

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

Low Grange Avenue, Billingham, County Durham, TS23 3NN

Inspection dates

22–23 January 2014

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.

- Children settle quickly into school. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because the school puts a strong emphasis on their personal as well as their academic development.
- Pupils continue to make good progress across the school. By the time they leave Key Stage 1, they have reached standards that are average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress across Key Stage 2. By the time they leave the school, pupils reach standards that are above and sometimes well-above average.
- Teaching is good overall with some that is outstanding, particularly in Year 6. Teachers' planning and questioning are particular strengths.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They enjoy coming to learn in this harmonious, caring school. They work and play together well. Pupils are well mannered and proud of their school and the work they do.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe and manage risk in different situations, such as water and fire safety.
- The headteacher, well supported by a strong team of teachers, is keen that pupils should achieve well. A regular check on pupils' learning and progress ensures that pupils make good progress and that teaching improves across the school.
- The governing body knows the school well. Governors know about the quality of teaching and the school's data. They are well trained and have been particularly effective at managing the school's finances and staffing issues to ensure pupils get good quality teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils are not always sure how to make their work better because some teachers' marking lacks clarity about how it could be improved. Pupils have too little time to act on any advice given in marking.
- Standards for the most able pupils are not high enough in Key Stage 1 because teachers do not always set work that enables some pupils to reach the highest levels of which they are capable.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons or parts of lessons, of which two were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at groups of pupils, as well as individual pupils, working with teaching assistants. They specifically listened to Year 2 pupils read, and other year groups in lessons.
- Inspectors talked to a range of pupils about their work and play in school. They also studied a range of pupils' work across the school.
- Meetings were held with seven governors as well as teaching staff, including middle leaders and the headteacher.
- Inspectors observed the overall work of the school and studied a number of documents including the school's data about pupils' current progress. They also examined documents relating to safeguarding, governance, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of 19 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and one parent contacted the lead inspector about the school's work. They also considered the school's staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors looked at school displays, its website and a range of other evidence relating to the wider work of the school.

Inspection team

David Shearsmith, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Barbara Redhead

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- An above-average proportion of pupils is supported by the pupil premium which is additional government funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in the care of the local authority and children of service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is below average. An above-average proportion of pupils is supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is taught as separate Reception and Nursery classes sharing an outdoor learning area.
- The school has before-school care for pupils, which is managed by the governing body.
- The school has experienced some turbulence in staffing over the past few years.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is outstanding, by:
 - improving the marking of pupils' work so that they receive clear guidance how to improve in mathematics and English and are given time to act on the advice
 - ensuring pupils know how to be successful in their learning so they can check how well they are doing in order to accelerate and deepen their own understanding and progress.
- Raise standards for the most able pupils in Key Stage 1 by making sure teachers plan lessons which provide activities that enable these pupils to reach the highest levels of which they are capable.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' achievement is good overall. The school regularly checks on pupils' learning and progress to ensure they have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- Children enter the school with skills that are below those typical for their age, with particular weaknesses in their literacy and mathematical skills. They make good progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in their personal development, because the school settles them well into learning. They make good progress in their literacy skills as the school promotes all pupils' speaking and listening skills well.
- Most pupils continue to make good progress across Key Stage 1. By the time they enter Year 3, they have reached standards that are in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In Key Stage 1, the standards reached by the most-able pupils are not as high as they could be. These pupils do not always achieve higher levels in their work because the work planned is not sufficiently challenging. The school has already addressed this but, as yet, results for the most-able pupils have not shown improvement by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress across Key Stage 2. They reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are above, and sometimes well-above, average. Teaching is particularly strong in Year 6 and here pupils often make accelerated progress. The most-able pupils make good and sometimes better progress with a number of pupils reaching Level 6 in mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress in reading and writing. In the 2013 Year 1 reading check, pupils' standards were well above the national average. This significant improvement on the previous year is because the school developed a good system for teaching phonics (the sounds that letters make). By the time pupils leave in Year 6, they have good and sometimes better skills in spelling and grammar.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics because teaching in this subject is consistently good across the school. Pupils regularly practise their calculation and mental mathematical skills. This ensures they make sustained good progress.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, typically make good and sometimes outstanding progress. The school uses its funding well. Teaching assistants provide support in the classroom as well as individual teaching sessions. Consequently, these pupils attain at least as well as their peers.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good and sometimes better progress. Teaching assistants support these pupils well, providing tasks and activities that aid their good progress.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is typically good overall and is stronger in Key Stage 2, particularly in Year 6 where it is often outstanding. The sharpness of teachers' questioning helps to develop pupils' understanding and this contributes to pupils' good progress in lessons.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children have a focused start to developing their speaking, listening and writing skills. A session in the Reception class saw children captivated by the use of a visual presentation about penguins, which introduced them to facts about these birds. Children were further involved through well-planned, careful discussion which developed their understanding of new vocabulary. A range of opportunities followed where children could explore the life of a penguin further, including writing about them. As a result, children made good progress and developed a range of different skills.
- Pupils' work is diligently and frequently marked. Pupils who benefit most from teachers' marking are given clear points for improvement and time to act on them. This was particularly evident in

a Year 6 literacy lesson. Pupils were given focused feedback on their work and, as a result, went on to produce some outstanding writing. These pupils make better and more consistent progress than those who do not consistently benefit from such good practice.

- Teachers plan lessons with a range of activities to spark pupils' interests. In a science lesson in Year 3, pupils were learning about why plants need light and water. They were fully involved in learning through a balanced diet of practical activities and information provided through a presentation by the teacher. The teacher made it clear how certain aspects of the tasks could be successfully checked during the lesson and pupils were able to make sure they had fully understood. Consequently, all pupils made good and some made outstanding progress.
- Teaching assistants' guidance makes a strong contribution to pupils' progress, especially for those who have special educational needs. Teaching assistants are very proactive, supporting groups in the classroom and individual pupils with specific needs by helping them understand how to tackle activities. In a session to assist pupils supported by the pupil premium, pupils made good progress because of the clear directions that helped close the gaps in their learning and develop their literacy skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and participate well in lessons as they have good attitudes to learning. They work well together or on their own and answer questions keenly in lessons. Pupils move around the school courteously and are well mannered. They enjoy their playtimes and lunchtimes and play together well.
- Pupils engage enthusiastically in sports because the school has used the primary school sport funding wisely to promote pupils' health, well-being and participation. Pupils particularly enjoy taking part in the regular activity sessions held by a gymnastics coach employed by the school.
- The school has made a concerted effort to improve attendance by rigorously following up on pupils who were not attending well or not arriving at school on time. As a result, pupils' attendance is above average and their punctuality is good.
- The school has a 'Before-School Breakfast Club', which gives pupils a good start to their day. They enjoy attending the club and participating in the activities provided.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. It has good systems in place to promote pupils' safety. Pupils commented that they feel very safe and parents agree.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe in different situations. The school ensures that, through its curriculum, they get good information to help them keep safe. As a result, pupils know about how to check on various types of risk, including when using the internet.
- The school successfully uses its curriculum to promote pupils' personal development. Consequently, there is a good understanding of what constitutes different forms of bullying. Pupils said there is no bullying in the school as they all get on well with each other. When there is a problem, adults in the school help them to sort it out quickly.

The leadership and management

are good

- The good leadership of the headteacher, who is well supported by a committed team of senior and middle leaders, ensures that pupils achieve well. Staff know the school and pupils well. The school has chosen the right areas to improve after checking on how well it is doing. Regular meetings to check on pupils' progress provide teachers and support staff with invaluable information to promote pupils' learning further.
- The school uses performance management effectively to improve teaching and to raise standards. It has been particularly successful in improving pupils' progress at Key Stage 2 and is aware of the need to get the same level of progress across the school. Teachers are appropriately rewarded for their endeavours, both in and out of the classroom.

- The school has a system for checking on the quality of teaching and pupils' work in books. Regular informal checks by the headteacher have helped to improve the quality of teaching. These, alongside some checking by middle leaders, have sustained good teaching and development. The school has significantly improved the teaching of phonics through training and support and this has had a positive impact on pupils' reading skills.
- The school is in the process of mentoring middle leaders so that they are already taking a greater responsibility for developing the school. The new leader responsible for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is providing invaluable support and continuity for these pupils. Other leaders are improving the quality of teaching and there are signs of standards improving at Key Stage 1.
- The school's curriculum successfully involves and interests pupils. Good links between subjects help to improve pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills. After-school activities, particularly a mathematics programme, enrich pupils' learning.
- The school provides good spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences for pupils and promotes their personal development well. Consequently, pupils relate well to each other and relationships across the school are strong.
- The school works with a number of partners to support pupils' learning, including the local church with visits from the local priest. It has successful links with parents that involve them in and inform them about their children's learning and progress.
- The school ensures that pupils are safe and secure and safeguarding procedures meet requirements.
- The local authority provides good support to the school, including a recent whole-school review of its performance requested by the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well. Through their 'School Improvement Committee', they have a good understanding of the school's performance data and the need to improve standards for the most-able pupils in Key Stage 1. They visit the school regularly, know about the quality of teaching and have helped the school sustain stability, despite a period of turbulence in staffing. They manage the school's limited finances well and make sure that staff are appropriately rewarded for good performance as measured against the Teachers' Standards. Governors have used the primary school sport funding wisely to improve pupils' participation, health and well-being, through additional activities and the use of a gymnastics coach. Governors use their various skills to support the work of the school and have clear roles and responsibilities. They are well trained, particularly in appointing new staff, having recently appointed a new headteacher. Performance management has been used wisely by the governing body to sustain and improve pupils' progress. Governors have a very good understanding of how the pupil premium funding is used to improve progress for those entitled pupils. They have made sure that these pupils have good support both in and out of class.

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	111678
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	431378

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Doherty
Headteacher	Jane Casey
Date of previous school inspection	23 March 2009
Telephone number	01642 560056
Fax number	01642 664560
Email address	stjosephsbill@stockton.gov.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

