

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Davey Drive, Hollingdean, Brighton, BN1 7BF

Inspection dates

6–7 February 2013

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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress during their time at St Joseph's, despite many entering the school with knowledge and skills well below those expected for their age. As a result, the majority of pupils achieve well by the time they leave the school and their attainment is in line with their peers nationally.
- Teachers work hard to ensure that lessons interest and engage learners. They make sure that work is matched well to pupils' needs. They provide a good level of support for pupils who struggle with learning, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, or those who speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well.
- Leaders and managers have set up effective systems to ensure that pupils are given maximum opportunity to achieve as well as they can. They recognise that there has been underachievement in the past, and have worked hard to ensure that this is no longer the case.
- The strong governing body has a clear view of the school's strengths and has carefully planned the next steps for its further improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not consistently make good use of other adults in the classroom to ensure that pupils are given the best chances to have their learning moved on at speed.
- Information and communication technology is not used effectively enough as a tool to support learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, of which one was a joint observation with a senior leader.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, the school's middle and senior leaders, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 16 responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection. They also looked at 22 staff questionnaires, taking account of their views, which covered all aspects of school life.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation, including records of the checks made on teaching, the school's improvement plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, health and safety checks and extracts from the school's checks on pupils' progress. Inspectors looked at pupils' written work and listened to groups of pupils read.

Inspection team

Lindsey Diamond, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Carolyn Steer

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Joseph's is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, and those who speak English as an additional language, is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average, as is the proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- More pupils than usual join or leave the school other than at the normal admission times.
- Pupils are mostly taught in single-age classes, with one class in each year group. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 are organised into two mixed-age classes.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium, which is additional funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families, is higher than normally found.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- No pupils attend any alternative provision, such as teaching in other schools or units.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance the impact of teaching on learning across the curriculum by ensuring that all teachers:
 - make full use of other adults at all times during lessons, both for teaching and assessment purposes
 - cater fully for the needs of all learners by allowing maximum opportunities for the use of information and communication technology as a tool to support independent learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The high number of pupils who enter and leave the school within different year groups poses challenges for the school in ensuring good progress in learning. However, effective systems have been set up to support all learners, irrespective of the time they spend at St Joseph's. Because of this, the majority of pupils make good progress, with many pupils who remain at the school for the whole of their primary career making exceptionally rapid progress.
- When they start in Reception, children's skills and understanding are often well below the levels expected for their age. They settle quickly into school routines and make good progress during their year in Reception.
- This good progress continues as pupils move up the school. There are some year groups who historically have not made as much progress as others. The school is very aware that accelerating the learning of these pupils is paramount and through focused high-quality teaching, has done much to ensure that they catch up and attain as well as they are able.
- Current evidence shows that pupils make consistently good progress in all year groups. By the time pupils leave in Year 6, they achieve well in both English and mathematics and their attainment is broadly in line with the national average.
- The school has set up effective systems to identify individual pupils who are falling behind in their learning and support them in catching up with their peers. Half-termly 'pathways' meetings clearly monitor this progress and ensure that learning is as fast as it should be for pupils.
- Pupils of all ages learn different ways to help them to read. The school has worked hard to ensure that pupils are using phonics (the sounds that letters make) to read unfamiliar words and are given the opportunity to read a variety of books. They are encouraged to use these skills across the curriculum, not just in specific reading sessions. Pupils are confident in reading and in discussing their books. Older pupils read fluently and with expression and deduce information from what they have read.
- The progress and attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, based on their average points scores at the end of Year 6, were just below pupils nationally in 2012. The gap is now closing further because of the effective use of pupil premium funding on additional staffing to support pupils in improving their skills in year groups that have previously underachieved, and on extra learning activities for eligible pupils. The school is effective in narrowing any gap between the attainment of individuals eligible for the funding and other pupils.
- Minority ethnic pupils and pupils speaking English as an additional language make good progress.
- Because of a focus on their learning, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs generally make consistently good, and often outstanding, progress. This is a strength of the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is now good, with some that is outstanding. As a result of this, most pupils make at least good progress over time.
- Teachers have high expectations of learners and this is recognised and valued by pupils. One pupil expressed this clearly by commenting that 'if learning is challenging, it is about right'. Teachers regularly praise pupils for the effort that they make in learning, irrespective of how highly they attain. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, the teacher was quick to congratulate a pupil who had struggled and then achieved success with a calculation, by saying 'we really do notice when you have made an effort'. As a result, this pupil was keen to try even more challenging tasks.

- Lessons are carefully planned to cater for the learning needs of individuals and groups. Teachers are flexible in deviating from these plans if their careful questioning of pupils during lessons shows that there are gaps in learning that need to be revisited and quick to move pupils on to the next stage if learning is quicker than expected.
- Lessons are consistently focused on 'real-life' situations, in order to engage learners and give their learning a purpose. For example, children in Reception are writing a class book to put in the school library. Likewise, pupils in Year 2 are developing their speaking and listening skills by preparing a presentation on the environment to be given to the whole school.
- Other adults are mostly used effectively to move learning on. However, despite the high number of supporting adults, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to make the most of them at all stages of the lesson.
- Regular and thorough marking of pupils' work ensures that pupils are praised for their efforts. It is generally very clear in directing pupils to their next learning steps. As one Year 5 pupil reported, learners are 'given a chance to see what the teacher has written at the beginning of the lesson', while another stated 'we have to remember to use her hints in our work'. As a result, they are developing the skills needed to check and edit their own work and take greater responsibility for their own learning.
- Although the school has a variety of equipment, pupils have limited opportunity in lessons to use computers, or other forms of information and communication technology, to move their learning on.
- Both parents and pupils report that homework is well matched to the needs of learners. This view was backed up by inspection evidence.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

is good

- The very strong family ethos within the school supports the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and contributes to good behaviour and positive relationships between pupils from different backgrounds.
- Pupils have a strong sense of fairness, and are quick to support their friends, both in learning and in the resolution of conflict. After one lunchtime, a Year 2 boy reported to his teacher that he had been hurt in the playground by a classmate. However, he was quick to point out that 'it was an accident and they said sorry'. The teacher took advantage of this situation to initiate a discussion with the whole class about how it was important to apologise, even if what had happened was an accident.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and disruption in lessons is uncommon. One pupil reported that 'school is a place where you learn and have fun – and we do'. However, when occasionally the quality of teaching is less than good, pupils can become distracted and not fully attentive.
- When occasionally pupils find it challenging to behave appropriately, they receive consistent messages about the school's expectations from all staff, and are well supported in making the right choices by the school's learning mentors.
- Face-to-face discussions with parents, as well as information from Parent View, reveal that most parents are happy with the way the school deals with inappropriate behaviour and with the few incidents of bullying that occur. This view is generally supported by staff. Parents comment that their children are happy at school and feel safe.
- Bullying is rare. Despite this, most pupils reveal a good understanding of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and report that they could share any worries about possible bullying with an adult in school.
- Younger pupils are actively taught about personal hygiene as an aspect of personal safety. Children in Reception experienced chicks hatching in their classroom, and enjoyed being able to handle them, while being taught about bacteria, hygiene and hand washing.
- The school provides good support for children whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and for their families. Pupils are well known and cared for, enabling all to feel safe.

- There have been no exclusions at the school since the previous inspection.
- Pupils are prompt to lessons, indicating an enthusiasm for what they will experience. Attendance is above average.

The leadership and management

is good

- Despite recent challenges within the school, including the current temporary nature of the headteacher post, robust systems ensure that learning has not been affected and that the school continues on its journey of improvement. This is supported by the high expectations and ambition noted from staff at all levels and the good and improving quality of the teaching.
- A clear and effective system to track pupils' progress has been put in place since the previous inspection. As a result, the school is able to identify quickly where progress is less than good and put in place systems to accelerate learning. The leadership team meet every half term with individual members of staff to discuss the progress of individual pupils.
- The school provides good information for parents, for example on its website, and actively tries to keep in touch. Parents have good opportunities to express their concerns and to see the school at work. Invitations to school at the end of every topic, known as the 'Fantastic Finish', let parents share their children's achievements. The overwhelming majority of parents express confidence in the school and how it supports all aspects of their child's education.
- The curriculum is well matched to pupils' interests, as well as their learning needs. It provides a wide range of 'real-life' experiences for pupils and promotes positive behaviour. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is promoted through collective worship and the religious education programme as well as through the wider curriculum. Pupils are socially and emotionally well prepared for life in modern democratic Britain and a global society.
- The local authority has been proactive in supporting school leaders, especially the governing body, during the current period of change. Support in relation to the quality of teaching and the pace of learning has rightly been more 'light touch'.
- All day-to-day health and safety measures are in place and the school ensures that all pupils are fully aware of all aspects of e-safety. Safeguarding procedures are robust.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. Governors monitor and evaluate accurately the work of the school and understand the data on pupils' progress, including how the school's achievements compare with those nationally. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas of relative weakness. They have planned well, both for the current period of change, and for the future of the school. They hold leaders to account for the school's performance, particularly the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Governors are well trained and apply their range of different skills to benefit the school. They effectively manage the performance of the headteacher and staff. Systems are in place for the approval of pay awards so that these are always tied to how well staff help pupils to achieve. They know how the school budget is spent and make sure, for example, that additional funding, such as the pupil premium, is used well to support pupils' achievement.

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	114542
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	405521

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	173
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Dunncliffe
Headteacher	Martin Thorn (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 March 2011
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