

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Headley Way, Headington, Oxfordshire, OX3 7XS

Inspection dates 12–13 February 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.

- St. Joseph's is a harmonious community where pupils learn well. They make good progress from their different starting points.
- Pupils, including more able pupils, reach standards that are above average in all subjects by the end of Year 6.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates.
- Pupils who speak different languages at home get good support in learning English.
- Most teaching is good and some is of the highest quality. Most teachers question pupils well so they can improve their learning.
- Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and what still needs to be done. They are well supported by committed extended leadership teams.
- Pupils say they feel safe. Bullying incidents are rare and pupils are confident that adults will keep them safe. They behave well in and around the school
- Teachers and other adults work together so that pupils have a rich and varied experience. The 'Greek Day' saw staff and pupils in ancient Greek dress exploring the culture, art and buildings with a visiting expert in Greek history.
- Governors are regular visitors to the school. They understand their responsibilities, and support and challenge the school well.
- The school works well with the local Cherwell Partnership. Staff share their expertise and benefit from the expertise of other schools.
- Parents and carers are pleased with the school. Their comments included, 'It's a lovely school', 'My children do well', and 'Teachers are always around and approachable.'

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in mathematics are not quite as high as in reading and writing.
- There is not enough high quality teaching to enable pupils to make exceptional progress in all subjects.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to act upon teachers' advice and guidance to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Twenty-eight lessons, many of them joint with the headteacher, as well as individual and small group activities, parts of lessons, and phonics sessions (the links between letters and the sounds they make), were observed.
- An inspector listened to pupils from Years 2 and 6 reading and held a discussion with a group of older pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' books informally in lessons and more formally with the school's headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors considered 88 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), and questionnaires completed by 18 members of staff were taken into account.
- Discussions were held with a representative from the local authority, with four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and senior and middle leaders.
- Various school documents were examined. These included monitoring records of the quality of teaching, external school evaluations, the school's development plan and the school's review of its own performance, reports of the governing body visits, headteacher's reports to governors, records of pupils' attendance, behaviour records and safeguarding documentation, and data on pupils' progress.

Inspection team

Jean Whalley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Catherine Beeks

Additional Inspector

Anthony Green

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. It has no nursery provision.
- Around half the pupils are White British. Other significant groups are Other White pupils, Indian and Other Asian pupils
- Around a third of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to the pupil premium is below average. This additional funding applies to pupils who are eligible for free school meals or are looked after by the local authority or belong to service families.
- The proportions of all groups of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs (school action, school action plus and those with statements) are below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There is a breakfast club and a variety of after-school clubs and activities run by the governing body.
- Since the previous inspection of the school, nine teachers have left and seven new teachers have been recruited and a new chair of governors has been elected.
- The school holds the International School Silver Award and the Eco-School Bronze Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of outstanding teaching by ensuring that all teachers routinely maintain the pace of learning that promotes outstanding progress for all pupils.
- Improve the achievement of all pupils, especially in mathematics, by ensuring that pupils act upon teachers' advice and guidance to improve their work and progress rapidly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- In Reception, information on children's learning and development for the last three years shows that the children entered school with skills and abilities which were in line or just below those expected for their age. They made good progress so that by the time they went into Year 1, almost all of them had the skills and abilities that would be expected and some exceeded those that would be expected.
- Skills checks for the children currently in Reception show that approximately half started school with lower than the expected levels of skills and abilities. Appropriate support and tailored interventions enabled the majority to reach expected levels within the learning and development bands by the end of their first term at the school, thus good progress was made.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn well and make good progress to attain levels above the national average. Results for the end of Year 1 phonic screening check showed that just over three quarters of the pupils met the expected standard. Their progress is closely tracked, and any slowing of progress is identified quickly and addressed. Progress data for the current Year 2 indicates progress will be above that of similar schools nationally.
- The school recognises that in 2013, Year 6 attainment in mathematics declined. It remained above the national average but it was not as good as in reading and writing. A specialist mathematics tutor, additional software and small group withdrawal sessions were organised and early indications are that these initiatives are having a strong impact. School data are beginning to show that for targeted pupils, progress is accelerating.
- Pupils' attainment and progress is closely monitored. Termly progress meetings ensure that the majority of pupils (whatever their starting points) are on track to achieve at least the school's target of 14 average point's scores in all subjects from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6. Reading and writing are strengths of the school. Pupils' achievement in both is above schools nationally. Mathematics is not as strong but is also above the national average.
- The school's small cohorts of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those eligible for additional support through the pupil premium funding have very different profiles each year. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, they make similar progress to their peers, and gaps, if any, are negligible.
- Pupils who have English as an additional language and who are from minority ethnic groups are supported well. Their achievement is in line with that of their peers in the school and better than that seen in other schools nationally.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching over time is typically good because pupils achieve well.
- Pupils have ample opportunities to acquire a wide range of skills, knowledge and understanding in a range of subjects because teachers are creative in finding different ways to achieve this.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are good, and have a positive impact on pupils' learning and development. This was especially the case when staff and pupils dressed as Ancient Greeks to explore Greek buildings, art and culture. Teachers made good use of a local classicist who was able to provide expert subject knowledge so that both teachers and pupils gained knowledge and deepened their understanding of life in ancient Greece.
- Most teachers have high expectations of their pupils, use additional adults well and aim to ensure that all pupils are stretched and attain to the best of their ability. However, in lessons where there is insufficient challenge this impacts on the rate of pupils' learning and progress.
- In an excellent lesson in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception), the teacher worked closely with a small group of children on comparing weights, introducing the language they would need to estimate and weigh items – heavy, light, higher and lower (height of balance scales). The rest of the class were involved in a range of activities linked to weighing, with highly

effective support and questioning from the other adults.

- While marking is effective in many instances, in some books seen during the inspection, there was not enough clear guidance to pupils as to how they should improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. They enjoy taking on responsibilities, for example as members of the school council, and are proud to welcome visitors into their school. They were keen to talk to inspectors and spoke very politely.
- In a stimulating English lesson for a mixed class of Years 5 and 6, pupils demonstrated a high degree of concentration and application to the task by writing interesting openings to their stories. The teacher ensured that the task met all pupils' abilities so they all made good progress. Pupils' comments included, 'It's fun, but it's not easy because we have to think hard.' When lessons are not so engaging, pupils can occasionally become distracted and fidgety but not disruptive.
- The school's behaviour record confirms that behaviour is typically good over time. There have been no exclusions since 2009.
- The majority of parents who responded to the on-line survey (Parent View) think that behaviour is good most of the time. The majority of teachers ensure that behaviour is good because lessons engage and enthuse pupils.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents who spoke with inspectors expressed confidence that the school deals effectively with bullying issues. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said they were very confident in speaking to an adult about any concerns that they might have, and that bullying is rare and is always dealt with straightaway.
- Pupils know that it is wrong to treat anyone differently because of how they look, how they worship or how they speak. They all said that they would tell an adult if they heard anyone being called 'bad' names.
- Pupils explained how to stay safe while using the internet and showed a good awareness of cyber-bullying. They know they should never give out personal information while 'on-line'. They have lessons from teachers and visitors and assemblies and films to explain how to stay safe.
- The attendance of the vast majority of pupils is above average and they are punctual to school. Where there are attendance concerns, the school works with families to address the issues and is proactive, for example in providing support from the home-school link worker to the very small number of 'hard to reach' families, so their attendance is improved.

The leadership and management are good

- The school is keen to continue pupils' improvement. The headteacher tracks their progress closely and responds to areas of slowed progress or underachievement promptly by alerting other leaders so that support and interventions can be initiated quickly and impact measured.
- The headteacher responds quickly to pupils' needs, for example providing professional expertise like occupational therapy, art therapy and language development support from school funds rather than having to wait for publicly funded services. This means that pupils benefit from professional support more quickly and successfully. The part-funding of the home-school link worker to support those pupils eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium is another example of her actions to support vulnerable pupils and ensure all pupils experience success.
- Support for the small number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well organised. Provision is carefully tailored to individuals, from providing specialist equipment and small group activities, for example the specialist mathematics tutor, to full-time one-to-one adult support working with the most vulnerable pupils. These actions enable pupils to make similar

progress to their peers. More able pupils are similarly well provided for by additional small group activities that challenge their thinking and stretch their abilities.

- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and is used as a secure platform to plan for future improvement.
- Staff are supported to improve their expertise in the school and across the Cherwell Partnership (the local collaborative network). This enables skills and expertise to be shared so all benefit from each other's successes. Staff with whom inspectors spoke during the inspection felt supported in both their professional and personal development.
- Learning, including pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, is well organised and creative. Pupils say they 'learn loads of stuff' and what they learn is interesting and enjoyable. Visitors such as the classicist for Greek history, and visits to France all add to the pupils' rich diet of opportunities and experiences so they are well prepared for the next stages in their education.
- A range of enrichment activities, including philosophy and music lessons for brass, piano, flute violin and a Forest School, all add to what pupils learn. All pupils are able to take part as funds are available to subsidise costs so equal opportunities are promoted. The school's orchestra is conducted by one of the National Children's Orchestra's conductors. The team was treated to a rousing arrangement of The Infernal Galop from Offenbach's Orpheus in the Underworld (the can-can dance) during their rehearsal time.
- The breakfast club and after school club provide a safe and sociable start and end to the day for those pupils who use them, and after-school activities, for example the orchestra, chess and sports clubs, are popular with the older pupils in particular. The clubs record who attends and pupils say they enjoy the challenges they provide.
- The primary school sports funding is used well to improve staff expertise and pupils' experiences. Governors are exploring ways of measuring its effectiveness for improving the pupils' interest and participation in sporting activities as well as benefits to their health and well-being.
- Parents and carers who spoke with inspectors were enthusiastic in their praise of the school and their children's experiences. They all said the staff are approachable, and that any issues were addressed promptly and resolved quickly. They supported the headteacher in her leadership.
- The school has an extended leadership structure, which means there are new leaders who are supported by those who are more experienced. This means that leaders at all levels work well together to drive the school forward and improve outcomes for all the pupils.
- The local authority has no concerns about the school. It assesses the school each year to determine what support is needed. The local representative makes a yearly visit to check its assessment is correct and offer any support the school requests.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They ensure statutory duties are met and that arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet current requirements. They ensure their training is ongoing. Governors know what expertise is needed and actively recruit people who have it. They make sure finances are used in a way that supports pupils' learning effectively. Governors know how the pupil premium is being spent and how well eligible pupils are achieving. They have a clear awareness of the main strengths within teaching and how well pupils achieve. Teachers' performance and links to pay are understood and they know what is done to tackle any underperformance. Governors are well known to the school community. They are regular and frequent visitors to the school. They observe lessons and talk to pupils, staff, parents and carers. The governing body uses external support, for example in setting the headteacher's performance targets and appraisal where appropriate. The governing body is a strength of the school, providing knowledgeable and effective support and challenge in equal measure to the school's leadership.

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	123216
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	431431

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

Type of school	Catholic Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	332
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Councillor Mary Clarkson
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Tomkys
Date of previous school inspection	29–30 June 2009
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