

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Springfield Road, Uttoxeter, ST14 7JX

Inspection dates 12–13 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' behaviour is excellent because adults have high expectations of how they should act and make the rules clear. Pupils feel extremely safe and free from any form of bullying.
- Pupils make good progress, and attainment is above average in both English and mathematics by the time they leave school.
- Pupils achieve well because the teaching is good, with some outstanding practice in both key stages.
- Pupils say how the teachers make lessons fun so that they learn quickly and remember what they have learned.
- Children make a very good start to school in the well-managed provision in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- The Principal is a very good leader who is highly respected by pupils, parents and staff. She drives school improvement effectively through the rigorous use of information on pupils' progress and swift action to rectify weaknesses.
- The school enjoys excellent support from the leaders of the Multi-Academy Company. These leaders, together with the principal, provide very effective systems to manage teachers' performance, rectify shortcomings in their teaching and raise achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are some inconsistencies in teaching that mean that pupils make better progress in some classes than others.
- Subject leaders are still developing their skills, and do not always check to see if their plans for improvement are put into practice.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 18 lessons, of which two were joint observations with the Principal. The inspectors also made a number of brief visits to lessons and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, parents, senior and subject leaders and members of the board of governors.
- The inspectors used the 36 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to gain the views of parents during the inspection.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring files, behaviour records and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Terry Elston, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Edwards

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of the pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those with families in the armed services, is below average.
- A small, but increasing number of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The Board of Directors manages a Nursery class on the school's site, as well as care facilities before and after school.
- There is insufficient data on pupils' progress in its first year to comment on whether the school meets the government's floor standards.
- The school converted to an academy in September 2012, joining six other schools in the Painsley Multi-Academy Company. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching from good to outstanding by all teachers routinely:
 - using the marking and assessment policy consistently well so that pupils know how to improve their work
 - giving pupils sufficient time in lessons to work by themselves at tasks suited to their abilities
 - having high expectations of the quality and quantity of pupils' writing in all subjects.
- Enhance the impact of middle leaders by them regularly checking to see if all teachers are following their guidance on how to improve teaching and raise achievement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress from starting points on entry to the school that are typical of their age group. Pupils, as well as their parents, feel they do well at school and they say how much their teachers help them learn. Pupils talk of their school as being 'One happy family.'
- Children achieve well in both Nursery and Reception classes and make particularly good progress in their reading and number skills. Children enjoy the themes such as 'pirates' and learn much from building pirate ships and writing to a pirate who stole their teddy bear. The good teaching of phonics (building letter sounds into words) from an early stage helps children to tackle unfamiliar words and read just for pleasure.
- Attainment by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics is above average which represents good progress. Pupils read confidently and many with good expression. They write well, creating exciting stories, imaginary diary entries and writing up their research into topics such as nocturnal animals. In mathematics, pupils count confidently and are good at creating graphs from data. For example, one class made excellent progress when they helped plan next year's residential visit by researching the most popular activities and displaying them on a graph.
- At Key Stage 2, pupils continue to thrive and achieve well in both English and mathematics. Pupils read fluently, and many scan texts in books and on computers quickly to gain information. They read widely and enjoy reading to younger pupils. Their writing shows a good understanding of how to capture the reader's imagination, and some of their 'newspaper reports' on how Spiderman saved a woman who fell from a skyscraper were thrilling. Pupils' writing in subjects other than English, however, is sometimes brief and careless.
- In mathematics, pupils achieve well because they master basic number skills early in the key stage and use them well to tackle problems about probability and how the cost of some items increases faster than others over time. Pupils' number skills are enhanced by many opportunities to use them in other subjects. A good example of this was in physical education when they used tape measures accurately to plan their running races and measure how far the javelin travelled.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress in both English and mathematics. Teachers and teaching assistants support these pupils very well in lessons, yet give them good opportunities to work on their own and develop their independence. Progress in reading is particularly rapid because of the good teaching of basic reading skills and many opportunities given to pupils to practise them with adults and other pupils.
- The good support for pupils who speak English as an additional language means they do well, and parents say how they settle quickly into school and learn quickly.
- Pupils entitled to the pupil premium achieve well, and the good support provided for them has helped close the gap with others to less than one term in both English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils say how much teachers help them learn quickly. In typical lessons, teachers make the learning expected clear and this helps pupils understand how well they are doing. At the end, pupils have good opportunities to check what they have learnt and see if they have been successful.
- Teachers make effective use of information technology such as the interactive whiteboards to add interest to their lessons and illustrate their teaching. For example, one class learned much about how to show their favourite fruit by watching the teacher build a graph on the whiteboard.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, children learn quickly because the work is demanding and fun. The adults plan a wide range of stimulating activities indoors and in the excellent outdoor area. The strong focus on basic reading writing and mathematical work in both classes ensures that children are very well prepared for starting Year 1.
- At Key Stage 1, the teaching of reading is consistently good, with regular sessions on the links between letters and the sounds they make and well-managed guided reading lessons when pupils read quietly on their own or with adults. At Key Stage 2, pupils are encouraged to read independently and widely to research their topics.
- In writing, teachers are good at capturing pupils' imagination with exciting topics to write about, but sometimes leave them too little time to finish their work. While teachers' expectations of pupils' writing are high in English lessons, they sometimes accept work in other subjects that is of a lower standard.
- In mathematics, teachers are very good at teaching basic number skills, and the mental mathematics sessions do much to speed up pupils' calculations. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to solve number problems and this helps them understand how to use mathematics in everyday life.
- Teachers have the highest expectations of pupils' behaviour with very clear rules that are applied consistently. As a result, lessons are calm and full of learning.
- For the most part, teachers take good note of the new marking and assessment policy and give pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work. In the best practice, teachers give pupils specific follow-up tasks to ensure they have understood the guidance, and pupils gain much from this. Occasionally, however, teachers miss the opportunity to help pupils improve and just say how good the work is.
- There is some excellent teaching that inspires pupils and ensures they make rapid progress. In these lessons, there is a very good balance of the teacher teaching and pupils working at challenging tasks very well-matched to their abilities. This is not the case in a minority of lessons when pupils have to work as a whole class for too long when they would make faster progress working on their own.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good, particularly in English and mathematics. The teachers plan tasks that are challenging yet achievable and ensure that pupils have every opportunity to ask and answer questions.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils fully deserve their reputation in the local area for their outstanding behaviour and courtesy to others. Following visits out of school, it is common for the school to receive letters praising the pupils for their good manners and the interest they showed during the visit.
- Pupils know the rules for good behaviour very well because all adults apply them consistently. They listen very carefully in class and persevere with difficult work. They are very good at exchanging ideas with their 'talking partners' and are always ready to accept views different from their own.
- Incidences of bullying or racist behaviour are very rare and pupils say how safe they feel. In the playground, they play happily with pupils of all ages and are quick to apologise if they bump into someone.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and say they miss their friends at holiday times. They are extremely punctual and attendance rates are high. Pupils know much about how to stay safe and older ones have produced excellent guidance on how to keep safe when using the internet and the impact of cyber bullying.
- Pupils thrive on the many opportunities provided for them to take responsibility. Year 6 pupils, for example, enjoy being paired with Reception children, looking after them at playtimes and teaching them their prayers.
- Pupils reflect deeply on important issues and the wonders of nature and gain much from their links with children from different countries. They show an excellent awareness of right and wrong and know clearly how their actions can affect others.

The leadership and management are good

- The principal leads the school very well and is highly respected by pupils, parents and staff. Her goals for the school are ambitious and the staff appreciate the way she manages change at a sensible pace. The staff feel that the conversion into an academy has been managed well so that all were kept well-informed about the changes.
- The principal works effectively at creating a strong sense of teamwork where all staff work well together to improve the range of subjects and activities available to pupils. Her leadership of pupils' spiritual and moral development is exceptional and an important reason for their excellent behaviour and personal development.
- The principal enjoys excellent support from the leaders of the Multi-Academy Corporation (MAC) who set the school's priorities and who have very high expectations of what the school should achieve. They have produced extensive guidance on school management that makes the best of the strengths of all schools in the MAC. For example, the systems to evaluate and manage teachers' performance are detailed and ensure that staff have every opportunity to improve their skills. This shows that the school is well set to improve further.
- Teachers benefit from regular observations of their work and good guidance on how to teach better. Areas for improvement are recorded accurately on computer systems and are used effectively in subsequent observations to check on how weaknesses have been rectified.

- Subject leaders evaluate the quality of learning in their area of responsibility well and give staff good targets to raise achievement. However, they do not do enough to check on how well these improvements have been followed through, which explains some inconsistencies in the teaching, application of the marking policy and the quality of writing in some subjects.
- Safeguarding systems are effective and meet all requirements. These systems are reviewed regularly by the school's leaders to ensure that staff and pupils continue to be safe.
- Parents appreciate the high quality of the care and support offered to their children to help them feel secure. They appreciate the way the school informs them about the work of the school and their children's progress. Parents speak highly of the well-managed care facilities that provide interesting activities for their children before and after school.
- Pupils find the activities provided for them interesting and appreciate the many clubs at lunchtime and after school that enhance their skills in music and sport. They enjoy the broad topics and the good opportunities to research using books and the internet. A wide range of visits, including residential trips, enhance the curriculum and help to develop pupils' academic, personal and social skills.

The governance of the school:

- The directors of the MAC and the board of governors have a clear awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses, including its performance compared with other schools, gained through regular visits, meetings with the senior leaders and detailed analysis of pupils' achievements. They have the knowledge to challenge the leaders and they take a full part in school improvement. They are closely involved in the evaluation of teachers' performance and the decisions about their pay. They have an excellent understanding of the school's budget and know how the funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium is spent, for example, on individual tuition and additional resources.

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	138727
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	409388

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	194
Appropriate authority	The Board of Directors
Chair	John Pennington
Principal	Mrs Joyce Cassidy
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01889 562702
Fax number	Not applicable
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