

# Saint Joseph's Catholic Infant School

Hazell Avenue, Aylesbury, HP21 7JF

**Inspection dates** 9–10 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Require improvement	3
Leadership and management		Require improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils do not consistently learn well enough in Years 1 and 2.
- Attainment in writing lags behind reading and mathematics because pupils do not make good use of a wide range of vocabulary to extend their sentences and make them interesting.
- Pupils are given too few opportunities to develop their writing across subjects.
- Teachers in Years 1 and 2 do not consistently explain clearly what pupils are to do and learn, or give pupils hard enough work to help them progress quickly.
- Pupils, particularly some boys, do not always concentrate well, nor do they always get on with their work. When this happens their learning slows.
- Subject leaders do not contribute enough towards improving teaching and learning.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' attainment is above average in reading and mathematics.
- Good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to learn quickly in the Reception Year, and achieve well.
- Pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language do so quickly.
- Pupils are kept safe at school and know how to stay safe.
- Good support is provided for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Senior leaders and governors know what to do to make the school good, and consequently teaching and learning are improving following the decline in pupils' achievement.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching in 13 lessons, five jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, teachers, pupils, members of the governing body and representatives from the local authority.
- The inspector took into account 33 responses to the online Parent View survey and held informal discussions with a sample of parents.
- The inspectors considered the views expressed in survey responses from 16 members of staff.
- A range of information supplied by the school was scrutinised, including the school's own information about how well pupils are doing, planning documents, checks on the quality of teaching, the school development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding documents.

## Inspection team

Alison Cartlidge, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

John Stewart

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized infant school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support from pupil premium funding (additional money provided by the government for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and the children of service families) is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language has risen since the last inspection and is well above average. Most of these pupils are at the early stages of learning to speak English when they join the school in the Reception classes.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- There have been many changes in staffing since the previous inspection, including temporary teaching arrangements to cover a number of long-term staff absences. The headteacher was appointed in September 2012 and a deputy headteacher joined the school in April 2013.
- Half of the governors are new.
- A pre-school that shares the school site and is run by the governing body is inspected separately.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching in Years 1 and 2 and improve the pupils' behaviour, by making sure that:
  - teachers make clear to the pupils what they are expected to do and learn
  - teachers provide work that is hard enough and that maintains the pupils' interest
  - pupils act upon their teachers' written advice so that they do not repeat their mistakes
  - all pupils, especially some boys, concentrate better on their work.
- Raise attainment in writing, by:
  - showing pupils examples of good writing so that they know what to do to make their writing better
  - making sure that pupils write interesting sentences that include more extensive and imaginative vocabulary
  - making sure that all lessons motivate the pupils and help them to learn quickly
  - increasing opportunities for pupils to write to support their learning across the curriculum.
- Develop leadership by sharpening the roles of subject leaders so that they have an impact on improving teaching and learning.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because attainment has declined since the last inspection and progress is uneven between subjects and classes in Years 1 and 2.
- Attainment by the end of Year 2 is above average overall, although it is broadly average in writing. Pupils tend to write simple sentences and make limited use of vocabulary. Pupils do not use and extend their writing skills sufficiently in support of their learning across different subjects.
- Attainment is above average in reading and mathematics, with reading being the strongest subject. In reading, pupils enjoy books and make good use of their knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics) to help them tackle new words. As pupils in Year 1 said, 'If you get stuck, sound it out' and, 'You can read more books so that you can get better and better.'
- Attainment on entry to the Reception classes is lower than at the time of the last inspection and the school's intake now includes many more children who are at the early stages of learning to speak English. Most children are working below the levels typical for their age when they start in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Children in Reception make good progress, especially in developing their speech and their confidence. They make sensible choices about their learning, work together amicably and concentrate well. Occasionally, learning slows when the task provided is not demanding enough.
- The achievement of the few pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is similar to that of others at the school, and gaps in attainment are negligible.
- Pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language do so quickly because the school has a strong system for teaching phonics, and effective, specific support is given to build their confidence.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs requires improvement because it is inconsistent. These pupils make better progress when they are being supported in small groups by a member of staff, but at other times they do not always learn quickly enough.
- There are times when the progress of various groups of pupils is slower than it should be, including the more-able pupils, especially when they are working on their own and the task is too easy.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- While there are some examples of good teaching across the school, it is not consistent enough in Years 1 and 2 and consequently teaching requires improvement. Teachers do not always provide motivating tasks or expect pupils to complete hard enough work.
- Teachers do not always explain clearly enough what pupils are expected to do and learn, and this can lead to a slow start when pupils are confused about a task. In addition, too few examples of good writing are shared with the pupils so that they can aim high in their own work.
- Pupils do not have enough chance to practise what they have learned in writing when they are working across different subjects, and some lessons are not interesting enough to help inspire the pupils.
- Teaching is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage because school routines are well established, and interesting and varied activities make children keen and willing to learn. For example, in one lesson children were keen to see which container would hold the most 'pixie dust'.
- A strength in teaching across the school is the caring relationship that exists between members of staff and the pupils, enabling pupils to feel secure and valued.
- Recent improvements in teaching are starting to have a positive impact. The role of teaching

assistants has been developed and they provide focused support and questioning when working with a small group. For example, in mathematics in Year 1, pupils were seen working in small groups according to ability and the teacher and teaching assistants explained their subtraction work thoroughly.

- Teachers have developed the guidance they provide pupils through their marking, although they do not always make sure that their advice is acted upon soon enough.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **require improvement**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because in lessons, some pupils, especially boys, lose concentration when the work is too easy for them. Pupils acknowledge that this happens from time to time and they say they could do much better in their writing.
- In contrast, most pupils behave well moving around school and on the playground and parents are happy with behaviour at the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and rates of attendance are above average.
- The school is vigilant in promoting equality of opportunity and in discouraging discrimination of any kind and consequently pupils are polite and friendly and play together harmoniously. They collaborate well with their 'talk partners' when discussing their work and show respect for cultural differences. As one pupil said, 'Talk partners help you to share ideas.'
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe at school and parents agree that members of staff are caring and supportive. Pupils know how to stay safe, including during the recent building work. They know what to do if they have a concern. Instances of bullying are very rare and are dealt with to the satisfaction of the pupils.

### **The leadership and management**

### **require improvement**

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders are not ensuring that teaching and learning are consistently good enough, and there has been a decline in pupils' achievement since the last inspection.
- Subject leaders are committed to improving the school and are receiving training because they are not improving their allocated areas and subjects of responsibility well enough.
- Leaders have maintained a calm atmosphere at the school during the many changes in staffing and senior leaders have introduced systems to increase the rigour of checking teaching and learning. As a result, senior leaders are clear about the next steps needed to improve the school and their evaluation of school effectiveness is accurate.
- Improvement plans identify the right things to make the school good and steps are being taken to bring about the necessary changes. There are signs that demonstrate that leaders have the capacity to improve the school and stop the decline in achievement. For example, pupils' progress is being checked closely, the role of teaching assistants has been developed and teachers' marking is more informative.
- Good leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has meant that provision for these pupils is good and developing well. The outdoor areas have been enhanced since the last inspection so that pupils learn well indoors and out.
- A strength in leadership is the positive partnership the school has with its parents, who are effusive in their praise, especially with the way members of staff show their care for families. One parent spoke for many by saying, 'Teachers are very helpful and look after the children.'
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Values such as caring and sharing are well established and pupils show sensitivity towards the needs of those less fortunate than themselves. They are keen to help others and to look after the environment. For example, they were keen to recycle the fruit peelings from snack times.
- The curriculum covers all subjects, although it does not support learning in writing as well as it does reading and mathematics. Funding is being used well to support the pupils entitled to the

pupil premium so that the gap in attainment between these and other pupils is negligible.

- There are clear plans for the new funding to enhance sport. Training for staff is taking place to increase their subject knowledge so that pupils can reach the performance levels of which they are capable. Clubs such as football, tennis and ball skills are popular with the pupils and contribute towards their healthy lifestyles and physical well-being.
- The local authority has increased the level of support for the school in the light of its changing needs and this is appropriate.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Members of staff are fully trained to care for the pupils and are checked for suitability for working in schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The new governing body is kept well informed and governors are keen to increase the challenge they provide. There is a greater awareness of what needs to be done to improve the school and how it compares with others. Governors are increasing their knowledge about teaching and pupils' progress. They know how teaching is checked, weaker teaching supported and how good teaching is to be rewarded. The governing body is working closely with the local authority to identify how governance can be developed and to identify further training required.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110478
<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	426661

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	180
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Julia Servi
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ann Taylor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16–17 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01296 484618
<b>Email address</b>	office@stjosephsrcinfant.bucks.sch.uk



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