

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Scratton Road, Stanford-le-Hope, SS17 0PA

Inspection dates 12–13 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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

- More able pupils and individual disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs do not make consistently good progress because activities are not matched closely enough to their abilities at all times.
- Teacher’s marking and other guidance is not always precise enough to help pupils improve their work. Introductions to lessons are sometimes too long so progress slows.
- The teaching of phonics, particularly to younger pupils is not consistently good in all classes.
- Despite some recent improvements, leaders are not improving teaching and achievement as fast as they need to.
- Leaders and governors do not evaluate the impact of the actions that the school has taken sufficiently.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils make good progress across Key Stage 2 and attainment at the end of Year 6 is good.
- Pupils behave well; they are polite and kind to each other and to adults. They care for each other well.
- Most pupils attend well and say that they feel safe and enjoy school.
- Reading is taught well and, as a result, pupils develop into confident readers who have a love of books and other literature.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have improved systems for collecting information on how well pupils are doing and for holding teachers to account for pupils’ progress.
- There is a wide range of sporting and other activities both before and after school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons taught by 10 different teachers of which four were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made short visits to lessons and other teaching areas.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, with representative members of the governing body, the local authority, senior managers and other members of staff.
- They observed the school's work, and looked at policies, planning documents, the school's own assessment data, records of attendance, behaviour and punctuality, information relating to safeguarding and pupils' work.
- Inspectors listened to some pupils from Years 1 and 2 read.
- Inspectors took account of the 42 responses to Parent View (the online questionnaire) and spoke to parents as they brought pupils to school.

Inspection team

Adam Higgins, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Watson

Additional Inspector

Rebekah Iiyambo

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Joseph's Catholic Primary is a slightly larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those supported at school action, is just above average. The proportion supported at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Almost all pupils are of White British Heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is about the same as that seen nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is significantly below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is significantly below the national average.
- No pupils are educated off-site.
- 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?

- Make teaching consistently good or better across the school by ensuring that:
 - teachers use information about pupils' prior achievement to plan work which meets the needs of individual pupils, particularly the more able
 - introductions to lessons are not overly long and that pupils have more time to work independently and with their peers
 - additional adults working in classrooms know what they need to do in order to support pupils' learning, particularly those who are disabled or who have special educational needs
 - pupils receive good quality written and other guidance from all teachers on how to improve their work and are given time to act upon it
 - pupils' attainment and progress are tracked systematically by all class teachers
- Improve the rates of progress in literacy and mathematics, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, by:
 - providing training in the teaching of phonics for all teachers and teaching assistants to ensure that it is consistently good in every class
 - providing more opportunities for problem solving in mathematics and for pupils to talk to each other about their learning
 - improving the use of the outside area in Reception by providing more imaginative and better-planned activities for children to complete when they are there
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - when checking the quality of teaching, leaders give more emphasis to how well teachers are improving pupils' achievement, the quality of pupils' work in books and how well teachers plan to use any additional adults in class
 - the school's improvement plans are more sharply focused on raising achievement, have clear timescales and identify precisely what will show whether the school is making the difference it is seeking

- governors make more systematic checks on how well actions taken to improve teaching and achievement are working and hold leaders more urgently to account for the quality of the school's work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because there is too much variation in how well pupils do. Work in pupils' books and inspectors' own observations of lessons show that, while the progress made by pupils across the school as a whole is improving it is not consistently good in all classes. In mathematics, the work given to younger pupils in particular does not include enough problem-solving activities or opportunities to talk about their learning, which would make them think really hard.
- Children start in the Reception class with skills that are in line with those that would be expected for their age. Improvements made since the last inspection mean that, overall, children now start in Year 1 with expected skill levels. Their personal, social and emotional skills and their ability to link letters to sounds (phonics) have significantly improved. However, the work set for different individuals and groups of children does not always build properly on their starting points and this restricts their progress.
- Year 1 pupils who took the phonics screening check in 2012, gained results that were better than those seen nationally. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is now average and has risen steadily since the last inspection. Here too, however, some pupils are not making progress fast enough because the teaching is not consistently good.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is now above average and rates of progress are good. In 2012, Year 6 pupils made good progress in both English and mathematics from their previous starting points in Year 3. Pupils are confident readers and their standards are generally good. They are, however, better at reading than writing, and younger pupils in Key Stage 2 sometimes struggle to write and spell accurately when completing longer pieces of writing.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs requires improvement. Pupils are well cared for and teachers and teaching assistants frequently give them good support, often in small groups and sometimes on an individual basis. At times, however, their work is not properly matched to their abilities and as a result their progress is inconsistent.
- Pupil premium funding is being spent well. It funds participation in a range of clubs beyond the school day as well as smaller teaching groups. As a result, these pupils are catching up with their classmates in English, although not yet in mathematics, and they make better progress than similar pupils nationally.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is not yet consistently good. It is not yet securing consistently good rates of progress for all pupils and groups of pupils.
- Teachers do not always use the information that they have about pupils' progress to plan activities that meet their learning needs. On occasion more able pupils waste time on work that is too easy. Teaching assistants are not always given clear guidance about what they need to do to support other pupils' learning.
- Teaching in the Reception classes is not yet consistently good. Teachers' planning ensures that

there is a range of opportunities to play and learn across all areas of learning. Routines and expectations have improved with the appointment of key staff. The outdoor play area is large and attractive and children enjoy using it. It benefits from a recently planted willow tunnel. However the quality of learning outside is not as good as the learning that takes place in the classroom because it is not as well planned for.

- Teaching in Key Stage 1 varies too much and is not yet ensuring good progress over time. Relationships are good and pupils enjoy working with adults and each other. However, teachers' introductions are sometimes too long and time is wasted because partner talk is allowed to go on for too long.
- The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent across the school and doesn't give pupils enough information about what they need to do next in order to improve their work. There are too few opportunities for pupils to respond to teachers' marking or to evaluate the quality of each other's work.
- In the best lessons teachers' knowledge of their subject is good. They target pupils with challenging questions to develop pupils' understanding before moving on. Teachers expect pupils to do their best at all times. For example, in a good mathematics lesson the teacher spent time correcting pupils' misconceptions by asking probing questions about how the problems had been solved.
- Pupils are provided with a wide range of opportunities to read. There is a planned programme of daily reading with adults, which includes volunteers. The provision of reading materials including a well-stocked library and bright and attractive book corners is good.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour in and around the school is good. Pupils are kind and polite to each other and to adults in the school.
- Teachers have high expectations of how pupils should behave. These are shared with the youngest children as soon as they start at school. In one classroom a display of the pupils' 'recipes for friendship' clearly demonstrated the important emphasis placed on pupils' social and moral development.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when using computers and other technology. They expect adults at home and in school to keep them safe but understand the important role that they also have to play in keeping themselves safe.
- Pupils know about the different types of bullying and how to keep themselves safe. They say that there is very little bullying at the school and that any bullying or poor behaviour is dealt with quickly.
- Most pupils attend well, although disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do not attend at the same high levels as their peers.
- Responses on Parent View show that nearly all parents and carers believe that the school ensures that pupils are well behaved.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have improved the way they collect information on how well pupils are doing and also the systems for holding teachers to account for pupils' learning. Teaching, particularly in Key stage 2, has been improved. However, leaders have not brought enough consistency to teaching across the school to ensure pupils all make good progress. Although they observe lessons regularly and provide feedback to teachers about their work, they have not sufficiently linked their judgements to teachers' impact on achievement.
- Leaders know what steps they need to take in order to improve pupils' learning and have put in place a sensible programme of support and training to improve teaching further. However their improvement plans are not robust enough. They do not place enough emphasis on improving pupils' achievement over time or include clear timescales and targets that would show whether that the school has made the difference that it planned.
- Teaching programmes provide many opportunities for enrichment. Older pupils learn to ride bicycles safely on the roads and are able to take part in a wide range of clubs such as dance and animation. Pupils talked enthusiastically about their role in designing a safety screen for the pond as well as the London Olympic Games themed artwork that they have done with the headteacher. The links that the school has with the local church and nearby secondary school provides the use of facilities which the pupils would not otherwise have access to.
- The school uses assemblies and the full range of teaching programmes very successfully to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A Mass in the Parish Church provided pupils with a quiet reflective opportunity to think about how they could help others.
- Parents and staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school. One parent commented that the school has 'a lovely family atmosphere where children and parents make lasting friendships; which is really important when families come from abroad.'
- The local authority provides light touch support. The school appreciated the visits that it received to check on the accuracy of the levels that teachers awarded to pupils' writing.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are committed to the school and know where its strengths and weaknesses lie. They regularly attend training provided by the local authority, the Diocese and from consultants brought in by the school. Recent training has enabled them to better understand the school's data and compare it's performance with other schools. They are aware of the actions that the school has taken to tackle underperformance but have not sufficiently investigated the impact of these measures or checked how well the school is achieving the targets for teaching and achievement set out in its action plans. Governors know how the pupil premium is spent but have not yet begun to evaluate its impact. They are rigorous in applying the school's appraisal arrangements and have the final decision on whether the performance of individual teachers against their targets justifies a pay rise. Governors ensure that school systems such as carrying out checks on the suitability of adults to work with pupils are correctly administered. Safeguarding arrangements meet 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	115173
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	401500

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	278
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jackie Bryan
Headteacher	Stephanie Lakin
Date of previous school inspection	22 June 2010
Telephone number	01375 672217
Fax number	01375 640095
Email address	admin@stjosephsprimary.thurrock.sch.uk

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