

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Gateshead

Prince Consort Road, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE8 1LR

Inspection dates 25–26 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school mission statement – ‘Aim high, care for others as Jesus does, everyone welcome’ pervades every aspect of the school’s life. Consequently, pupil’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- Achievement is good overall and improving. Some pupils make outstanding progress due to the good and sometimes outstanding quality of teaching they receive.
- The curriculum is well planned to engage pupils’ interests. As a result, pupils’ attitudes to learning are exemplary. They are highly motivated and keen to learn.
- Children make an excellent start in the Reception where they quickly become happy and confident learners.
- By the time they leave at the end of year 6 pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are kind, considerate, thoughtful and well mannered. They feel very safe in the school and know that they will be helped if they have any worries.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, they love to learn and their attendance has improved. Parents are very appreciative about the way the school encourages their children to learn.
- The aspirational headteacher is ably supported by the senior leadership team and dedicated whole-school team.
- The governing body is highly effective and has a clear understanding of the strengths and needs of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The rate of pupils’ progress is not consistently outstanding across the school.
- Whilst teaching has improved greatly there is not yet enough outstanding teaching. There are not enough opportunities for active and independent learning.
- Not all pupils know their next steps in learning or what they need to do to achieve them.
- Plans for improvement do not always include clear measures of success, making it difficult to check how effective actions being taken are.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons which included small group support.
- Four observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher. There was also a joint observation to look at the letters and sounds programme.
- The inspectors heard pupils of different abilities read in both key stages and also looked at the quality of work in their books.
- They held meetings with the headteacher, the governing body, subject leaders and a representative of the local authority. They also took account of 23 staff questionnaires.
- They met parents informally at the beginning of the school day, took note of the 27 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and also of the school's own parental survey.
- They had discussions with the school council, prefects and buddies and also met informally with many other pupils across the school day.
- Playtime and lunchtimes were observed, as was an assembly, a hymn practice and an act of collective worship.
- The inspectors looked at a range of school documentation including the school's view of its own performance, its plans for improvement and information about how well current pupils are doing. Local authority reports on the school's performance were also viewed.
- Inspectors also checked documentation relating to safeguarding, governance, behaviour and attendance.
- They also looked at the quality of displays in the classroom and around the school as well as information on the school's website.

Inspection team

Janet Greaves, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter William Harrison

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school although numbers are rising.
- It is also a Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- There has been an increase in the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups though this remains below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is rising.
- The percentage of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is well above the national average and increased considerably in 2013. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- Pupils with disability or special educational needs supported at school action is more than double the national average but there are fewer supported at school action plus or with a statement of educational needs.
- The school has experienced a higher than average mobility but this is now closer to the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets out the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There is a breakfast club managed by the governing body.
- Since the last inspection there have been a number of changes in the teaching staff particularly in Key Stage 1.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities for active and independent learning
 - ensuring that all teachers are using information about pupils' progress to plan lessons that meet all of their learning needs
 - helping pupils take more responsibility for their own learning by ensuring that they know what their next steps in learning are and what they need to do to achieve them
 - making sure that marking and feedback gives pupils an opportunity to reflect upon and improve upon their work.
- Increase the good rate of progress to outstanding across the school by:
 - making sure that plans for improvement include clear measures of success that are broken down into achievable steps across the year so that all leaders, including the governing body, know if new initiatives are having a positive impact on improving outcomes for pupils and can more easily check how well teachers are performing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good and improving because of better teaching. There is outstanding progress for some pupils but this is not yet consistent across the school.
- Children start school with skills that are often well below that typical for their age particularly in communication skills. Attainment by the end of Reception is improving and pupils make good progress. They made outstanding progress recently in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the greatly improved quality of teaching and provision. Children reached the expected levels by the end of Reception with many exceeding them, particularly in reading and writing. Children achieved better in their language development than in mathematical development but this is already being addressed with discrete mathematics sessions and more activities with a mathematical emphasis.
- By the end of Key Stage 1 standards have been lower than the national average but this has improved over time and has been at the national average since 2012. Given pupils' starting points this is good progress overall. More pupils than the national average passed the phonics screening test due to the successful implementation of the sounds and letters programme which is also impacting positively on early reading development. Pupils are making good progress in mathematics from their starting points, so, although attainment is still below national standards, it is moving closer to the average. This is due to improved teaching at the end of Key Stage 1.
- By the time pupils have reached the end of Key Stage 2, their attainment is above the national average because of the good progress pupils make with progress accelerating as pupils move on through Key Stage 2 where some are making outstanding progress. More pupils are now reaching higher levels of attainment than in the past.
- Pupils eligible for free school meals are also making good progress. Funding has been well allocated and actions are making a positive impact upon standards and achievement. The gap is closing between these pupils and the others in the school, particularly in reading and mathematics. Pupils eligible for pupil premium and those who are not, attained the same standard in both English and mathematics combined in 2012, which was above the national average.
- Pupils with disabilities or special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups do as well as other pupil groups and make at least good progress with some making outstanding progress.
- The pupils who speak English as an additional language are provided with extra targeted help and due to this make good progress with some making rapid progress, particularly in their reading.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is improving but is not yet consistently outstanding throughout the school. Children make an excellent start in the Reception Year where they quickly settle down to become happy, confident learners.
- Children in the Reception class are currently receiving an outstanding education. They thoroughly enjoy their activities in their well organised classroom and the much improved outdoor area. They also benefit from excellent teaching that takes account of their own interests and needs.
- For example, in one session, children were all together talking about the story of The Three Little Pigs. During this session they also had the opportunity to practise the sounds that they had already learned. The teacher's skilful questioning enabled the children to be actively engaged at all times. One child suggested a way of preventing the wolf from catching the three little pigs was by making a trap. Immediately the teacher refined her plans in order to allow him to follow

his own interests. She extended his suggestion to finding the best food to put in the trap in order to attract the wolf. Children were later observed working together making huge traps with cardboard boxes in the outdoor area. Many other activities followed the story of The Three Little Pigs and children participated enthusiastically.

- The programme that the school is using to teach pupils their sounds and the letters they represent is having a positive impact on the early development of reading particularly for pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding and lower-ability pupils. The more able readers in Key Stage 1 enjoy their guided reading sessions and are reading with both expression and comprehension.
- Pupils make the most progress in the lessons where they are given opportunities to work actively. For example in Year 6, pupils were writing a speech about the merits of their recent residential experience at an outward bound centre in Kielder. They were given the opportunity to present their speech to their partner which they did successfully and with great enthusiasm.
- In a mathematics lesson in Year 5, pupils were all given work that was their next step in learning. This made them think carefully and they responded positively to this challenge. Likewise, another mathematics lesson in Year 2 gave all abilities the chance to solve problems when looking for patterns.
- In the best lessons, where pupils make outstanding progress, it is because pupils are given activities which interest them and also allow them to work actively. Teachers have high expectations and good subject knowledge. Questioning does not just check what they have already learned but extends their thinking. There is a brisk pace to the lessons with appropriate support when needed but where teachers expect the pupils to work independently. Teaching assistants are well deployed and support pupils well. Marking provides guidance on how to improve.
- Occasionally lessons are not planned well enough to match the needs of all pupils or too much support limits the pupils' independent learning.
- Marking is not always consistent so that pupils do not always know what their next steps in learning are and what they need to do to achieve them.
- Homework activities support learning and the school has also provided a homework club. There are many clubs including three for mathematics. Others include karate, multi skills and other sports. There is also a choir and additional time given to help children prepare for Holy Communion.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are very friendly and welcoming. They are caring and treat one another and adults with respect, regardless of any cultural and religious difference or disability and special educational needs. They describe the school as being like, 'one big happy family'.
- They take on additional responsibilities such as buddies and prefects, roles which they have to apply for before selection. The school council and other older pupils are role models for younger pupils.
- In Year 6 each pupil mentors a Reception child, meeting with them in the term before they start school and also sending them a welcoming letter during the summer holidays. This enables children to come to their new school already having a friend to help them settle in well.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and consequently attendance has improved and there are fewer pupils who are regularly absent. Attendance is currently average and improving.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of what bullying is but they also state that it does not happen in their school. They say that any problems that do arise are extremely rare but are promptly dealt with by the school staff. Parents support this view.
- They also have an excellent awareness about e-safety. They know about cyber bullying, the potential dangers of mobile phone use and the internet. They know what they should do if anyone contacts them and who to go to for help.

- Pupils enjoy their lessons and are highly motivated and keen to learn.
- The school promotes aspiration and being caring and welcoming to all. This is evident in all aspects of school life. The school has worked very hard to promote this positive ethos in everything that they do. There is a whole-school team commitment to getting the best for all pupils and this is evident in the behaviour and attitudes of the pupils.

The leadership and management are good

- Inspirational leadership from the headteacher, ably supported by a skilled senior leadership and whole-school team has created an atmosphere where pupils thrive. The school team are committed to getting the best outcomes for all pupils. One member of staff said, 'The school has a fantastic happy atmosphere and it is an honour to work here.' Staff members are excellent role models for pupils who appreciate greatly what the school provides for them. Parents also value the school highly.
- The curriculum is rich and varied thus promoting good achievement and outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A specialist sports coach enhances the physical education and sports programme. A specialist music teacher teaches music across all age groups.
- Visits including an outdoor residential in Hawkthorn in the Kielder Forest for Year 6, a visit to Cragside Hall and to the Theatre Royal all enhance the curriculum. All help to extend pupils' experiences and are greatly enjoyed. Visitors from the world of work have increased pupils' knowledge and raised future aspirations.
- The school's view of its own performance is accurate and this means that the school improvement priorities are relevant to meet the needs of the pupils. There is a need to ensure that there are clear areas for improvement across the year so that the headteacher and governing body can measure how effective their actions are.
- Subject leaders are knowledgeable about their subjects and know the strengths and areas for development. They are fully involved in monitoring their subjects and providing advice and guidance for staff.
- The school is underpinned by strong Christian values that teach respect for all and, as a result, pupils have a healthy respect for all faiths and cultures. The school is a thriving cohesive community where all pupils are given equal opportunities to succeed.
- The school is effectively supported by the local authority school improvement partner who knows the school well.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors are led effectively by the Chair and vice chair. Governors are very knowledgeable about the school and have a strong monitoring role. They ensure that the safeguarding requirements are fully in place. Their actions since the last inspection have included reinforcing the site security with a perimeter fence. They have made many important decisions which have included the appointment of the current headteacher and deputy headteacher, improved the Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor area and created a new library. They have made good use of the pupil premium funding by investing in a sounds and the letters programme to promote early reading development which is having a positive impact on reading and spelling. They also provide visits and visitors, provide a subsidised breakfast club, additional teaching assistant support and increased access to laptops. They have raised aspirations with visitors from the world of work project and increased pupils' confidence. They are using the additional physical education and sports funding to secure the expertise of a specialist sports coach as well as provided many clubs and active activities. They are increasingly linking the performance of teachers to financial reimbursement.

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	108383
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	425927

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	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marisa Jobling
Headteacher	John Hattam
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2008
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