

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Lancaster

Aldrens Lane, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 2DU

**Inspection dates** 23–24 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	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

- Although achievement is improving it is not yet good. The proportion of pupils making or exceeding expected progress is not yet sustained over time, particularly in English and mathematics.
- The progress made by pupils is not rapid enough, particularly at Key Stage 1.
- Although teaching is improving, there are still a few lessons that require improvement. Teachers do not always set work that helps pupils to learn well.
- Teaching assistants do not always provide consistently effective support across all areas.
- The classrooms and learning areas do not always excite pupils enough to enable them to learn well.
- The governing body is not yet fully developed to provide sufficient support and challenge to school's leaders at all levels.
- Senior leaders and the governing body do not rigorously monitor and evaluate the progress of different groups of pupils.

### The school has the following strengths

- The behaviour of pupils and their attitudes to learning are good. Pupils are polite and well-mannered to each other and to adults.
- Every pupil is equally valued. They are well cared for and say they feel safe in school.
- The curriculum offers a good range of subjects, topics and opportunities that contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The reading programme has developed pupils' reading skills well.
- Senior leaders and the governing body have a clear view of how successful the school can be and what needs to be done to improve it further.
- Senior leaders and the governing body have demonstrated a clear commitment to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Consequently, since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching has improved.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed nine lessons taught by nine teachers. Two lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils, with staff, two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, including documents relating to behaviour and safeguarding, minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's analysis of how well it is doing and its improvement plan, the school's data on pupils' progress and pupils' work.
- Inspectors took account of the 56 responses to the parents' survey carried out by the school in April 2012. There were no responses from parents recorded in the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also took account of the 32 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Alan Parkinson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Shutt

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Joseph's is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average. The pupil premium is the additional funding provided for children in local authority care, known to be eligible for free school meals and the children of forces families.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of those supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school has not met the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good or better in order to accelerate pupil progress by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and providing further opportunities to challenge pupils
  - further developing the role of teaching assistants to enable them to provide consistent effective support to pupils across all areas
  - further developing learning areas that stimulate pupils and offer richer opportunities to learn.
- Improve leadership and management at all levels, including governance, by:
  - further developing the role of the governing body and providing appropriate training for the newly appointed governors, to enable them to provide better support and challenge to school leaders at all levels
  - ensuring that the progress made by all groups of pupils is rigorously checked and evaluated across all areas.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are well below those expected for their age. Some children's personal, social and emotional development skills are exceptionally low. Good teaching in the Nursery enables children to make good progress. However, the attainment of most children remains well below age-related expectations on entry to Reception. The mainly good provision in Reception enables good progress to be maintained. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, most children are nearer to the attainment expected for their age.
- In Key Stage 1, the progress made by pupils slows because teaching is not always good. In 2012, pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics improved after declining in 2011. However, pupils' attainment in writing continued to decline.
- Between Years 3 and 6 pupils make expected progress in English and mathematics but fewer pupils than nationally make better than expected progress. At the end of Year 6, levels of attainment in reading and mathematics are higher than in writing but remain below national levels overall.
- An emphasis on improving pupils' reading skills through the whole-school reading programme is successfully raising pupils' attainment in reading. The school has recently introduced strategies to improve pupils' writing skills and there are now signs that this is starting to work.
- The gaps in achievement between different groups of pupils, including those supported by the pupil premium, vary from year-to-year. The pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide additional support, such as, one-to-one or small-group work focussing on literacy and mathematics. The gaps between the attainment of those pupils who are eligible for free school meals and all other pupils in the school are beginning to close. However, this improvement is not consistent across all areas and across all year groups.
- The few pupils who speak English as an additional language, those from ethnic minority backgrounds, disabled pupils, and those who have special educational needs make similar progress and sometimes better progress than their peers.
- Although pupils' achievement and rate of progress is improving, overall it requires improvement because it is not yet rapid enough and consistently strong over a sustained period.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage good teaching provides children with many opportunities to be actively involved in their lessons. For example, the extensive and high-quality outdoor area provides children with exciting opportunities to develop their learning through play.
- In the best lessons, teaching is well organised and planned. Pupils are given work that helps them to learn quickly and good opportunities are provided for them to share their ideas with each other. Pupils respond well to effective questioning that encourages them to think for themselves. For example, in a Year 5 English lesson, pupils were actively engaged asking questions to their peers in the 'hot seat' about their trip to a re-cycling plant. Pupils said they really enjoyed their trip and that it helped to develop their awareness of the environment and waste.
- Pupils say that they enjoy school, enjoy their lessons and feel that they are taught well.
- In a few lessons where teaching is less effective, teachers do not provide work that enables all pupils to learn well enough. This is because teachers do not always set work that is hard enough for pupils of varying abilities and their expectations of what the pupils can do are not always high enough. As a result, some pupils do not learn quickly enough.
- The classrooms and general learning areas do not show pupils' work or provide displays that excite pupils' imagination or develop their creativity and thinking skills well enough.

- The teaching of reading has improved and pupils' achievement is improving as a result. Pupils throughout the school are aware of the school's drive to get them reading more often and more competently. In a well-organised Year 2 session, pupils were actively involved in developing their phonic skills (linking letters to the sounds that they make) to read difficult words, and made good progress.
- Teaching contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through activities such as school assemblies, the 'Wednesday Word', visiting artists, school trips and by encouraging cooperation and group working.
- Although pupils' work is regularly marked and teachers use praise effectively to encourage pupils, they do not always provide specific written comments that tell pupils what they need to do to improve.
- Teaching assistants are used well in some lessons to support learning, particularly for lower-ability pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. In these lessons their contribution enables pupils' to develop their skills and achieve well. However, in some lessons the use of teaching assistants is less effective and some pupils do not make good progress.

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

- Pupils are polite and well mannered. The relationships among pupils and between pupils and adults are very good.
- The pupils have good attitudes to learning. They are keen to participate in their lessons and they help each other learn through good collaboration and cooperation. This enables lessons to proceed smoothly without interruption. However, on a few occasions, particularly when they are not taught by their usual teacher, some pupils' behaviour is not always good.
- Pupils say they feel safe because they are well cared for by teachers and other adults. Playtimes are lively but friendly and pupils behave safely in the playground at break times.
- The responses to the parental survey carried out by the school are positive. They indicate that a very large majority of parents agree that pupils behave well in school, that they are not bullied and that they are well cared for.
- The school provides opportunities for pupils to develop as responsible individuals. For example, raising money for charities, such as Red Nose Day, Cafod and support for schools in Africa, by being members of the school council and by the older pupils helping those in the infant classes.
- Attendance has recently improved but remains below the national average. The school works in a close and effective partnership with the local authority to address attendance and punctuality issues.

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

- The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body have accurately identified the school's strengths and areas for further development. Raising standards further by improving the quality of teaching is the school's main priority.
- Regular lesson observations and monitoring systems provide accurate information on the quality of teaching in the school. Feedback is provided to teachers on their performance to ensure that teaching and achievement continue to improve. This information is used well by the headteacher in order to provide a relevant programme of staff training and to advise the governing body about teachers' promotion and movement up the salary scale.
- The school's systems for checking individual pupils' progress are good. Any differences in pupils' achievement are identified swiftly and action taken. Pupils at risk of falling behind in their learning are quickly identified and additional support is provided. This shows the school's commitment to offering equal opportunity for all its pupils. However, the school does not

rigorously monitor the progress made by different groups of pupils. Therefore, the information needed to compare the progress made by different groups against national averages is not available.

- The curriculum is well planned so that it meets pupils' interests well. The school provides pupils with a variety of activities to enrich pupils' experiences. For example, topic work, which draws subjects together, and enrichment activities, such as, the trip to Houghton Tower to support Year 4 pupils work on the Tudors, provide good opportunities for pupils to develop a wide range of academic and social skills. These contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Safeguarding procedures and policies meet statutory requirements. The school has effective procedures in place to protect pupils, especially those pupils whose circumstances make them most vulnerable. This is strengthened by the effective partnership and support from the local authority.
- The school has benefited from the local authority's effective and valuable advice and support in improving its performance.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has operated with only six members out of a possible 13 during the last twelve months. Although, governors know the school well and have a clear view of the quality of teaching, they have not been able to give enough support or challenge to school leaders at all levels. The vacant positions have been filled and the school now has a full complement of governors. Governors are now beginning to challenge school leaders, and continue to use performance management to set appropriate and challenging targets to further promote school improvement. They have a good understanding of the school's finances. This includes using pupil premium funding to provide one-to-one support and additional teaching and learning opportunities in order to improve the English and mathematical skills of those pupils who are at risk of falling behind. However, they do not always rigorously check and evaluate the impact of teaching and improvement strategies on the progress made by different groups of pupils.

## 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>	119620
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	401857

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>	226
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Ryan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Juliet Walling
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 July 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01524 65576
<b>Fax number</b>	01524 60588
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