

St Joseph's Catholic Primary

Langwith Road, Langwith Junction, Mansfield, NG20 9RP

Inspection dates 14–15 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders, managers and governors have been very successful in bringing about rapid improvements in both teaching and learning.
- Pupils achieve well. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now well above average.
- Teachers are highly motivated and enthusiastic. This is because systems for sharing best practice are very well developed and senior leaders provide excellent guidance. There are exceptionally rigorous processes for checking on teachers' work.
- Teaching is good throughout the school and some is outstanding. Lessons are well planned and interesting.
- Behaviour and safety are excellent. The pupils are hard working, enthusiastic learners. Their respectful and caring attitudes contribute significantly to the positive atmosphere in school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural understanding is developed extremely well. The school community is mutually supportive, as one parent said, 'We're one big family.'

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to make decisions about their own learning.
- Sometimes teachers do not check that pupils have acted on the advice they give them when they mark their work.
- In some lessons, teachers do not find interesting ways of adapting work to ensure that all pupils learn as well as they can.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 17 lessons taught by seven teachers and visited smaller groups during sessions teaching letters and the sounds they make (phonics). They conducted a learning walk to see work across a broad range of subjects displayed around the school and in classrooms.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils and spoke with others during break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and examined the work in their books.
- Inspectors talked with the headteacher, subject leaders, teachers, representatives of the governing body and a local authority officer.
- Inspectors analysed 23 responses from parents on the Parent View website and the school's own survey of parent views. They also talked with parents at the start of the school day. They took into account the views expressed in seven questionnaires returned by staff.
- The inspectors examined a range of documents including the school development plan, progress tracking data and analyses, policies relating to the safeguarding of pupils and the school brochure.

Inspection team

Christine Merrick, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sharon Jackson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most primary schools.
- There is a smaller-than-average proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and from families with parents in the armed forces.
- The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is smaller than most primary schools, though this has been growing in recent years. There is also a smaller-than-average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is smaller than average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is also smaller than most schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - allowing pupils to make more choices about the way they learn, the topics that they investigate and the way they present their findings
 - ensuring that all teachers consistently follow up their written advice to pupils
 - adjusting to cater for pupils' different aptitudes and preferred styles of learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The school assesses children as below the levels expected of children at this age when they start school, particularly in communication and language skills. Children settle well and make good progress because they enjoy the activities provided for them. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage most are at least in line with expectations. They are confident and secure because relationships are warm and nurturing.
- Good progress is sustained across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Pupils leave Year 6, on average, the equivalent of a year ahead of pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because teaching has become much more effective in mathematics and English, particularly in writing.
- In Reception, children begin to learn about the sounds that letters make. They make good progress and, by the time they reach Year 2, they can use this understanding well. As a result, a very large majority reach or exceed expected levels in both reading and writing, including those children who are learning English as an additional language.
- Pupils read widely. They use their skills across a range of subjects, such as when a Year 5 class used the internet to find out all they could about Lord Shaftsbury. In Year 6, pupils are able to analyse and comment on how newspaper reports present information and seek to influence views by the language they use.
- Pupils eligible for funding through the pupil premium make good progress. The additional provision has included extra reading books to support their understanding of letters and sounds, one-to-one support for individuals and extra adults in the classroom to support small groups of pupils. This additional provision is very carefully monitored to ensure that it has a positive impact on pupils' learning, and these pupils are as successful as the others in school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs reach standards that are above average due to excellent systems for identifying their needs, targeting support and close monitoring of their progress. Demanding tasks and high expectations ensure that pupils of all abilities achieve as well as they can.

The quality of teaching is good

- Lessons are always conducted at a brisk pace. This means that pupils are kept engaged and interested throughout. Lessons are very well planned and build well on pupils' previous learning. Activities are interesting and motivating, as, for instance, when Year 2 pupils explored electrical circuits to light bulbs and work buzzers.
- Some teaching is outstanding. In these lessons, excellent use is made of searching questions that both reinforce learning and deepen understanding. They also contribute to pupils' capacity to empathise with others. This was evident in a Year 5 discussion about life during the industrial revolution, when pupils showed great maturity in sharing their thinking with others.
- The atmosphere in classrooms is very positive. Teachers build mutually trusting relationships with the pupils and develop great enthusiasm for learning. In one lesson, pupils cheered when given an additional extension activity that stretched their capabilities because they were enjoying the challenge so much.

- Teachers give directions that are very clear and explicit, with precise guidance on what and how they want pupils to learn. Sometimes, this dominates lessons so that they become quite teacher directed. This means that, in some classes, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to make choices about what they investigate and how they present their findings to others.
- Pupils know what they are expected to learn because teachers explain clearly what success looks like. Pupils are given opportunities to check how well they have achieved their aims and skilful marking ensures that pupils get good feedback on their work. In some classes, though, teachers do not check that pupils follow the advice they are given, which means that mistakes are repeated.
- Teachers work very well with other adults who support them in the classroom. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported extremely well during whole-class teaching, in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. In the most successful lessons, teachers provide additional resources and adjust work appropriately to ensure that all children make good progress. However, in other lessons, tasks set do not always take sufficient account of the different ways that children learn. For instance, in one class, pupils of different aptitudes were given very similar worksheets.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils enjoy school immensely and attendance has improved as a result. They are very enthusiastic about their lessons and the opportunities that they are given, such as dressing up as Tudors and the residential trip to Briars. Pupils are very loyal to the school and are proud to be part of the school community.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They work extremely well together and support each other's learning very effectively. For instance, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, the most able group were asked to explain what they had learnt then supported others by talking with them about the problems they were having.
- In the corridors and at lunchtime, pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They show great respect to others, whether adults or children. They are exceptionally polite and courteous and are delightful to talk to because they are warm and welcoming to visitors. Their attentive, diligent behaviour in class ensures that lessons proceed smoothly and there are no disruptions.
- There is no evidence of bullying in school. Pupils speak very highly of how they are treated by their peers. Parents and staff all agree that standards of behaviour are very high and that any small issues are dealt with very quickly. One parent felt that this was because either the headteacher or deputy headteacher is available on the playground every morning to discuss any issues and deal with them immediately.
- Pupils feel safe and secure in school. They are mindful of each other's needs on the playground and in the classroom. The youngest children play well together and share resources without arguments. Older pupils understand the need for caution when using the internet and are thoughtful and mature about looking after themselves.
- Pupils are conscientious and are eager to take on responsibilities. One Year 6 pupil expressed her enjoyment at being nominated to be house captain, having written a persuasive piece of writing to the house members. Pupils plan and lead assemblies, finding scriptures or music that relate to the topic under consideration and finding artefacts to use for reflection.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher's determination and drive are exceptional. She is highly ambitious for the school and has extremely high expectations of both staff and pupils. She has successfully changed the culture of the school, raising aspirations and tackling underperformance very rigorously. A very large majority of parents felt that the school was well led and managed.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have systems for checking the work of the school that are very robust. They ensure that clear targets are set for staff at all levels and that pay awards are given only where teaching is good. Meticulous attention is paid to very well-focused school improvement plans that ensure areas for development are tackled thoroughly and successfully.
- The deputy headteacher and other senior members of staff provide excellent professional support for less experienced staff. They have been instrumental in raising the quality of teaching. There are very high quality training and development opportunities and newly qualified teachers are particularly well supported.
- Relationships with parents are excellent. Parents appreciate the very effective communication and easy access to staff and senior management. As one parent explained, 'The doors are always open.' Parents are effusive in their praise for the school and recognise the huge improvements to both teaching and learning since the last inspection.
- The local authority provided good support whilst the school was in the process of change. They now provide light-touch support because the school is successfully sustaining improvements over time. It continues to support self-evaluation through its 'Quality Development Dialogue' visits.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well because monitoring systems are effective and they are closely involved in planning improvements. They oversee the school's finances successfully and have ensured that additional funding through the pupil premium is used well. They can point to gains made by pupils as a result of resources provided. Governors provide both support and challenge to the school because they have the skills and knowledge to ask appropriate, challenging questions when examining data. They ensure that arrangements for pupils' welfare and safeguarding meet all current regulatory 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	112908
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	401319

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	163
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Neale
Headteacher	Deborah Tibble
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2010
Telephone number	01623 742609
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Email address	headteacher@st-josephs-pri.derbyshire.sch.uk

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