

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Mobberley Road, Goldenhill, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST6 5RN

## Inspection dates

11–12 December 2012

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' achievement has improved over the last three years. However, this is not fast enough and too few pupils make good progress.
- Teaching is improving but there is not enough that is good or better to make sure that most pupils make consistently good progress over time.
- Subject leadership is at an early stage of development and subject leaders do not know enough about how well pupils in their subjects are doing. There is no leader for the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result there has not been enough capacity at senior leader level to improve the school quickly.
- Opportunities are sometimes missed to help children learn quickly by focused questioning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

### The school has the following strengths

- Attainment for most pupils was above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in 2012 because some teachers are able to challenge pupils so that they make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and has improved over the last three years. Pupils feel safe and contribute much to the friendly and positive atmosphere in school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils enjoy taking responsibilities and develop leadership skills.
- The acting executive headteacher and the governing body have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done to further improve.
- All the staff have supported the executive headteacher very well during a difficult time of change and have worked well with staff from the other schools in the loose collaboration to improve the quality of teaching.
- The checking up on the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is improving. Consequently, the gap between the attainment of these pupils and others is narrowing.

## Information about this inspection

- Two additional inspectors visited 14 lessons and observed eight teachers.
- The inspectors spoke to pupils, listened to a small number of them read and looked at the work in pupils' English, mathematics, art and topic books.
- They scrutinised many documents including data on pupils' progress, the school's checks on how well it is doing, minutes of governing body meetings, various school policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils.
- Discussions were held with members of staff, representatives of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of parents' views using the school's recent survey, the responses of 11 parents using the online questionnaire in Parent View and informal conversations with parents bringing their children to school.

## Inspection team

Judith Straw, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Patricia Cope

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Joseph's is an average-sized Roman Catholic primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- A small proportion of pupils are from Gipsy, Romany and Traveller families.
- Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is above average. In this school this includes pupils known to be entitled to receive free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion supported through school action is just below average and those supported through school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, the expected minimum standards set for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has Healthy School and Activemark awards.
- The school has been led by an acting executive headteacher for nearly three years. During this time the executive headteacher has had responsibility for three Catholic primary schools across four different sites. However, a new headteacher will take up her post at St Joseph's in January 2013. The executive headteacher will then return to her original school. There is currently an acting deputy headteacher until the newly appointed deputy headteacher takes up her post in April 2013.
- Since the previous inspection there have been several changes in staffing and in membership of the governing body and the senior leadership team has been restructured.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
  - ensuring that all lessons have the same pace and variety of activities as the best and that activities do not go on for too long, so that pupils stay interested in their work
  - making sure that pupils always finish their work
  - marking books so that a dialogue is built between teachers and pupils, so that pupils are expected to respond to comments from teachers and so improve their work
  - ensuring that pupils understand the words they encounter and the sounds they make (phonics).
- Improve the quality of education in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - using questioning to take children's learning forward
  - ensuring that children learn well when choosing activities for themselves
  - developing leadership skills in the Nursery and Reception classes and, when appropriate, appointing a coordinator for Early Years learning.
- Improve the effectiveness of the school's leaders by:
  - developing the skills of subject leaders in checking on the progress and achievement of pupils in their subject areas.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils' reading, writing and mathematics are improving steadily. This is because teachers work hard to try and make up for gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills which developed in earlier years. Three years ago pupils made too little progress in most classes. However, this unsatisfactory position is being remedied each year so that progress is now broadly average, especially in reading and mathematics. This means further improvement is required in order for progress to be good. Pupils' progress in writing lags only a little behind and the school has made writing a particular focus this year.
- Some pupils start Key Stage 2 with above average attainment and should reach well above average by the end of Year 6. Teaching has not been consistently good enough to make this happen. The rate at which pupils learn is now improving; in Years 5 and 6 and in some other classes progress is now good.
- In 2012, not enough pupils in Year 6 achieved the higher Level 5 in both English and mathematics.
- Pupils from Gypsy, Romany and Traveller heritages make better progress than similar pupils in other schools and some achieve well.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make expected progress because the school carefully checks upon their work and provides support in various ways, such as by putting them in small groups and sometimes providing one-to-one tuition.
- Pupil premium funding is spent in helping pupils to improve their self-confidence, gain access to a good variety of after-school activities and get extra help in lessons. As a result, these pupils are making better progress and the gap is narrowing between their attainment and that of other pupils.
- Children enter the Nursery with skills a little below what is expected for their age. They make steady progress in Nursery and Reception but are still a little below average when they enter Year 1.
- Pupils concentrate well in lessons, listen to their teachers and enjoy working independently or in pairs and groups.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The staff have responded well to the executive headteacher's drive to improve the quality of teaching and this accounts for standards rising. However, teaching throughout the school is not yet consistently strong enough to ensure that most pupils achieve above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics over time, which would represent good progress.
- The pace of learning in some lessons is slower because teachers talk for too long and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to work independently. Where teaching is good, pupils rise to the challenge of high expectations. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 6 pupils were decided what they were going to investigate and how they would go about it. In better lessons, teachers split learning into several timed chunks with pupils constantly completing tasks and moving on to the next so that learning is fast and keeps pupils keen and interested.
- Teaching assistants are often effective in supporting the learning of pupils who need extra time and help with basic literacy and numeracy skills. Their work with individuals and small groups contributes to the progress of pupils supported through the pupil premium funding and those on school action and school action plus.
- Teachers mark books regularly and conscientiously. However, some pupils do not finish work in their books and sometimes do not respond to requests from teachers to improve or add to their work.
- Phonics is taught systematically and regularly in most classes. However, sometimes mistakes are

not explored to identify why children are having difficulties. Some pupils can read quite difficult words but have no idea what they mean.

- In the Nursery and Reception classes children learn through purposeful play, share equipment well and use their imaginations. However, sometimes adults miss opportunities to extend children's thinking and speaking and so take learning further. The staff are working hard to improve their assessment procedures and to ensure that they are accurate.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, sometimes when children choose their activities, these lack proper focus so that children do not see how what they are doing links to the main learning for the day.

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

- All the pupils and most of the parents agree that behaviour is typically good and has improved over the last two years. Scrutiny of behavioural records confirms the improving position.
- Pupils say that bullying is very rare. They agree that there is little name-calling or any other kind of bullying and if it occurs it is swiftly dealt with by adults. As a result pupils feel happy and safe in school and enjoy their learning. They say that all the staff are approachable, listen to their views and respond well to any concerns that they might have.
- Pupils have a good understanding about possible sources of danger such as on the road, drugs, alcohol and using the internet and social media.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities such as serving on the school and eco councils and improving awareness of road safety.
- Attendance is improving and is broadly average over time. Senior leaders keep a record of the attendance of all pupils to identify any who fall short of the norm, and try to work in partnership with parents to raise their awareness of the importance of regular attendance. The school works well with other agencies in supporting the attendance of Gypsy, Romany and Traveller pupils so that the attendance of these pupils has improved.

### **The leadership and management requires improvement**

- The acting executive headteacher has been well supported by all the staff in improving the school over the last three years, particularly for behaviour, teaching and learning. The pace has been slower than the school would have wanted, partly because the executive headteacher has had major responsibilities in three schools.
- The leadership of teaching and learning has been successful in eliminating inadequate teaching. Senior leaders have a good understanding of the strengths in teaching and the areas where it can be improved. There is a greater proportion of good teaching than previously so that good practice can be shared within the school and in other schools in the loose federation.
- The executive headteacher has sharpened staff performance management procedures so that pay is linked to teaching and management performance and to raising standards.
- Pupil progress meetings are held every half term so that teachers have a much clearer idea about which pupils are making the progress expected of them and which are falling behind and need extra support.
- All pupils have equal opportunities to be successful and the gaps between the attainment and progress of different groups, including those supported through pupil premium funding, are narrowing.
- Subject leadership is at a very early stage because the priority has rightly been to improve teaching and learning, especially in English and mathematics. The school is aware that that subject leadership is the next stage of development in improving leadership and management across the school.
- Significant improvements have been made in the Early Years Foundation Stage over the last two years. Assessment of how well children are doing is now regular and more accurate, progress is

improving and communication with parents is now good. Aspects which still need to be developed are the use of assessment information to plan more effectively for the next steps children need to make and better use of questioning to extend children's thinking, investigations and exploration of their learning.

- The curriculum captures pupils' interest, is balanced and meets the needs of the pupils. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about activities, such as trips to the theatre, an inspirational trip to the Paralympics, dance club and other sporting activities. Pupils always enjoy the Year 6 residential week where they have the chance to try new activities such as rock climbing. Pupils insist that, 'school is a fun place to be'.
- Safeguarding has a high profile in school and is regularly reviewed at staff meetings and is always discussed at governors' meetings.
- The local authority has provided some effective support in the last six months in the areas of developing teaching and learning and in improving what is provided in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are well informed about the school through personal contact, regular visits and accurate reports from the executive headteacher. They study the reports and have regular discussions with teachers and leaders. Their range of expertise, together with training they have undertaken, means that they are in a good position to both support and challenge the school to do even better. Governors are well aware of where the school has improved and what still needs to be done to become a good school. They pay particular attention to the headteacher's management of performance and how the additional pupil premium funding is spent on supporting those at risk of underachieving. They have worked well alongside the governing bodies from the three schools that were in a loose federation until September of this year. Under the leadership of the executive headteacher, the business manager and the governing body, the school has succeeded in eliminating a large budget deficit.

## 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>	124314
<b>Local authority</b>	Stoke-On-Trent
<b>Inspection number</b>	402251

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	234
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Christine Hulme
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Butters
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 235393
<b>Fax number</b>	01782 235394
<b>Email address</b>	stjoseph@sgfl.org.uk



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