

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Newtown Road, Malvern, WR14 1PF

Inspection dates 5–6 November 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

- Too few pupils make good progress and achieve as well as they could in reading, writing or mathematics.
- Not enough teaching is consistently good or outstanding to make sure that all pupils reach the levels they are capable of at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Teachers do not always provide work that is matched to pupils' individual levels and this slows down their progress.
- Sometimes, adults do not ask pupils questions which make them think hard enough or give them opportunities to plan their own work and use their own ideas.
- Pupils' work is not always marked regularly or in a way that helps them to improve it.
- The headteacher and governors have appointed several new teachers and created a new leadership team since the previous inspection but the effect of these actions has not yet led to higher levels of achievement.
- The new leadership team has made a good start but expectations are not high enough to drive rapid improvements in pupils' achievements.
- The way leaders and managers check the school's work has not yet led to improvements in the quality of teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- Governors have an accurate view of the school and offer a good balance of challenge and support for leaders.
- The school provides a happy and harmonious environment in which pupils feel safe.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered. They behave well and attend school regularly.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of exciting visits, clubs and outdoor activities.
- Parents have very positive views of the school and agree their children are well looked after.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They saw 15 lessons or parts of lessons, five of which were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with pupils, teachers, the headteacher, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 14 responses to Parent View, the online website. They also spoke informally to parents as they brought their children to school.
- Meetings with support staff were held and their views taken into account.
- The inspection team listened to pupils read, spoke with them about their learning and looked at the work in their books.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school's checks on how well it is doing, the school improvement plan, data on pupils' current progress, leaders' reports following lesson observations, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Heather Simpson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Michael Onyons

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than most other primary schools.
- The large majority of pupils are White British and most speak English as their home language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care or those with a parent in the armed forces, is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The numbers of pupils joining the school other than at the normal starting point is above average.
- There is pre-school on site but it is not managed by the governing body and is therefore inspected separately.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been several staff changes since the previous inspection, including three new class teachers since September 2013, (which is half of the school's teaching staff), and appointments to the leadership team. The numbers on roll have also increased and there are now six classes.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is good or outstanding by making sure that teachers:
 - plan activities which meet the needs of all ability groups
 - provide a good balance between teacher-led activities and opportunities for pupils to plan and develop their own ideas
 - use questions effectively to probe pupils' understanding and develop their thinking skills
 - tell pupils how to improve their work through marking and feedback.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure all leaders:
 - raise expectations and set challenging targets for all pupils to reach
 - develop the skills of the new leadership team to carry out regular and rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and use information gathered to make sure that pupils are making at least good progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Most pupils, including the more able, make the progress expected of them but too few make faster progress in reading, writing or mathematics so that they reach even higher levels.
- Children join the Reception class with skills and knowledge which are broadly in line with those typical for their age although there is some variability as the numbers joining the school fluctuate. They make the progress expected in their first year and this continues as they move through the school from Years 1 to 6. As a result, attainment is average at the end of Reception, Year 2 and Year 6. This represents expected progress rather than good progress.
- Over time, attainment is affected by the variation in pupil numbers in different year groups. While it is broadly average at the end of each key stage, there are occasional peaks and dips because the performance of each individual can have a disproportionate impact on the standards reached. Additionally, the school receives a higher than average proportion of pupils part way through a key stage, and this also affects results.
- While attainment is usually average, it was below average in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in 2013 in all subjects. Both of these groups were however below the levels expected for their age on entry to school. An influx of additional pupils also directly affected these results as an extra 13 pupils joined part-way through Key Stage 1 and 10 pupils in Key Stage 2.
- Reading is taught well and pupils have a good grasp of how to use phonics (their knowledge of letters and sounds) to break down tricky words. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the levels required in the national screening check in Year 1 was close to the national average in 2013. Pupils have good attitudes to reading and read regularly, both at home and at school. Reading volunteers make a valuable contribution to making sure that those who are struggling do not fall behind.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs requires improvement along with others in their class. Additional support is provided both in and outside lessons to make sure they keep up but does not result in them making accelerated progress.
- Pupil-premium funding is used for additional learning support. This ensures eligible pupils make similar progress to their classmates. Any gaps in their attainment, compared to others, fluctuate along with overall attainment. For example, pupils who left Year 6 in 2013, were approximately two years behind others in their class, but the school's own data shows that this gap is closing in other year groups and there is approximately only one term's difference in attainment in English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good and this leads to too few pupils making good progress over time. Where teaching requires improvement, tasks are not always matched closely to pupils' needs. This slows down the progress pupils are capable of making. Additionally, teachers over-direct lessons and do not give pupils enough opportunities to plan their own activities or use their own ideas.
- In the main, teachers use questions well. However, in some classes, they miss opportunities to probe pupils' understanding and challenge their thinking by asking more in-depth questions.

Brief answers are too readily accepted when pupils would benefit from explaining their answers more fully.

- Positive relationships exist between adults and pupils in all classes. Pupils like their teachers and as a result want to work hard. The work of teaching assistants makes a useful contribution to the progress pupils make, particularly those who have special educational needs or are eligible for the pupil premium.
- A wide range of activities are planned in the Early Years Foundation Stage to help children build on their early skills. All adults support and question children well to check their levels of understanding. However, some activities have been the same since September, for example the role play area, and children then lose interest in them quickly when allowed to choose what they would like to do.
- Where teaching is good, teachers have good subject knowledge and use resources well, including computers. They give clear explanations so that pupils know precisely what to do. Exciting activities are also planned to make sure pupils find their learning interesting. For example, in a guided reading lesson, the teacher made sure that all groups had different activities that promoted their language and literacy skills well, including one group who used a finger puppet theatre to retell a story and another group who played word bingo.
- The quality of teachers' marking varies considerably between classes and across subjects. In the best marking seen, teachers provide clear guidance about what pupils have done well and what they need to improve. Where it is not helpful, work is merely ticked or not marked at all.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is good

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive – even where lessons are less demanding, they apply themselves well. Pupils behave well in and around school. They are polite, friendly and helpful. They show good levels of respect towards each other and towards staff and have a good understanding of how their behaviour contributes to school life and relationships. Pupils are proud of their school.
- All parents and pupils who gave their views said that behaviour is good and pupils are kept safe. Pupils themselves are aware of potentially dangerous situations but have been taught how to avoid these, for example, not talking to strangers or giving out personal information on the internet.
- Pupils are aware of the different forms of bullying, for example cyber, physical or verbal bullying. They explain however that this does not happen in their school as incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively by all staff.
- Leaders strongly promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils reflect on their religious beliefs, know the difference between right and wrong and enjoy learning about people from other countries or different religions. Tolerance and respect are the norm and this leads to a happy and harmonious school where everyone is valued and treated equally.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding as teachers provide too few opportunities for pupils to make choices about learning and to take independent responsibility for their work and progress.
- Attendance has improved and is now average and pupils are punctual to lessons.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have appointed a significant number of new teaching staff and extended the leadership team. However, it is too early for these changes to have had an impact on achievement.
- Until recently, the majority of checks on the quality of teaching have been carried out by the headteacher. Other leaders and managers have not been involved and therefore do not always know how well pupils are doing in particular subjects or classes, or how they can support their colleagues.
- Leaders' expectations are not always high enough and steady rates of progress have been too readily accepted. The setting of pupils' targets lacks sufficient challenge and as a result, pupils make only the expected progress.
- Leaders have provided training to improve the quality of teaching and this has led to improvements being made. Attendance rates have also increased due to actions taken.
- Annual targets are set for each member of staff and are based on the national 'Teachers' Standards' and whole-school priorities. Checks made on these records show that where these targets are met, recommendations are made in relation to pay increases to the governing body.
- A wide range of subjects are taught and these help promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Visits, visitors, clubs and outdoor learning also add to pupils' enjoyment of school and provide memorable experiences. Leaders are planning to use their primary school sport funding, when it is received, to promote and develop pupils' physical fitness and well-being further by employing a sports coach.
- The local authority has provided support to leaders and teachers to help raise standards.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a wide range of knowledge and experience which they use to challenge and support the school. They have a clear understanding of how well the school is doing and where further improvements are needed, including in terms of pupil performance. They are committed to seeing the school improve and as a result, were fully involved in the recent staffing appointments to make sure only good quality teachers were appointed. Governors set targets for the headteacher and check that pay increases for teachers are now only approved where there is evidence that pupils are making good progress. They have not however previously challenged the low expectations or undemanding targets set for teachers. Governors have a secure understanding of the quality of teaching as they visit school regularly and often work as voluntary helpers with pupils. They keep a careful check on finances, including the use of the pupil premium to ensure that this money makes a difference to eligible pupils. They also carry out regular training and safeguarding checks to make sure they meet their statutory duties effectively.

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	116901
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	426971

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	152
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pamela Taylor
Headteacher	Ann-Marie Wallbank
Date of previous school inspection	24-25 November 2011
Telephone number	01684 573016
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