

St Joseph's Catholic School

Church Road, Laverstock, Salisbury, SP1 1QY

Inspection dates 26–27 November 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 because:

- Students achieve well, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs. They reach levels of attainment that compare favourably with others nationally.
- Teaching is good. Lessons generally provide suitable challenge and enjoyable learning experiences. Occasionally, however, activities are not fully tailored to the needs of some students.
- Students' outstanding behaviour supports their good learning. Their excellent attitudes, appetite for learning and positive outlook mean that they enjoy school and care deeply for it and for one another. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- Leadership and management are good. The acting headteacher and new senior leadership team work closely with other leaders and teachers in school. Their work is starting to have a positive impact on all aspects of school life. This is building on a long period of considerable improvement in both the provision for, and outcomes of, students, both academic and personal.
- The excellent understanding held by the governing body and its rigorous support and challenge to school leaders mean that it is a considerable force for the good of all those involved with St Joseph's.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Occasionally tasks in lessons do not fully match the needs of all students.
- Leaders and teachers in departments do not consistently ensure that marking always offers enough help to students and that they have sufficient opportunity to respond to the demands of teachers' feedback and assessment of their work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 25 lessons, taught by 24 teachers and held meetings with staff, students and members of the governing body. They held a telephone meeting with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of its policies, plans, records of meetings and student assessments.
- The inspectors took account of the 64 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, in carrying out the inspection.

Inspection team

Carolyn Carnaghan, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jerry Giles	Additional Inspector
Cliff Mainey	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Joseph's Catholic School is a smaller than average sized secondary school.
- The majority of students are from a White British heritage.
- The proportion of students who are eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for students in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families) is below average.
- The proportions of students supported by school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are below average.
- There are a small number of students supported by Year 7 catch-up funding (monies specifically provided to ensure students whose attainment in English and mathematics falls short of national averages).
- One student receives alternative provision for their education at the Alert Training establishment.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- There was an acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher at the time of the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise students' achievement to outstanding by ensuring teaching is always planned to provide sufficient opportunities and challenges to meet the needs of all students.
- Ensure that teachers' marking across all subjects provides sufficient feedback to students to enable them to improve their learning by:
 - consistently indicating how well students are doing and what they need to do next
 - providing time and opportunities for students to respond to the comments made in the marking of their work
 - checking that students always follow up on regular assessments and marking in order to improve the quality of their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students enter the school with levels of attainment that are below national averages. They make good progress and leave Year 11 having reached slightly above average attainment. This means their achievement is good. The proportion of students achieving expected, or more than expected, progress in both English and mathematics compares favourably to the national proportion.
- Those who receive extra pupil premium funding also make good progress and most achieve well. Their attainment is a little behind that of others. The attainment of those students in Year 11 last year was one term behind in English and one year behind in mathematics. However, the gap is closing. The school is building imaginative ways of spending the additional funding, such as through funding trips to, for example, a *Warhorse* puppet workshop and performance, reading support and developing an extensive programme of one-to-one support. This is helping reduce the gaps in attainment.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs, including those supported by school action, school action plus and a statement of special educational needs, also make good progress. The school's diagnosis of the needs of students is rapid and the attention paid to them is a strength. These students receive considerable support across all subjects, such as through individual reading sessions and supervised homework clubs. Every student has access to all activities and this comprehensive approach to inclusion means there is no discrimination and everyone has an equal opportunity to enjoy and achieve.
- Students enjoy reading widely and often. The school ensures all students are encouraged to choose challenging books and many attest to how much reading has helped them improve across all subjects. Students add to their enjoyment, such as in an English lesson where they used a computer quiz to test their understanding of aspects of their book. They rated their books, using a star system, with the teacher making sure the next text chosen added a little more challenge to the last.
- Very small numbers of students receive alternative educational provision, such as the one student attending Alert Training. For those attending this provision, progress and achievement are currently slightly lower than for others, particularly in English and Science.
- The school no longer enters students early for GCSE examinations.
- Students eligible for Year 7 catch-up funding have made good progress in English, though progress is slower in mathematics. This funding is supporting students so that they can tackle all subjects and much effective work has been accomplished.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Students receive good teaching. Although long-term planning of lessons is thorough, occasionally the detailed planning to ensure that each lesson provides sufficiently for the needs of all students is not as strong as it could be. The tracking of students' progress has undergone a rigorous review so that teachers are becoming much more familiar with how this information can be used to inform future plans for teaching.
- In the best lessons, teachers prove their excellent subject knowledge. They make it clear what needs to be learned and achieved. More-able students are not held back because learning is fast and fun. In these lessons, students exhibit enthusiasm and confidence, such as when a student read a section of a novel with vigour and passion, making sure he got the accent just right to express the feelings of the character. In a science lesson students used interactive activities to build understanding of how power stations function. Pace and challenge were clear features.
- Where teaching is less effective, students are unclear as to what they need to do or they are insufficiently challenged to go further. It is clear that students at St Joseph's enjoy challenge;

they are confident to take on peers and teachers in discussions. In a Year 10 English lesson students made it clear how much they enjoyed being treated as young adults and being challenged to get to the heart of a complex piece of poetry. They were also happy to express how they were less enthusiastic to write an essay, but got down to the business of fully exploring their ideas on paper very quickly and positively. When teaching does not provide such challenge, progress slows.

- High expectations of behaviour and attitudes are established in good lessons and they are the norm. However, sometimes students are not given the chance to live up to their own expectations for their work because teachers do not provide enough detail in their marking or do not give time for students to respond to comments and develop their work accordingly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' outstanding behaviour and attitudes to learning aid their progress considerably. They understand what good learning feels like and naturally strive for it themselves. The positive atmosphere the school creates is obvious in lessons, in conversations and prayers.
- Students are highly confident to express the depth of their feelings about the plight of others living in worse circumstances than themselves. They empathise with other people and there is rarely any ill feeling expressed between each other. The calm start to most lessons, often through prayer, means thoughtfulness is the norm.
- Students understand that excellent behaviour means lessons are enjoyable; they support each other quite naturally. Conduct in and outside the classroom is exemplary. Incidents of bullying of any kind, including on the internet, are extremely rare but students express their full confidence in teachers to deal with it effectively.
- Safety and safeguarding, including the need for e-safety, are well understood by students. Outside activities are approached carefully with clearly understood rules and established routines. This allows students the freedom to enjoy working on extended activities, such as in sport where students were able to lead others and hone their football skills to high levels. Courtesy and tolerance are expected and received, so aiding progress and achievement.
- Parents and carers are confident in the way their children are being educated and express few concerns about their behaviour. The good manners and care exhibited by students to one another and to their teachers attest to the success of the school in providing students with opportunities to develop their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural values.

The leadership and management are good

- The new acting headteacher and senior leaders have already made strides, building on previous good practice. There is a clear sense of purpose and high aspiration coming from the acting headteacher, which permeates the school. The new team of department heads and coordinators has been given the confidence to develop the work of teachers in their subjects. This is starting to take shape but not all teachers have yet fully used the extensive range of results from student assessments, acquired by senior leaders, to drive up progress in lessons. While assessments are regular and rigorous, planning for teaching does not always ensure it comes as a direct result of understanding of how all students are progressing.
- The monitoring of teaching is effective, ensuring senior leaders have a firm grasp of where the school's strengths and areas for development are. Performance management, based on these regular checks on teaching, helps support teachers and allows for appropriate and timely opportunities for professional development.
- The local authority provides strong support and guidance for the school's leaders. Their regular reviews have built leaders' understanding, planning and evaluation skills. Senior leaders have a

clear vision for the future that has been disseminated and fully understood by the whole school. This supports and demonstrates the school's capacity for further improvement.

- The range of subjects offered in school is broad. Most students learn two foreign languages, unless their primary need is for extra English and support for mathematics, when they learn one. There is regular exploring and sharing of strong practice among teachers, frequently starting with the humanities department – a legacy of the school's subject specialism. This means teachers are continuously challenged to do better.
- There are numerous opportunities for students to reflect on others in the world and develop their views of modern morality. Excellent behaviour is a strong testament to students' outstanding social development.
- Students enjoy many sporting and arts activities. There are numerous lunchtime and after-school clubs, such as radio club, homework club and music.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body have a very keen understanding of the school. They have built this through a rigorous programme of observation and a desire to do things better. Members of the governing body have all availed themselves of training courses to support the school. They share their considerable expertise generously and continuously pose questions and challenges to the school. Senior leaders benefit from governors' enthusiasm for their school, their professionalism and objectivity, though they still need to develop their appreciation for some of the variability in teaching across subjects. They have worked hard to raise the attendance of all students, and the school has done so. Their support for the Year 7 attendance club has meant that these students are grasping the need to always come to school. Governors have developed a clear appreciation of how well students are achieving compared to national patterns and they use this knowledge to underpin their plans for the school. They appreciate how teachers' performance and experience relates to their pay and support the acting headteacher in her monitoring of teaching and learning. They also understand and support the way government funds are spent, including for those students eligible for pupil premium. Governors help and support the school as it supports other educational establishments locally. The expertise of staff at St Joseph's in careers guidance and next steps choices has been generously shared with others. This also helps the school's own students as they make their choices for where they will go after Year 11. Members of the governing body support the school in meeting its statutory safeguarding 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	126473
Local authority	Salisbury
Inspection number	429569

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

Type of school	Modern (non selective)
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	464
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Hooper
Headteacher	Rachel Ridley (acting headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 January 2012
Telephone number	01722 335380
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