

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Front Street, Nympsfield, Stonehouse, GL10 3TY

Inspection dates 12–13 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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

- St Joseph's is a rapidly improving school. Achievement is good, especially in mathematics.
- Disabled and those with special educational needs do well because of the high quality support they receive.
- All teaching is at least good and much is outstanding.
- Teachers plan work carefully to make sure that all pupils are given work which provides good challenge for their ability.
- Pupils know how to improve their work because teachers give them clear information when they mark their books.
- Teaching assistants are very skilled and they help pupils of all abilities to learn well.
- Pupils' attitudes to school and learning are exemplary. They are always polite and respectful to each other and to adults. They have excellent attitudes to their work and they are keen to do well.
- The broad range of the subjects pupils learn includes excellent opportunities for them to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Pupils feel safe because they know that the adults care about them and look after them well.
- The headteacher has a passion and commitment which are shared by all members of the school community, including governors; she has the full support of pupils, parents and staff.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Over time, not all teachers have had consistently high enough expectations.
- Achievement in reading is lagging behind writing and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in eight lessons and parts of lessons, all of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other leaders in school, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, parents and pupils.
- The inspector took account of 38 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as views of parents from informal discussions in school.
- Information about how well school leaders know how good the school is and their plans for school improvement, as well as information about pupils' progress, minutes of meetings of the governing body, teachers' planning, pupils' work, safeguarding procedures and examples of the targets teachers are given as part of the management of their performance were examined.
- The inspector analysed 12 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Jeanne Simpson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding (those known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and those with a parent in the armed forces) is lower than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is higher than average.
- The proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum standards set for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching, particularly in reading, by:
 - raising the expectations of all teachers to match those of the best
 - providing more chances for pupils to develop the skills they need to become fluent and effective readers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is improving rapidly. Pupils, including the more able, make good and sometimes outstanding progress.
- When children enter Reception, their skills are broadly in line with those typically found for their age. The range of experiences they have means that they make good progress in all areas of learning. The classroom is full of chances for them to develop their communication skills and practise writing. By the time they enter Year 1, a higher than average proportion reach a good level of development.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) is good and more pupils are currently working at higher levels than at the same time last year. Pupils use their knowledge about phonics well when they are both reading and writing, which demonstrates their increasing knowledge and confidence.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have fallen slightly over the last three years, particularly in reading. However, a small number of pupils are in each year group and a high percentage of pupils are disabled or have special educational needs which mean that there can be considerable variations from year to year. Information collected by the school and the current work in books show that pupils' progress from their starting points is good and improving.
- By the time pupils leave the school the standards they reach are above average, particularly in mathematics. In reading, pupils make good progress. However, reading is an area of relative weakness compared with writing and mathematics.
- More able pupils do well and a higher than average percentage of pupils reaches the higher levels in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The very few pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding make comparisons with national averages about attainment inappropriate. However, the school takes great care to ensure that the funding is used to provide precise support for pupils' academic, social and emotional needs. As a result, the progress they make is at least as good as their peers.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is a strength of the school. Information about how well pupils are doing is collected regularly and the school is quick to recognise if any pupils are falling behind. Help is immediately put in place through short programmes of support and through one-to-one help in the classroom. As a result their progress is broadly the same as their peers and by the time they leave, their attainment is about a year ahead of similar pupils nationally.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and much is outstanding. However, the school is not complacent and leaders and teachers are all keen to make sure that teaching continues to improve.
- Expectations are almost always high and the quality and quantity of the work pupils produce are excellent. Teachers make good use of information about pupils' attainment to plan work which provides good levels of challenge. Occasionally, the learning of all pupils, particularly the more able, is hindered because teachers do not challenge their thinking deeply enough.
- Teachers plan very carefully so that pupils' learning builds systematically over a series of lessons, beginning with teaching the basic skills and understanding what pupils need. The pupils know what they need to learn next from the information teachers give them on their individual task sheets, known as 'learning ladders'. Pupils receive extra support where needed through regular group or individual teaching sessions because teachers use information they gain when marking pupils' work to spot what they need to do next to achieve well. Pupils say they enjoy learning in this way, particularly the freedom they have to progress at their own rates.
- Teachers use questioning effectively to check on how well pupils have understood the new learning and the work they have been given to do. This means that no learning time is lost.
- Pupils know what their next steps are from the comments teachers write and they always have

time to put the suggestions into practice. All work is marked regularly and teachers always make sure pupils know how well they have done.

- Basic skills are taught well, especially in mathematics, because teachers have good subject knowledge. Writing is also taught well, and there are many occasions for pupils to practise writing through the other subjects they learn.
- Pupils read regularly with adults and displays in classrooms encourage pupils to share their love of reading. Pupils' progress in acquiring the skills they need to become fluent and effective readers is hindered because teachers do not always exploit every chance to show pupils how to become even better readers.
- Teaching assistants make an important contribution to pupils' learning. They work closely with teachers so that they understand pupils' next steps which means that they know exactly how to help them to learn well. They use questioning skilfully and they allow the pupils to demonstrate that they understand by letting them continue on their own.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are consistently polite and respectful to each other and to all adults. They hold doors open and stand back to let adults pass without being reminded. Their manners are impeccable because they know that this is what is expected at St Joseph's.
- In discussions, pupils who have recently joined the school commented on the differences between how well pupils treat each other compared with their previous experiences and the word that was often used was 'welcoming'.
- Pupils play together well at playtime, irrespective of age. Pupils in Year 5 have been trained as play leaders so that they can help the children in Reception to learn new games.
- Pupils, adults and teachers all think that behaviour is a strength of the school. Pupils say that behaviour is dealt with well and that teachers are very fair. During the inspection, no learning time was lost because teachers had to manage inappropriate behaviour. In one class the teacher did not even need to raise her head to check on the behaviour of the rest of the class while she was teaching a group because she knew she could trust them to get on with their work. She was not mistaken.
- Pupils have outstanding attitudes to learning. They are highly motivated and they have exceptional levels of concentration, from the youngest pupils to those in Year 6. They talk proudly about their learning and the progress they are making.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. All members of the school community have confidence that the school is a safe place in which to learn.
- Pupils were adamant that there is no bullying, but they are confident that if there was an incident, it would be dealt with. They say that this would be done in private so that people would not be embarrassed but parents would be called into school and it would not happen again.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe, including when they are using the internet. The visits from the Life Skills Bus help them to learn about 'stranger danger', road safety and how to keep themselves safe in situations they might meet as they get older.
- Attendance is high and rising because pupils want to be in school and because the school has good systems for contacting parents if pupils are absent. There has only been one exclusion in the last three years.

The leadership and management are good

- St Joseph's is a rapidly improving school because the headteacher has created a culture where only the best is good enough. Over time leaders have not always responded quickly enough when standards have fallen but there is now a relentless focus on improving the quality of

teaching and raising attainment. The headteacher has the full support of the staff in realising her vision of St Joseph's as an outstanding school.

- All parents who responded on Parent View would recommend the school. Pupils are clear that the school is getting better and that this is due to the changes that the headteacher is making.
- Leaders, including governors, have a clear understanding about what is going well and what needs to improve. They make regular checks on the quality of teaching and they use information about how well pupils are doing to check that the changes they are making are working. If improvements are not fast enough, they rethink what they are doing. The long-term plans for improvement are helpful and governors check at regular points during the year that the school is on track to reach the challenging targets that they have set.
- Middle leaders also provide strong leadership. They are fully involved in checking how well things are going in their subjects and they give good support to their colleagues.
- Teachers say that the targets they are set for their performance are very challenging but that meeting them means that the school is getting even better. They value the training they have, which includes sharing the good and outstanding practice in the school as well as within the local cluster of schools and in the wider community.
- Leaders ensure that pupil premium funding is carefully targeted through individual teaching and through specially designed programmes of support. As a result, pupils are helped to do as well as they can and they make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils enjoy the wide range of subjects they learn and the way that teachers make links between subjects whenever possible. For example, in a topic about the Great Fire of London, the youngest pupils were involved in baking bread, writing diary entries wearing a wig and a cape in the style of Samuel Pepys and enjoying a visit from the fire service.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is exceptional. Pupils understand how the work of Catholic Aid for Overseas Development (CAFOD) is helping children in Sierra Leone and they sponsor the education of a child in Ghana. The Fairtrade tuck shop and the walk around the village that the pupils have organised in support of CAFOD are examples of how they are taking responsibility for helping others. There is a wide variety of clubs and many pupils learn musical instruments.
- Leaders have used the additional funding to improve sport and physical education well. There are strong links with external partners such as the local secondary school, Youth Sport Trust and sports clubs. Pupils have chances to take part in a wide variety of new sports such as orienteering, table tennis, tennis and cricket and they have increased their understanding of the importance of sport in improving health. Teachers have improved their subject knowledge through coaching sessions, which means that the improvements to pupils' well-being and fitness can be sustained into the future.
- There are no groups of pupils who are underachieving which shows that the school is promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.
- The school's systems for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority has provided good support to the school since the time of the last inspection, which has been withdrawn appropriately as the school's effectiveness has improved.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are committed to ensuring that the school continues to improve. They use the information the headteacher gives them about achievement to make comparisons with similar schools nationally and they check that everything possible is being done to help the pupils to do even better. They regularly attend training and they visit the school to see for themselves how well things are going, though they know that their visits should be more regular. They know about the quality of teaching and what has been done to make it even better and they check that only the best teachers are rewarded by progression through the pay scale. They ensure that the pupil premium funding is used effectively by making regular checks on the progress of the pupils who receive support. They have eradicated the budget deficit of the past and they are ensuring that funds are now spent wisely.

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	115707
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	431086

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jacquie Derrick
Headteacher	Wendy D'Arcy
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 July 2012
Telephone number	01453 860311
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