

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Newport Road, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 2AW

**Inspection dates** 19–20 September 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well at all key stages. Boys and girls do well regardless of their age or background. Disabled pupils and those who need special help make good progress. There has been a marked improvement in standards achieved by more able pupils, particularly in mathematics.
- Teaching is good. Classes are managed well and relationships are positive. However, teachers' planning for more able writers is sometimes not sufficiently challenging. Although the pace of learning is usually good, this is not always the case. Sometimes teachers spend too long introducing lessons.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and pupils feel safe. Boys and girls from different backgrounds play together happily. They develop good collaborative skills and work together very effectively. Pupils enjoy learning and are keen to do well.
- Improvements in the quality of leadership and management by staff and the governing body have had a positive impact on teaching and pupils' achievement. All are united in their determination to provide the best for all the pupils.
- Self-evaluation procedures are good and ensuring accurate data are used well to inform the well-honed development plan. Even so, apart from in English and mathematics, the role of subject leaders is underdeveloped.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although teaching is occasionally outstanding, there is not yet enough to make achievement outstanding. Too few pupils attain the higher level in writing.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Inspectors observed 15 lessons led by nine teachers. Two of these were joint observations undertaken with the headteacher and one of the deputy headteachers.
- Inspectors held meetings with a representative from the local authority, members of the governing body, and with groups of pupils. In addition to a number of meetings with members of staff, the questionnaires completed by 11 members of staff were also taken into account.
- As well as informal discussions with parents and carers at the start of the school day, a meeting was held with eight parents and carers. In addition, account was taken of the 42 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation including the school's analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, the school's raising attainment plans, leaders' monitoring records and pupils' work.

## Inspection team

Keith Sadler, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Sonja Joseph

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a little smaller than the average sized primary school. It serves the three Catholic parishes in Newbury and Hungerford.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and both the percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are broadly average. Very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English.
- The number of pupils supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is about half the national average. These few pupils are entitled to the pupil premium (additional funding).
- The school meets the current floor standards set by the government, which determine the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2014, lift the quality of teaching and learning from good to outstanding by ensuring that:
  - work set for more able pupils in writing is as consistently challenging as in mathematics
  - pupils' skills in grammar are strengthened
  - pupils in Years 3 to 6 are clear about what they need to do to improve their work in reading and writing
  - the pace of learning is not slowed by teachers spending too long introducing lessons.
- By January 2014, strengthen the monitoring and evaluation role of teachers with subject responsibilities to match that of the leaders of English and mathematics.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the previous inspection. When taking account of their different starting points, the proportion making and exceeding the expected progress is above national figures.
- Standards are now above average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher level is high in reading and mathematics. In writing, it is average.
- Children start in the Reception class with skills and abilities that are at expected levels. They make good progress with most attaining the expected goals on entry to Year 1, with almost all doing so in their personal and social skills.
- The children are already confident and secure in the routines of the class and their social skills are being developed well. They made good strides in their understanding of the sounds that letters make in a well-organised lesson and they were delighted in playing sound games.
- Progress across the rest of the school has accelerated and is good in all year groups. At the end of Year 2, standards in reading are above average and benefit from the strong emphasis placed on teaching phonics.
- Standards in mathematics have been boosted. This is because there has been a successful drive to ensure that work is demanding for more able pupils. As a result, there has been a strengthening of these pupils' achievement to current high levels.
- In writing, work for more able pupils is not as sharply defined in writing as in mathematics. Furthermore, staff recognise that pupils' grammar skills are not sufficiently well developed.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well. All made the nationally expected progress during both Key Stages 1 and 2 last year and several exceeded this. In lessons, these pupils make good progress because tasks are matched well to their needs and they are challenged to do their best.
- Pupils in receipt of additional funding achieve well in English and mathematics. Their progress is tracked well and there are good procedures to ensure that they do not slip behind.
- Improved tracking of attainment is used effectively to ensure that all groups achieve well. Boys and girls, pupils known to be entitled to free school meals, those from different ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language all make the same good progress as their classmates.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has improved and is now mostly good across a range of subjects. Some is outstanding. Its impact on achievement is positive. Although a few lessons still require improvement, the proportion has been reduced considerably.
- Teachers establish positive relationships with the pupils who try hard to do their best. Staff ensure that lesson objectives are clearly understood and success criteria for meeting them are generally made explicit. In a successful Year 6 literacy lesson, for example, the teacher cleverly drew from the pupils the key features of biographical writing. These were then used first for pupils to develop success criteria for their writing and later to check their work against them.
- A strength of most lessons is the setting of different tasks that are matched to pupils' varying needs. This is particularly a feature in mathematics and reading. Occasionally, however, work is too easy for more able pupils in writing.
- Marking is generally good. It is thorough and comprehensive. However, pupils are not always aware of the next steps to improve their learning, particularly in reading and writing in Years 3 to 6.
- Teachers are adept at providing opportunities for pupils to collaborate. In most lessons,

teachers use 'talking partners' well to enable them to discuss quickly any topics being considered.

- Pupils say that they enjoy the many opportunities for them to work in pairs and groups. This strategy was used effectively in a Year 5 mathematics lesson when pupils were learning about the properties of triangles. In the activity pupils supported and aided each other well as they drew and then described specific sorts of triangles.
- Reading is taught well with a good emphasis on phonics. This was seen in a session in Reception and in Years 1 and 2 when pupils listened attentively, responded enthusiastically and made good progress in learning about sounds made by combining key letters.
- Good attention is paid to the teaching of pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs because their individual needs are identified quickly and good support from skilled teaching assistants aids their learning.
- There is a good programme of support, complemented by a specialist teacher, for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. These pupils say that they are helped to learn English quickly. They say they are supported well by the adults and also their appointed 'buddies'.
- Inspection findings confirm the school's evaluation of good teaching. It is not yet outstanding because there remain a few lessons that require improvement and the proportion of those that are outstanding is small.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils work hard in lessons and are keen to learn. Their behaviour around the school and in worship is exemplary. They are sensible, thoughtful and considerate of the needs of others. Pupils greatly value the friendships they make in school. Year 6 pupils, for example, say that they thoroughly enjoy being buddies to the new children in the Reception Year.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and their parents and carers agree. Pupils have confidence in the help they would gain from all the adults if they were worried about social or academic issues. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe both in and out of school. Pupils say that there is no bullying but, nonetheless, they have a good understanding of different kinds of bullying, including cyber bullying.
- These strengths are the result of the high levels of care and support provided by the adults. As one parent said, 'There is a positive air about the school.' Staff are rigorous in ensuring that all pupils are given the opportunity to be included in all the school has to offer. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Despite these strengths, behaviour and safety are good rather than outstanding. This is because in some lessons, particularly where the pace is not brisk, pupils' levels of concentration and behaviour wane and pupils become easily distracted and do not stay on task.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The leadership and management of the headteacher are effective and she is supported well by the two deputy headteachers.
- The many improvements made, and the accurate self-evaluation which has identified the school's strengths and weaknesses well, are key reasons why the school's effectiveness has improved.
- Rigorous checking of teaching and learning has been the key to ensuring its consistency. These checks lead to well-conceived targets for teachers to improve. When linked to the wide-ranging programme of training, for both individuals and whole staff training days, the impact on provision has been positive.
- The senior leadership group has benefited from successful support provided by the local authority, particularly in the designing of specific targets for improvement and the

subsequent checking of their implementation. This has led to systems being much more rigorous and also for teachers being held to account for their pupils' progress.

- Improvements in tracking of pupils' progress have enabled staff to ensure that no group of pupils is left behind and this has played an important role in ensuring that all pupils have equality of opportunity.
  - Close attention is paid to additional funding being spent effectively. For example, Years 4, 5 and 6 entitled pupils have benefited from the provision of one-to-one support.
  - The self-evaluation skills of senior staff and leaders for English and mathematics are of high quality. However, the skills of other leaders are not yet sufficiently well developed.
  - Revisions to the curriculum, which have included closer links between different subjects, have made learning more meaningful and enjoyable than previously. The curriculum contributes well to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn to consider important moral and social issues through a strong and consistent programme.
  - The quality of leadership and management is not yet outstanding because its impact on teaching and learning, although improving, is not yet outstanding.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - the effectiveness of the governing body has improved considerably, under the expert leadership of the Chair, and it is now good
    - there is a deep commitment to improve the school's provision and achievement further with the governing body playing a key role in supporting and challenging the school. This is based on good quality information gained from regular visits to check how well the school is moving towards meeting its development targets
    - members of the governing body ensure that statutory regulations are met and they are particularly assiduous in ensuring that all requirements for child protection and staff vetting procedures are fully in place.
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## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110094
<b>Local authority</b>	West Berkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	405270

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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	196
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sinead Hall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison Webster
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 April – 1 May 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01635 43455
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