 children aged two years nine months up to rising five years and the crèche and day nursery which provides whole-day care for children of three months to rising five years. Children transfer to St Joseph's Reception classes or other local schools in the year in which they are five. The school also provides wrap-around care in the form of a breakfast club and after-school club. The school has gained a large number of awards the most recent being the Active Mark and Fair Trade Status in 2010. The school became an academy on 1 September 2011.

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 Catholic Primary provides an outstanding education and exemplary care for its pupil with the result that they make exceptional progress in their academic and personal development to achieve high levels of attainment. The stimulating and broad curriculum enables them to achieve extremely well, not only in the basic skills of English and mathematics, but also in many other subjects such as information and communication technology (ICT), art and music and prepares them exceptionally well for the next stage of their education. One parent's comments in writing were typical of many, 'The school is great at achieving a balance between nurturing my child and enabling him to perform to the best of his abilities.' The school puts the pupils at the heart of all it does. Pupils feel exceptionally safe and in this caring environment respond extremely well to high levels of challenge. They want to do well and are rightly proud of their achievements. Parents and carers recognise the strengths of teaching and strong leadership of the headteacher, his deputy headteacher and senior staff which has created an ethos of looking for the best and constantly striving to improve. The school is exceptionally well led by the headteacher who, with the senior leadership team and the extremely strong support and partnership of the governing body, has built on the many strengths seen at the previous inspection to create an outstanding school. Staff are continually evaluating what they do, are accurate in their assessments and effective in perfecting their work. Their capacity for further improvement is excellent.

Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities make the same outstanding progress through the school. Pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve extremely well from their different starting points and the majority reach levels of attainment that are above those of their peers in other schools. Teaching is outstanding overall and, even though early in the term, pupils' learning is accelerating. The comprehensive and accurate assessments on pupils' learning are used very well to match the activities to pupils' abilities and needs and contribute significantly to the pupils' strong progress in many lessons.

Children make a good start to their learning and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The pre-school and nursery staff work well together and with those in Reception to provide a cohesive and continuous education that supports each child, recognising their individual talents and needs so they make good progress in their learning and development. Good partnerships with parents and carers begin in these early stages and good arrangements for children to start in each of the settings ensure that they settle well and start to thrive under the

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sensitive support of all the staff. There are well-thought-out procedures to support both parents, carers and children when it is time to move from the baby room into the two-year-old's room in the nursery or from nursery to pre-school and then on to the Reception classes. The transition into Year 1 is not quite as effective and many children find it difficult at first to adjust to the different expectations and ways of working.

By the time pupils reach Year 6 they are confident and mature young people who have a strong sense of responsibility and appreciation of the need to care for their world and one another. Their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is outstanding. Their experiences while working towards the Fair Trade Status and in working with their partner school in Manchester, and others in France and China, all give them a strong awareness and interest in others' lives and cultures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide a more gradual transition between the style of teaching and learning used in the Early Years Foundation Stage to the more formal way of working in Year 1 so that children's confidence and abilities continue to thrive without pause.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Children enter the Reception classes with a wide variation in their knowledge and skills which are often below those expected for their age, especially in their language skills and in their personal and emotional development. They achieve well across all areas of learning to reach broadly average attainment by the end of the Reception Year. This good start prepares them well for future learning and they are inquisitive and enthusiastic learners. By the end of Year 2 they have achieved exceptionally well to reach significantly higher attainment than is found nationally. Both boys and girls achieve extremely well. Girls' attainment is higher than the boys' but boys also reach levels that are above the national average. This excellent progress continues for pupils of all backgrounds and abilities through Key Stage 2. The few pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals achieve as well as their peers as do those who start school in the early stages of learning English.

This excellent progress is the result, not only of excellent teaching and an exciting and well-planned curriculum, but also because the pupils are keen to do well. Pupils told the inspectors and their parents' and carers' comments confirmed that they really enjoy school. Attendance is significantly higher than is found nationally. Pupils behave well, both in lessons and around the school, and this creates a calm and positive working environment. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils are confident learners who work well as individuals or as part of a team cooperating and collaborating together to explore problems. They organise and share their resources very effectively. Pupils understand what they need to do to improve and try hard to

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reach the targets set for them. Pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities also respond very well. They are keen to show what they know, concentrate effectively and participate actively in answering questions both in mathematics and in English lessons. Pupils enjoy learning and respond just as enthusiastically in music and French lessons. They show good levels of responsibility and are eager to contribute not only to the life of the school, where they act as monitors, mentors for younger pupils and as members of the school committee, but also to the local community and to those who are in need. One parent commented, 'I especially like the amount of responsibility they are given and the leadership roles that they undertake. The school allows them to be confident caring individuals while providing them with the skills they need to cope with secondary school.' Pupils develop an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe and have a good understanding of how to develop a healthy lifestyle. Participation in the many sports activities, which contributed to the school's Active Mark, is high.

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	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The curriculum meets all pupils' interests and needs extremely well. There is a strong focus on developing the basic skills of English, mathematics and ICT, and great importance is placed on other subjects, such as art and physical education as well as on pupils' personal and health education. The curriculum is considerably enhanced by additional activities, visits and visitors. The pupils told inspectors about the many exciting activities they enjoyed such as visits to the Imperial War Museum and

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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Hampton Court as part of their class work. Excellent partnerships with many outside agencies support pupils' academic and personal development very well. Partnership with the local secondary school extends the range of activities particularly in music and sport. Links with schools overseas and their work on fair trade promotes pupils' awareness of global issues, responsibility, morality and cultural differences. The school's use of subject specialists for ICT, music, art and French also significantly raises the quality of teaching and learning in these areas promoting the skills of the gifted and talented pupils as well as for the majority.

All teaching was characterised by meticulous planning and the very effective use of detailed assessments that ensure work is well matched to all the pupils' needs. Teaching assistants have a significant impact on the excellent progress made by the pupils. Exemplary, ongoing assessment during the lesson also enabled teachers to maintain the very rapid pace of pupils' learning by increasing the challenges or revisiting important points of learning as required. Even in classes with new teachers, pupils' learning can be seen to be accelerating rapidly, matching the pattern of previous years, and attainment is already high.

Pupils know they are well looked after, known and respected as individuals and are confident to go to many members of staff if they are troubled. This same level of care is extended to parents, carers and families. It is truly a St Joseph's family. The quality of provision for pupils who are facing challenges in their lives, for those identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those in the early stages of learning English is extremely effective. High levels of care extend to the transition arrangements as pupils move on to the secondary school. Good quality wrap-around care at the breakfast club and after-school club are very well regarded by the pupils and their families.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
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?

Ambition and the pursuit of high quality are clearly evident throughout the school. The headteacher has very clearly communicated his drive and vision for the school. His high expectations are understood and actively promoted by the staff. They are outstanding in their abilities to make a difference to the pupils, and to set challenging targets that are met through their relentless focus on the needs of each child. High

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levels of self-challenge and robust monitoring mean that the senior leadership team is constantly asking the question: 'Is it good enough?', and so seeking further improvements. School development planning is detailed and a very effective management tool. The support and development of staff are very effective so that all feel enabled to take on new challenges. There are many examples of senior staff improving teaching and subject leadership. Those new to teaching are very well supported. The school is extremely well supported by an active governing body which has a strong influence on the strategic development of the school. Governors actively monitor all aspects of school life and ensure improvement takes place. Staff and governors are assiduous in ensuring the safeguarding of all pupils. The policies and procedures for child protection are extremely rigorous and are well understood by staff who are well trained in safeguarding issues and first aid. Ensuring safe recruitment is high on the agenda and the school site is extremely safe and secure.

Each pupil is of importance and so ensuring equality of opportunity and the recognition of diversity are all part of the school's drive to ensure their high achievement. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated. Outcomes for the pupils are outstanding and the result of exceptional value for money. Partnership with parents and carers is good. Communication is effective and a high number of parents and carers volunteer to help in the school. Of particular note is the effectiveness of the daily support given by parents and carers to the Reading Project in both Key Stages 1 and 2. The school is an extremely harmonious community. Staff have carefully evaluated the ways in which it promotes community cohesion. This maintains the outstanding promotion already in place exemplified by the many strategies to support it both on a local level and in the wider community.

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	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Good provision in all three settings enables children to develop well academically and personally. Great emphasis is placed on welfare arrangements and on keeping children safe and secure. Staff are well trained and knowledgeable about all aspects of safety, hygiene and the developmental stages of the children in their care. Good quality assessments through observations of the children at play and while working with the class teacher and/or their key workers build up an effective overview of the children's learning and personal needs. Next steps are planned and shared with parents and carers so together the children are successfully supported and achieve well. They very much enjoy their time in the different settings, playing together and sharing their toys and resources well. Three boys in a Reception class, for example, delighted in building their diggers and other vehicles to create a pretend road works while in the nursery three small children clapped with glee at the success of their game. Activities are well planned in each of the activity rooms and outside areas and are based on children's interests so they get successfully involved. Resources are well used to stimulate children's interest so they want to experiment and explore. Even at this early stage in the term, children in the Reception classes have settled well and teachers already have a good understanding of their abilities from records sent up from the pre-school and nursery and from their initial assessments.

The managers and staff in the three settings work well together to evaluate and improve the provision for the children in their care. Assessments have been moderated so that there is a shared view of the children's learning and development and successful communication between each setting is ensuring a continuous provision for all the children in their care. Effective induction procedures ensure that parents and carers are well informed and children confident in their next steps.

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

Over half of the parents and carers returned the questionnaire (56.6%) which is a higher proportion than is usually seen and the considerable majority of these responses were very supportive of the school and highly complimentary, especially about the care pupils receive and the very effective balance of high challenge and support that enables pupils to reach their potential in all areas of their development.

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The broad curriculum and range of opportunities pupils receive, alongside excellent teaching and strong leadership, are also frequently commented upon. The following comments were typical of many parental responses: 'Our child thoroughly enjoys being at St Joseph's and is developing academically, socially and emotionally to our complete satisfaction', and 'The staff are caring and professional. My daughter has had a fabulous time at St Joseph's. Not only has her academic progress been phenomenal but also her confidence and independence'.

The level of positive responses is much higher than is usually received, but there were a few concerns expressed. Some parents and carers were worried by inappropriate behaviour that they felt was not addressed sufficiently and there were some comments about bullying. The inspectors observed behaviour in classes and around the school. This scrutiny indicated that pupils' behaviour is good, and often outstanding in lessons. Playtimes were fun and a little boisterous and the pupils told inspectors that they have no concerns about bullying. When there are disagreements or upsets they told inspectors that the teaching staff were quick to sort out the problems. All the pupils who returned their questionnaire said they felt safe at school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Josephs' Catholic 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 249 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 440 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	161	65	84	34	2	1	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	164	66	83	33	1	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	105	42	132	53	6	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	118	47	116	47	9	4	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	160	64	82	33	3	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	130	52	109	44	4	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	102	41	132	53	7	3	2	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)	126	51	112	45	2	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	135	54	106	43	4	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	102	41	115	46	18	7	4	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	99	40	124	50	12	5	1	0
The school is led and managed effectively	166	67	75	30	2	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	176	71	67	27	2	1	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



15 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Aldershot, GU11 3DD

Thank you for making us so welcome and answering our questions when we visited you recently. You are rightly proud of your school and what it does for you. You and your parents and carers are correct in thinking that you go to a very special school and we think the care and education it provides for you are excellent. St Joseph's is an outstanding school.

Here are some of the things we found out.

- The staff in the nursery, in the pre-school and in Reception help you to make a good start to your development and learning.
- You make excellent progress in your work to reach high standards.
- You want to do well and enjoy your work.
- You behave well, you are polite, friendly and helpful, you enjoy taking responsibility and have done lots of things to help the school to be a better place. You get on extremely well with one another and have a strong awareness of the needs of others around the world, well supported by your study of fair trade.
- Teaching is outstanding and teachers work hard to make sure that your lessons are interesting. They use information about how well you are doing to ensure your activities build very well on what you already know and can do so you improve rapidly.
- The school is led extremely well by your headteacher and his senior teachers. Everyone works together as a strong team that is extremely well supported by the governing body.
- The staff look after you exceptionally well so you feel extremely safe.

Even though St Joseph's is an outstanding school, there is something we have asked your headteacher and staff to do to make it even better:

- To help children in Year 1 to gradually get used to the changes in the way they need to work after the activities in Reception.

Thank you again for helping us and we wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Callaghan
Lead inspector

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