

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Edenfield Crescent, Huyton, Liverpool, Merseyside, L36 6DS

Inspection dates 19–20 March 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- This extremely caring school is an exciting place for pupils to learn. Pupils' personal and academic achievement thrives because their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is consistently well above average. Pupils of all ages make excellent progress year on year.
- The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding because teachers set their sights very high and pupils always rise to the challenge.
- The curriculum is exciting and gives pupils many opportunities to test and develop their skills across all subjects.
- Leaders and managers are highly ambitious for every pupil. They aim for nothing but the best. They have improved teaching quality significantly since the previous inspection.
- Governors challenge and support the school vigorously to make sure that high standards are maintained.
- Pupils enjoy school enormously because they feel safe and confident about what they do and learn. Their behaviour and relationships are outstanding. Even though attendance continues to improve strongly, it falls short of the challenging target set by school leaders.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons and parts of lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, school staff and members of the governing body. A representative from the local authority was also contacted.
- There were insufficient responses via the online questionnaire (Parent View) to gain a clear picture about parents' views but inspectors took account of a recent survey of parents' views carried out by the school.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including: national assessment data and the school's own assessments; the school's evaluation of its work; curriculum information; forward planning; minutes from governing body meetings; safeguarding documentation and samples of pupils' work.

Inspection team

Kevin Johnson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kathleen Harris

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school in which almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding, that is those known to be eligible for free school meals, children of service families and children looked after, is well above the national average.
- A very small proportion of pupils is supported by school action.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school exceeds the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.
- Additional care is provided by the school before the school day begins. This is not a breakfast club but it gives pupils an opportunity to nurture basic literacy, numeracy and computer skills.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the above-average target set for pupils' attendance is reached by improving the attendance of the few pupils who are persistently absent.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- When children start in Reception, their abilities in most areas of learning are broadly typical for their age. Nevertheless, a significant number are at stages of development in their language and communication and independence which are below expectations. They make rapid progress in their first year in school because of high quality teaching and exciting activities that help them to develop language skills and make choices. They quickly become curious about the world around them and very keen to learn.
- Outstanding progress continues in Years 1 and 2 and the significantly better than average attainment at the end of Year 2, seen over time in reading, writing and mathematics, is set to continue. The school has done particularly well in the current Year 2, by increasing the number of pupils who are on track to reach the higher Level 3 in mathematics.
- Progress in Years 3 to 6 is better than expected for most pupils. In writing, pupils' progress, across the curriculum, is truly exceptional. Attainment has been consistently well above average for the past four years in both English and mathematics. The school was placed in the top 20% of schools nationally in 2012 for attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' current work and school assessments indicate that well above average attainment is likely to be maintained.
- Standards in reading in Year 6 are impressive. Pupils get off to an excellent start in Reception and Key Stage 1, where the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is first class. This gives pupils that early confidence they need to tackle both reading and writing independently and make rapid progress. Pupils in Year 2 do not stumble over words. They make sense of what they read, use their phonics skills when necessary and thoroughly enjoy reading. Year 6 pupils read fluently from a range of different texts. Their understanding is evident in the way they use expression in their voices and their ability to 'read between the lines' is very well developed.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to others from their varying starting points. In 2012, all achieved expected levels of attainment for their age and a similar picture is emerging in the current Year 6. Their learning is very carefully planned to make sure particular needs are addressed. The quality of teaching and other additional help they receive is excellent.
- Pupils supported by funding through the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, perform as well as others in the school, and at times, better than others. There are no identifiable gaps between the attainments of different groups. All are equally well supported by the school's effective use of the funds to provide the additional teaching and pastoral support needed to enable their outstanding achievement.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teachers always expect the most from their pupils. They plan lessons that challenge all levels of ability and always make learning fun. They give pupils a real sense of achievement because pupils can check their own learning during lessons and see what they have done. Teachers' very helpful marking also allows pupils to measure their progress, and quickly revise any mistakes they might have made.
- Imaginative teaching, using a range of methods, generates high levels of interest and keeps pupils on their toes. For example, teacher and pupils reversed roles in one lesson. The pupils really enjoyed their role play, as did the teacher, who became the 'naughty' pupil as she was 'told off' for her writing 'mistakes' as the class corrected her work. This rapport highlights the typically high quality of relationships between teachers and pupils and the confidence that pupils share with their teachers.
- Independence and resourcefulness are expected even from the youngest pupils. After

introducing pupils to a science investigation about growing plants, the teacher stepped back and allowed Year 1 pupils to organise their own groups and resources and do the investigating and recording themselves. Such independence is nurtured in Reception, where children bring their own ideas to planning and seize exciting moments such as finding a live frog in their playground as a starting point for new learning and adventurous searches for more frogs!

- Literacy and numeracy skills are taught exceptionally well. There are ample opportunities for pupils to practise writing and mathematics in different ways across subjects.
- Technology is used exceptionally well as a tool to help pupils learn. Laptops and computer tablets are used routinely in lessons and impressive photography adds a professional touch to the pupils' school magazine. Teachers use electronic whiteboards skilfully in lessons to demonstrate ideas clearly and help pupils to focus on their learning.
- No time is wasted. Pupils always learn at a good pace because of the excellent support they receive in the classroom, and in small groups, from teachers and teaching assistants. They question pupils extremely well, constantly checking their learning and encouraging them to think about the next steps.
- There is a strong sense of 'learning together' in lessons. Pupils enjoy testing their ideas on each other and helping one another out. They work purposefully and with great determination to succeed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is rooted in the school's Christian aims and values. Pupils are extremely mindful of others both in school and farther afield, as seen by their charitable work for different communities and causes.
- Pupils are three-times winners of the Diana Award. They are fully aware of the different forms that bullying can take, including cyber-bullying and name-calling. By working with pupils from other schools, they have clear ideas about how to deal with it, should it occur in their school.
- Pupils say that they always feel safe in school, and know that they are exceptionally well cared for and supported by adults. Parents are in full agreement with that view. They also appreciate the additional care provided before school begins.
- Outstanding behaviour at all times, politeness and good manners are the hallmarks of pupils' conduct around the school. Assertive Mentoring (a system that encourages pupils to take responsibility for their learning and behaviour) is well established and accepted by pupils. This has a very positive effect on pupils' personal development and their exemplary attitudes to learning.
- Attendance is in line with the national average and is improving, due to effective work by the learning mentor and the school's rigorous monitoring. However, the school acknowledges that it has yet to reach the target it has set for itself and that a few pupils still persistently miss school.
- Pupils contribute greatly to the everyday life and friendly supportive atmosphere of their school. They take on many responsibilities willingly, from school council members to play leaders for the infants and friendly 'buddies' in the playground.
- Overall, pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stages of their education.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leaders and managers at all levels contribute fully to the school's constant drive to provide the best for pupils. Staff members work as a highly effective team with shared vision and determination for the school's continued future success.
- The headteacher is a very strong driving force, ably supported by senior leaders; the highest expectations are clearly shared and understood by all who work in the school. Regular checking of the school's work, and the progress made, provides a clear and accurate picture of how well it is doing. The local authority recognises this as a self-improving school that requires only very

'light-touch' support and fully capable of maintaining current standards and quality.

- Systems for managing teaching and checking teachers' performance are rigorous and highly effective. Less competent teaching is a thing of the past. Teachers know how they are accountable for pupils' progress and achievement and that their effectiveness in the classroom is measured by leaders against the *Teachers' Standards* document. They are also aware of how salary progression is linked to success in the classroom. Training for teachers to keep up to date with subject knowledge and skills is very well planned, much of it being based on sharing the best ideas and practice within the school. As a result, outstanding teaching has been achieved and well above average attainment consolidated, since the previous inspection.
- Subject leaders plan an exciting curriculum that engages pupils' interest and enjoyment exceptionally well. Pupils achieve very well across the range of subjects because of the additional teaching and expert coaching provided in physical education, design technology, French and music, for example. Visits to places of interest, including residential visits, provide further exciting support for pupils' learning and personal development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has an excellent understanding of how the school works and how well it is doing. Relevant training and their depth of professional expertise ensure that governors continuously provide excellent challenge and support for leaders to maintain the high quality of the school's work. Governors have a very clear overview of teaching quality and salary progression. They speak confidently about the pupil premium spending and maintain their very strong commitment to providing equality of opportunity for all pupils. Statutory duties such as the headteacher's performance management and financial management are carried out efficiently. Safeguarding procedures are given high priority and fully meet all government 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	104472
Local authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	402947

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	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Mulcahey
Headteacher	Charlie Newstead
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2007
Telephone number	0151 489 4072
Fax number	0151 449 0135
Email address	stjoseph@knowsley.gov.uk

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