

St Joseph's Catholic Primary and Nursery School

Main Road, Boughton, Newark, NG22 9JE

Inspection dates 17–18 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Good teaching ensures that pupils make good overall progress in English and mathematics by the time they leave, regardless of their ability or background.
- Teaching is particularly good in the nursery and Year 6 classes, and pupils do particularly well in developing their reading skills.
- Parents and carers are pleased with the quality of education, care and support provided for their children.
- Pupils from all backgrounds are warmly welcomed, and the school ensures that those who need the most support get it.
- Pupils behave well. They have positive attitudes to their work, and know how to keep themselves and others safe.
- Senior leaders, staff and governors work well together as a team in carefully checking the performance of pupils and staff, and planning for improvement. As a result, standards at the end of Year 6 are rising.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in mathematics are not as high as in reading and writing.
- Pupils are not confident enough in using what they already know about numbers to solve mathematical problems quickly.
- In a few lessons, teachers do not stretch the most able pupils because the work they set is not hard enough.
- Teachers do not always encourage pupils to discuss their ideas, for example with a partner, to extend their vocabulary and depth of thinking.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons or parts of lessons. Several of these were joint observations with the headteacher. They included some guided reading sessions. Several groups of pupils also read individually to inspectors.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the senior and middle leadership teams, groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and the special educational needs coordinator. A representative of the local authority also spoke to the lead inspector by phone.
- Inspectors took account of the views of nine parents and carers as expressed in Parent View, the online questionnaire. They also studied information from the school's most recent parent survey, and spoke to several parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring information, records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding, and minutes of governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Sue Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Richard Boswell

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is broadly average in size for a primary school.
- Slightly more pupils than usual are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. This provides additional funding for children known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and those from service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs through school action is above average.
- The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is a little below average.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage with a very small number speaking English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils from Traveller families is well above the national average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils join or leave partway through their primary school education.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently at least good and increase the amount that is outstanding by:
 - checking that lesson activities are always demanding, particularly for the more-able pupils
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to discuss and develop their ideas with someone else.
- Raise standards, particularly in mathematics, by ensuring that:
 - pupils develop their mental mathematical skills and the confidence to solve problems speedily and accurately
 - senior leaders and subject leaders are more thorough in identifying further steps for improvement in all subjects, but especially in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children join the Nursery and Reception classes with skills that are well below the expectations for their age in communication and social development. Staff welcome all children warmly and they settle happily. They make good overall progress, particularly in the Nursery, where staff focus very effectively on developing children's speaking skills.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 are rising. They are currently above average in English and on track to be at a similar level in mathematics by the end of the year. Most pupils make good overall progress, particularly when they have been in school for right through from the Early Years Foundation Stage to the end of Year 6.
- Pupils do best in their reading, and are typically confident in working out unfamiliar words. Good teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) and enjoyable guided reading sessions have a positive impact on reading skills, and also mean that pupils often write well too. Reading records show that many pupils in all age groups read regularly to an adult. This helps them continue to develop their skills and comprehension.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of mathematics but they are sometimes a little slow in their mental calculations. Some lack the confidence to use what they already know to solve a range of mathematical problems.
- Thorough checks on the progress made by every pupil help staff to quickly identify where additional support and guidance are needed. As a result, pupils who speak English as an additional language, those from Traveller families and any pupils who join late all make similar progress to their classmates. The school's close links with the Traveller community mean that families choose to return their children to the school over several years.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do well because individual support and guidance helps them from an early stage to make good progress towards the individual targets set for them.
- More-able pupils make good overall progress, though occasionally they could do even better. A few say work is sometimes a little easy, but teachers are making better use of the information from checking their work to set more challenging tasks, especially in Year 6.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Throughout the school staff have very effective working relationships with the pupils, and provide them with much praise and support that raises their self-confidence. Pupils' responses in lessons are valued, and this motivates them to 'have a go' without fear of failure.
- Where teaching is most effective, staff work very successfully to provide activities that interest and motivate the pupils to learn. For example, those in Year 6 made excellent progress in designing an Aztec God of chocolate because of excellent teaching about the Aztec civilisation.
- Staff make good use of questions to encourage pupils to describe what they are doing and thinking. For example, in the Nursery children listened to a recording of various noises that they

matched to picture clue cards, and were encouraged to describe what made these noises using new words.

- Some staff carefully plan opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas with a friend or adult. Occasionally, however, pupils have to sit and listen to a teacher for too long and their concentration wavers.
- Teachers show that they have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve over time. In a few lessons observed, though, staff did not demand enough from some pupils. The sample of pupils' work also shows that occasionally work is too easy for pupils who are capable of reaching higher levels.
- Support staff are often used well to assist the least able pupils and sometimes those who are more able. They are also usually, though not always, deployed well at the start of lessons when the teacher is talking to the whole class.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is good

- Parents and carers rightly believe that the way in which all children are welcomed and valued as individuals is a strength of the school. Pupils from all backgrounds get on well together and enjoy being part of this caring community. The school promotes a good understanding of cultural differences and is committed to promoting equality and tolerance of others.
- The large majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Most say they like school and clearly enjoy regular activities including registration. Older pupils particularly enjoy touches of humour in their lessons. Pupils also like the warm responses of catering staff, which help them to feel valued and cared for.
- Discussions with pupils show that they have a good understanding of how to keep safe in and out of school. They recognise the positive and negative sides to using computers, for example when communicating via the internet, and understand their individual responsibilities. They are able to identify different types of bullying, and are confident that if they raise any concerns, the staff will deal with them quickly and effectively.
- Many pupils grow in confidence as they move through the school, as illustrated in the ideas and opinions of older pupils. Occasionally a few do not push themselves to answer questions or to produce their very best work.
- Improving attendance and punctuality has been an important focus since the last inspection. Attendance has risen and is now broadly average, although it is still affected by pupils from all backgrounds taking holidays in term time. Most pupils now arrive punctually. The school works hard to stress the importance of regular attendance, and the impact absence and lateness have on progress.

The leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and assistant headteacher work closely together to lead and manage the school. Together with the governing body, they share a clearly expressed determination that the

school will keep moving forward by improving teaching and raising standards.

- The school has effective systems to check and track the progress pupils make. Pupil premium funding is used carefully, including for after-school activities and residential visits, and the school carefully tracks the impact of such expenditure on the progress of specific groups of pupils.
- The staff work closely together as a team. Their understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school is generally accurate, and senior staff are focusing on the right areas for improvement. This ensures the school has good capacity to improve further. The monitoring of teaching is generally thorough but is occasionally overgenerous.
- The school holds teachers appropriately to account for pupils' progress, although the link between pupils' standards and teachers' pay is not always clear, particularly for staff with additional responsibilities such as leadership of subject areas.
- The subject leaders for literacy and numeracy have monitored pupils' work in English and mathematics, and have led training activities to improve staff skills. Such activities have met with mixed success because their involvement in monitoring teaching is not extensive enough. This has meant that they are sometimes uncertain about specifically what else needs to be done to ensure improvement, especially in mathematics.
- The local authority provides 'light touch' support for this good school. It has provided training for governors which has enabled them to develop their skills well.
- Planning in different subjects includes regular activities that promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. It also has an effective focus on building pupils' literacy skills, for example when they write detailed accounts in history. Opportunities to use their numeracy skills in different subjects are more limited.
- The school has good links with parents and carers and tries to involve them in the life of the school and in supporting their children's education. Most of the families spoken to during the inspection are very pleased with how the school looks after and educates their children.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - is good because governors have developed their role in holding the school to account for the standards achieved, by asking searching questions of senior staff
 - is effective in developing links with the local community, including Traveller families
 - has a good understanding of the need to rigorously monitor all areas for which governors hold responsibility, including the impact of pupil premium expenditure and performance-related pay awards for teachers
 - ensures that procedures and policies to safeguard the pupils meet current national requirements.

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

Unique reference number	122822
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	403501

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tracey Pearson
Headteacher	Mike Donoghue
Date of previous school inspection	15 October 2007
Telephone number	01623 860392
Fax number	N/a
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