

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Rowley Road, Whitnash, Leamington Spa, CV31 2LJ

Inspection dates

11–12 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- Pupils achieve well. Standards by the end of Year 6 are well above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The headteacher provides a clear sense of direction and is ambitious in his drive to ensure that this continues to be a successful school.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have identified the correct priorities to continue improvement.
- Good teaching enables pupils to make good progress from when they arrive in Reception to the time they leave in Year 6. Teaching is particularly strong in Year 6.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils. They work effectively in partnership with teachers to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. Pupils feel very safe and respect the staff and each other.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are a real strength. The school provides an exceptionally caring environment, which is appreciated fully by parents.
- There are excellent opportunities for pupils to develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. When pupils leave in Year 6 they are well prepared for secondary school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to make sure that all pupils make excellent progress. Pupils, including the most-able, are not always challenged as much as they should be.
- Checks made on the quality of teaching do not always focus on how challenging the work is or how much progress pupils are
- Teachers' marking and feedback to pupils are not always consistent with the school's marking policy. Teachers do not always ensure pupils respond to the advice they are given to improve their work.

making.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 17 lessons or parts of lessons, three of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors heard a sample of pupils read, looked at past and present work in pupils' books, observed morning playtime and lunchtime activities and attended an assembly.
- Meetings were held with the senior and middle leaders, groups of pupils and two members of the governing body. Telephone conversations were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- There were very few responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). However, inspectors analysed the responses made to a recent school survey and talked to parents and carers before and after school. The inspectors also considered 15 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team looked at a number of documents including: the school's self-evaluation and planning for improvement; records of the quality of teaching; information on pupils' current progress and achievement; records relating to punctuation and attendance; and the school's safeguarding information.

Inspection team

Rachel Howie, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Morag Kophamel

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care) is less than half the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. Those pupils supported through school action plus and those with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding and help pupils to make faster progress by ensuring that:
 - the level of challenge for all pupils, particularly the most-able, is consistently high across all subjects
 - the school's policy for marking and feedback is rigorously applied by all teachers and that teachers check that pupils act on the advice they are given.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - monitoring activities are more systematically planned to ensure marking is consistently good across the school
 - the checks made on the quality of teaching take more account of the level of challenge pupils are set and how much progress this enables them to make

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- From their starting points, pupils make good progress in Reception and are well prepared to start Key Stage 1. Pupils continue to make good progress and by the time they reach Year 6, they attain standards above those found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, they are well prepared to begin the next stage of their education.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2013, almost all pupils had made the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics. Fewer pupils than the national average made better than expected progress in reading and writing. The school was quick to respond to this and the information it has about pupils currently in the school, shows that progress in these subjects is accelerating. A rapidly increasing proportion of pupils are now making good progress.
- The school fosters exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to do their best and learn new things. This is helping pupils to make good progress.
- Progress for the vast majority of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good because they receive effective and focussed support. The special needs co-ordinator checks frequently on their progress and works effectively alongside teachers, teaching assistants and outside agencies to ensure the work they are given is appropriate.
- There are too few pupils eligible for the pupil premium to make a judgement on their attainment without a risk of identifying them. Generally, across the school, the attainment of these pupils is below that of their classmates in English and mathematics but the gap is getting narrower. This is because good use has been made of the funding to provide additional and well-matched support for individual pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2013 the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the phonics (the sounds that letters make) was in line with the national average. This is a significant improvement from the previous year. The proportion of pupils in the current Year 1 to meet the standard is likely to be well above average. This is because the school has developed its teaching of phonics well.
- Pupils enjoy reading. All pupils visit the school library regularly and the stock of books reflect an extensive range of interests and reading abilities. Pupils appreciate the opportunity to suggest new books and authors that they would like adding to the library.
- Pupils now have more opportunities than at the time of the last inspection, to practise their writing skills in a range of other subjects, such as religious education and history. This is helping them to make good progress.
- There has correctly been a focus within school to ensure that the level of challenge for more-able pupils is sufficient to enable them to reach the higher levels of attainment. This is not yet happening in all classes, however.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is usually good with some that is outstanding. Teaching is characterised by good relationships, pupils' extremely positive attitudes to learning and teachers' strong subject knowledge. Together, these help pupils to make good progress.

- Teachers make regular assessments about pupils' ability and check that these are accurate by comparing them with those made by teachers in other local schools. In Reception class, staff keep very precise records about pupils' learning in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The teaching is not yet outstanding because teachers' expectations are not always ambitious enough for all pupils, including the most-able. Some pupils are capable of even more than they are being asked to do or are ready to move onto more difficult work sooner than the teacher realises. This is preventing them from making outstanding progress.
- Teaching is most effective when pupils understand the steps they need to take and the work challenges them enough. For example, in a Year 6 story-writing lesson, the teacher used a very challenging story opening as an example and showed pupils explicitly what made it effective. Throughout the lesson, she had very high expectations, encouraging pupils of all abilities to use more complex sentences and adventurous vocabulary. In addition, pupils were motivated by the task (a Radio 2's story competition). As a result, almost all pupils made outstanding progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants question pupils skilfully to check on their understanding or to encourage them to think hard about something, saying for example, 'Tell me more about...' or 'How do you know?'
- Strong working partnerships between teachers and teaching assistants are evident across the school. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson about choosing the best value items from a shop, the teaching assistant and the teacher worked very effectively together. They modelled clearly, precisely and in a fun way, how to use mathematical skills to find the best bargain. This good support for individuals and groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, has been particularly effective in ensuring pupils at risk of falling behind are supported well.
- The school has recently rewritten the marking and feedback policy, with help and ideas from the pupils. Where marking and feedback is most effective it provides a clear indication about what pupils have done well and some precise advice about how to improve the work. The good practice seen in some Key Stage 2 classes is not yet consistently matched across the school. Not all teachers ensure pupils act on this advice to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Inspectors, staff and parents agree that the behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Parents value the school's family ethos and strong moral guidance. All staff have high expectations of behaviour. Pupils consistently meet these expectations regardless of which adult they are working with. Even when not directly supervised by adults, pupils maintain a very high standard of behaviour. This was evident in a Year 6 lesson when pupils were working in groups around the school making a film. Despite the exciting nature of the task and the requirement to work collaboratively and negotiate with one another, their behaviour was exemplary.
- During playtimes and lunchtimes, and when moving around the school, pupils are polite and friendly and treat adults and one another with respect. They show genuine care for each other and are quick to offer help and support where it is needed.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Inspectors agree with pupils and parents that St Joseph's is a very safe place in which to learn and play. This is because staff place a high degree of importance on this aspect of school. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. Their knowledge about the dangers of the internet and how to

keep themselves safe is exceptional. The recently introduced pupil e-safety council is ensuring that this high level of understanding is shared with parents and governors.

- Pupils enjoy coming to school, attend regularly and speak enthusiastically and proudly about the opportunities they are provided with and the topics they learn about. They take pride in their uniform, return to their classrooms promptly after playtimes and settle quickly to their learning. This has a very positive impact on the progress they make.
- Pupils have an extremely thorough understanding of different types of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying, and are adamant that it is a very rare occurrence. Pupils are confident that staff listen if they have any concerns and deal with it swiftly and appropriately. The school's records on behaviour show that any form of negative behaviour is extremely rare.
- Pupils' relationships with adults are exceptionally positive. This is, in part because adults seek their views regularly and pupils value this. Older pupils enjoy the range of responsibilities that they are trusted with, for example being house captains and librarians and being play leaders for younger pupils.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's determination that every pupil should achieve academic and personal success is at the heart of the school's improvement. He leads the school purposefully and with discernible commitment. Governors and staff support the headteacher's vision well and are enthusiastic about his leadership. This was seen in the unanimously positive response from the staff in their survey. Subject leaders are well-supported and lead their subject effectively.
- The headteacher has a strong track record in identifying leadership potential in staff and providing opportunities for them to develop their skills. The local authority also uses his expertise to support other local schools.
- Leaders know the school's strengths and areas for improvement because of their accurate assessment of the quality of teaching and their regular analysis of information about pupils' progress. Teachers receive helpful feedback about how they can improve their classroom practice.
- Leaders have worked hard to accelerate the progress of pupils and improve the teaching of phonics. A range of additional support has been carefully targeted to enable more pupils to achieve even higher levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. The information that leaders collect on how well pupils are achieving shows that progress is accelerating for an increasing proportion of pupils.
- Improvement activities are rightly focussed on improving pupils' progress, for example the recent review of the marking and feedback policy. However, checks to ensure how consistently new policies such as this are implemented are not systematic enough to ensure improvements are embedded quickly. Checks made on the work in pupils' books are not sharply enough focussed on the level of challenge provided for groups of pupils and how much progress this enables them to make.
- Teachers have clear targets set in order to improve their performance. They receive good quality training and are held to account for the progress of pupils in their class. Plans are in place to ensure that a similar system is in operation for teaching assistants.

- The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to excel in a wide range of subjects including music and sport. Inspectors observed an assembly where the school music group played together exceptionally well and pupils sang confidently in three-part harmony. Pupils talked particularly enthusiastically about their history learning and demonstrated a good level of knowledge. A wide range of after school clubs such as Spanish, Irish music, netball and art supplement the curriculum.
- Pupils are provided with a variety of valuable and exciting experiences. These include trips to places of interest and visitors into school to stimulate pupils and extend their learning – as one pupil said, 'It makes history learning real because you can see it in front of you.' Pupils also have opportunities to make decisions about the school through the school council and raise money for a range of charities. This, together with the opportunities pupils have to learn about different faiths and cultures, has made an exceedingly positive contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- In order to make best use of the extra sport funding (provided by the government to all primary schools) the physical education (P.E.) subject leader has developed a comprehensive plan to ensure that pupils engage in more physical exercise and teachers are able to develop their teaching skills. Additional sports clubs are planned and specialist coaches are supporting the teaching of P.E. More equipment has been purchased for 'fit for learning', the regular programme of exercise that pupils undertake. An additional school council is being set up to evaluate the success of these projects.
- Procedures to keep pupils safe meet current requirements.
- The local authority has provided appropriate levels of support for this good school since the last inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well. The committee structure has recently been reorganised and this is enabling governors to become specialists in particular areas of governance and is leading to more challenging questions being asked of school leaders. In partnership with the headteacher, they use performance management to reward good teachers and hold staff and leaders to account for raising pupils' achievement. Governors are rigorous in their duties with regard to the finances of the school and take their responsibilities to keep children safe very seriously. They are well-informed about the quality of teaching and about pupils' achievement, including those who are eligible for pupil premium funding.

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	125719
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	441288

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Malone
Headteacher	Jim Goggin
Date of previous school inspection	13 March 2008
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