

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Joseph Street, Hunslet, Leeds, LS10 2AD

Inspection dates

18–19 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Some effective leadership and the support of key partners have insured that the school continues to provide a good overall quality of education despite the challenge it has faced with adapting to an increasingly diverse and more complex school population.
- Pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching, pupils' behaviour and safety, and leadership and management remain good despite the more stringent benchmarks in place since the school was last inspected.
- The school's academic tracking data and the 'provisional' 2013 national test results for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils indicate that pupils' attainment across the school in most subjects is rising and the progress they make is, more often than not, faster than expected.
- The areas for improvement highlighted by the previous inspection relating to governance and the quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage have been addressed.
- Some high-quality support and guidance from specialist support staff help to ensure that pupils who are known to be vulnerable to underachieving such as minority ethnic pupils, pupils with special educational needs and those who are supported by the pupil premium all make good progress.
- The Christian values the school promotes and a caring ethos that permeates this school help to ensure that pupils feel safe and content.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is effectively promoted.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The impact of the school's work in some aspects requires further improvement, such as attendance, the teaching of writing and some aspects of leadership and management.
- The school remains on a journey towards being an outstanding provider of education, which is demonstrated by the aspects requiring further improvement to be good and the fact that pupils' outcomes and the quality of provision across the school are not yet outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- An acting headteacher joined the school on 2 September 2013 and the acting deputy headteacher, who was promoted from within the school, took up her post at the same time.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in each of the school's seven classes at least twice, including the Early Years Foundation Stage provision. Several of these were undertaken jointly with the acting headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and evaluated the quality of the work in a range of pupils' books. Inspectors watched specialist staff delivering sessions to develop and improve the literacy skills of pupils at the very early stages of acquiring the English language.
- Meetings or discussions were held with the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher; two groups of pupils; a local authority representative and three members of the governing body. Inspectors also discussed the school's work with the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, special educational needs coordinator and the literacy and mathematics coordinators.
- Inspectors took account of the 10 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), along with an analysis of the school's own parental questionnaire. Inspectors also evaluated questionnaire responses from 23 school staff. Inspectors also spoke with several parents.
- The inspection team examined a range of school documentation including: safeguarding and child protection arrangements; improvement strategies; records of lesson monitoring and checks on pupils' learning and progress and the minutes of meetings, including those of the governing body. Inspectors also looked at records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- The inspectors considered the school's arrangements for making best use of the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, those whose parents are in the armed forces and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

Inspection team

John Young, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Diane Buckle

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- At this smaller than average-sized, but growing, primary school, the number of pupils originating from minority ethnic heritages is higher than the number of White British pupils.
- The proportion of pupils who are believed to speak English as an additional language has increased significantly and is more than double the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is higher than average.
- The proportions of pupils supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are high. Their needs range from moderate to severe learning difficulties, Autistic Spectrum Disorders and speech, language and communication needs.
- For the past three years, there have been very few higher-attaining pupils among the older cohorts in the school.
- All of the pupils are educated at the school and none receives alternative provision.
- The school hall also acts as a Parish Centre where the community meets to celebrate Mass.
- The school has a breakfast club and there is an after-school club but this is not run by the school. Inspection reports for this provision can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum levels expected for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning, particularly in writing, so that pupils' attainments and achievements are consistently good or better throughout the school by:
 - increasing the effectiveness with which pupils learn, develop and use their writing skills so that their attainment is consistently high when compared with national age-related expectations
 - removing the inconsistencies which remain in the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and sharing more effectively the best teaching and learning practices that exist in the school
 - providing further training and/or mentoring where necessary so that teaching is consistently good or better and enables all pupils to make rapid and sustained progress in all subjects.
- Improve attendance and reduce levels of persistent absence so that they are at least in line with national averages by:
 - ensuring more effective strategies are brought in to raise attendance, especially among those pupils who are persistently absent
 - ensuring parents and carers are better informed about the damage to their children's education that frequent absence and taking extended holidays during term time can cause.
- Improve the efficiency and strategic influence of leadership and management at all levels so that its overall effectiveness is outstanding by the time of the next section 5 inspection by:
 - ensuring that all policies and procedures, including monitoring and evaluation systems, performance management, assessment practices, curriculum development and school improvement plans, are rigorous, robust, high-quality and always stand up to scrutiny, including arrangements to secure progression in pupils' competence and confidence in writing
 - ensuring all leaders, including middle leaders, are involved in strategic decision making appropriate to their position and routinely monitor, evaluate, and refine their approaches to raising pupils' achievement and improving the quality of teaching and the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most pupils' achievement is good when set against their starting points on entry to the school. This is the case for all of the groups in the school, including minority ethnic pupils, those who attract pupil premium funding, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- School data, which have been moderated, and inspectors' observations indicate that the majority of children start school in the Reception class with skills, dispositions and attitudes that are lower than those expected for their age. They make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1, with the majority of them reaching a good level of development. Similarly, their performance in the end of Year 1 phonics screening test compares favourably with national averages. By the end of Year 6, when they leave the school, pupils' attainment is in line with national averages, which represents good progress from their below-expected starting points on entry to the school.
- There is also clear evidence from the latest school academic tracking data, official data from the Department for Education and the 'provisional' national test results for Year 2 and Year 6 that pupils' attainment continues to rise and the progress they make is getting quicker overall.
- Beneath these headlines, the school's leaders know that they must address the inconsistencies in pupils' attainments and achievements in writing across the school. Similarly, there is scope for many more pupils to achieve the higher levels of attainment available in reading and writing.
- Pupils read widely, confidently and often. They take pleasure in reading and are progressing quickly as a result of the effective strategies employed by the school.
- Pupil premium funding has helped to fund specialist staff such as a speech and language therapist and additional teacher time to teach reading, literacy and mathematics. These approaches are showing some signs of being effective.
- The school's assessment of children's starting points is not always accurate and staff know that it needs to be more rigorously checked and monitored so that any evaluations derived from them about the extent of the progress pupils make are secure and reliable.
- Pupils' achievement is not outstanding because there are variations in the performance of some pupils and subjects. For example, Year 3 girls' learning and standards and progress in writing which are not yet consistently good enough.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The overall impact of teaching on pupils' learning is good, which is reflected in the good progress most pupils make, including the rising numbers of Eastern European and West African pupils, in reading, writing and mathematics. Inspectors also saw effective delivery of religious education, music and history.
- A feature of this school is some high-quality specialist support which enhances the learning and development of pupils at the early stages of learning English, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in literacy and mathematics.
- The teaching of writing is inconsistent, which is reflected in pupils' variable progress. Staff are capable and work hard but would benefit from training to improve their consistency and impact.
- Pupils' progress is good when they receive interesting and progressively challenging activities to tackle, which help to effectively develop their knowledge and understanding of key concepts and skills. Staff support their learning well through skilful questioning and by correcting any misconceptions that arise. Less effective aspects include work that is too easy and spoon-feeding pupils so that they do not have to think for themselves during descriptive writing sessions.
- The deployment and use of teaching assistants to support groups and individual pupils' learning is variable, with some superb practice observed, counterbalanced by less-effective intervention.
- Staff are aware that the quality of marking and feedback is too inconsistent and accept that they need to ensure that all staff adhere to the guidelines in place and routinely apply them. At present, not all pupils know how well they are doing or what they can do to improve further.

- Teaching in the Reception class is effective and children make good progress as a result. They settle in quickly and feel confident because of the good support staff provide. A good mix of child-initiated and teacher-led activities, together with a range of visits, visitors and events, inspires the children to be creative, more independent and to explore their environment with a curious eye.
- Reception staff have really improved the way they question children's understanding in order to identify their next steps in learning and plan appropriate activities.
- No outstanding teaching was seen and a number of lessons required improvement, which reflects the fact that teaching is not yet consistently strong in every classroom. School leaders appreciate that they must eliminate the inconsistencies in teaching, especially in writing, and share and embed the best practice that already exists in the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school has a caring and inclusive ethos which helps to ensure that pupils from a diverse range of ethnic heritages work and play happily together. Pupils, including those deemed more vulnerable than others, feel safe and secure at the school, aided strongly by supportive staff, whom pupils feel have their best interests at heart.
- Pupils are aware of the potential risks they face and are aware of how to keep themselves and others safe. They are confident that if they had a problem staff would help them to resolve it.
- A high standard of behaviour is expected and most pupils adhere to the clear guidelines in place. Staff manage pupils' behaviour well. There are few detentions or exclusions and most pupils are well-mannered, have positive attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons and at social times.
- There are few recorded incidents of homophobic-, racist- or cyber-bullying and pupils told inspectors that bullying of any form was rare. However, the school is aware that in addition to tightening its procedures for recording incidents, it needs to ensure that existing policies, for example those relating to promoting equalities, are regularly evaluated for impact and refined where necessary. Leaders also appreciate the need to introduce more effective strategies to moderate the behaviour of the small number of pupils who get into trouble repeatedly.
- Most of the parents who responded to Parent View and to whom inspectors spoke, and those who completed the school's own questionnaire, agree that the school ensures that pupils are well behaved and that their children are safe and happy at the school.
- Pupils' attendance is rising but remains stubbornly below the national average. In particular, the school accepts that they must reduce the numbers of pupils that are persistently absent, and raise awareness among those parents who take their children on extended holidays during term time, of the harm this can cause to their children's education.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has sustained its good overall effectiveness, and improved outcomes and the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage since the previous inspection. Senior leaders' accurate self-evaluation means that they realise that there is room for improvement in several areas. Foremost is the need to eradicate the inconsistencies that exist in aspects of the school's work, and which are barriers to the school becoming an outstanding provider of education.
- The management of teaching is effective but would benefit from a sharper focus on meeting staff training needs and closing the gap between the best and weakest teaching in the school.
- Senior leaders know that subject coordinators need to be more involved in strategic decision making appropriate to their position and routinely monitor, evaluate and refine their approaches for raising pupils' achievement and improving teaching quality and the curriculum.
- Similarly, the school acknowledges the need to ensure that all policies and procedures, including monitoring and evaluation systems, performance management, assessment practices, curriculum development and school improvement plans, are rigorous, robust, high-quality and always stand up to scrutiny, including the plans to improve pupils' competence and confidence in writing.

- The school has benefited from its links with the Catholic Compass, which is a group of Catholic schools who share their particular strengths in teaching and learning, curriculum, leadership and governance and leadership to support, guide and advise each other to improve.
- The school liaises with parents via regular newsletters, its website, and the Parent Teacher Association, as well as inviting them into school regularly. Of those who completed the Parent View survey, 90% would recommend the school and feel their children are well taught.
- Pupils benefit from a curriculum that is well matched to their needs and interests. An appropriate focus on developing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in mathematics, reading and writing is complemented by a range of other subjects that are taught through themes and 'Big Questions'. Some high-quality specialist support helps to remove any barriers pupils may have to fully accessing the curriculum. The new primary school sport funding has been used to provide expert coaching to improve pupils' performance and encourage them to live healthy lifestyles.
- The curriculum, assemblies, visits and visitors all help to promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development effectively. Pupils are considerate, raise funds for charity and know the difference between right and wrong. Pupils proudly fulfil their roles as school councillors, when representing the school in sport and when singing for residents of the local home for the elderly.
- To celebrate the school's cultural diversity, West African and Eastern European parents came to school in national dress, spoke in their home language and shared food traditional to their countries with pupils.
- Pupil premium funding has been used well to: raise the targeted pupils' achievement; improve their attendance and provide wider curriculum experiences. As a result, the gaps between their academic standards and other pupils in the school are closing.
- Safeguarding measures meet requirements and systems for recruiting staff safely, child protection, risk assessment and site security are sound. Designated staff get suitable training.
- Effective leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has resulted in major improvements in teaching, assessment practice and children's progress since the previous inspection.
- The Diocese, local authority and partner Catholic schools have provided some effective strategic support, guidance and advice to the school's senior leaders and governors.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have acted to address the deficiencies in their work outlined at the previous inspection. They have had training, guidance and support from several sources including, the governing bodies of partner Catholic schools judged outstanding, and strengthened the systems they have for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance, particularly concerning teaching quality and pupils' progress. Governors know how pupil premium funding is being utilised and the benefits it has brought to the pupils. They also have an understanding of the school's academic tracking system and 'official' performance data. They have a realistic view of the school's current effectiveness and acknowledge the shortcomings that remain.
 - Governor's better awareness of their roles and the training and support they have received have enabled them to be more rigorous in their evaluation of school leaders' effectiveness, and the quality and impact of teaching and the curriculum. Governors are aware of the links between performance management and staff salary progression or promotion, with examples provided of some decisive action taken when deemed necessary.

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	108028
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	427348

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	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Eamon McGeough
Acting Headteacher	Mrs Christine McHale
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2011
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