

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Woodford Lane, Winsford, Cheshire, CW7 2JS

Inspection dates 2–3 April 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.

- Leaders and governors have worked hard to ensure that this is a welcoming school where all are included equally and all do well. Pupils, regardless of their starting points, make good progress in all subjects including reading, writing and mathematics.
- Reading is taught well, particularly for those at the early stages of reading. This helps pupils to enjoy reading for pleasure and produce their own creative writing books for their topic work.
- Children get a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress.
- The quality of teaching is good and improving and sometimes it is outstanding.
- Behaviour is good and pupils feel safe in school.
- Attendance is above average. This reflects pupils' thorough enjoyment of school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed well through the rich curriculum.
- Leaders have improved the quality of teaching effectively and have ensured that this continues to be a good school.
- The governing body carries out its roles well and holds leaders stringently to account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding and so pupils do not make exceptional progress. Sometimes work is not hard enough to challenge the most-able pupils fully so that they can make exceptional progress.
- Misspellings of key words used frequently within a topic are not always corrected.
- Marking comments do not always help pupils to know how to improve their work.
- Leaders and managers do not use the information they record to tell them precisely how well different groups of pupils are doing, both personally and academically.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 15 parts of lessons and watched pupils being taught in small groups. Three of these lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and the assistant headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with key staff, three groups of pupils, four members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in Years 1, 2 and 6.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including: the school's data relating to pupils' progress; the work in pupils' books in all year groups and the school's documentation relating to attendance, behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors took into account the 57 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke to parents at the start of the school day. Also 36 staff completed inspection questionnaires and their responses were also analysed.

Inspection team

Sharona Semlali, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kathleen Harris	Additional Inspector
Frances Farnorth	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- There have been many changes to the teaching staff since the previous inspection. The headteacher started at the school in September 2013. At the time of this inspection, four teachers were on maternity leave.
- Some classes are taught in mixed-age groups.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of girls is higher compared to that of boys.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is below average. (The pupil premium is extra funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those from service families and those looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school manages its own breakfast- and after-school clubs.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching so that all of it is good and more is outstanding to bring about faster progress and higher standards by ensuring that:
 - all groups of pupils, including the most able, have appropriate levels of challenge
 - commonly used key words, including those used in topic work, are checked and spelt correctly
 - marking comments make it clear to pupils what they need to do next and how to improve their work
 - pupils are given enough time to follow up and act on marking comments, so that they learn from their mistakes.
- Strengthen leadership and management by analysing the data and other information senior leaders have, so that they can see precisely how well different groups of pupils are doing, personally and academically, and whether leaders need to take any other action to support them further.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are mostly well below those typical for their age. They make good progress because all activities are planned well to meet the diverse learning needs and interests of all children. As a result, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development in 2013 was in line with the national average.
- Pupils continue to make good progress between Years 1 to 6 and standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave at the end of Key Stage 2. There are no discernible differences between boys and girls.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their individual starting points. This is due to the wide range of bespoke programmes they receive by trained and skilled teaching assistants. This enables them to have the confidence to learn alongside their peers in the classroom.
- The most able pupils make good progress. However, at times, they are not given enough challenge to stimulate their thinking to enable them to make even better progress.
- There were no attainment gaps between those eligible for the pupil premium funding and the others in the school in mathematics, reading and writing in the 2013 national tests. This shows how well the school is ensuring that all groups of pupils are given an equal chance to achieve well, regardless of their starting points.
- Good reading habits are promoted across the school. Early reading skills such as the letters that sounds make (phonics) are taught well. The effect of this is seen in the improved phonics screening check results for the Year 1 pupils in 2013, which were above average and a significant improvement compared to the previous year.
- Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to write at length in different subjects. This is evident from the high quality written work seen in the topic books made and designed by pupils, which link a rich mix of subjects through themes. However, some of the common everyday words specific to the topic are sometimes spelt incorrectly and occasionally not corrected by staff. Consequently, errors recur.
- Mathematics is taught well and through other subjects. Pupils are given good opportunities to use real-life events to apply their skills in this subject. For example, when pupils studied the 'Titanic' they presented the information well in a variety of tables showing the age ranges of the passengers that used the life boats.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching over time is good overall and sometimes it is outstanding. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support those who need additional help with their learning. They question and probe pupils' thinking well. They help to reshape and deliver any planned activities so that pupils can participate in all tasks. For example, in a mixed class of pupils from years 1 and 2, pupils' writing was stimulated by the clever use of computer technology in the outdoor area to take photographs of a group of pupils miming activities. As a result, pupils were full of ideas and produced some high quality written work.
- Questioning is used well to encourage pupils to explain their reasoning and ideas. Working in collaboration with a partner is also used well to help pupils to learn. This was seen in a Year 6 mathematics lesson where pupils undertook some challenging mathematical investigations. A range of thought-provoking questions was posed and pupils were encouraged to give detailed explanations for their ideas and reasoning to their partners. This helped them to make exceptional progress.
- Interesting activities are planned around a wide range of meaningful resources and successfully incorporate pupils' ideas, particularly when planning the different themes for the curriculum. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning. However, occasionally the most able pupils are not given

enough challenge to stretch their thinking.

- Teaching is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children are observed closely as they learn. This helps adults to know when to intervene when children are playing without support, so that they can move their learning forward quickly. Children's skills of imagination and curiosity are stimulated well by the vibrant indoor and outdoor areas.
- Pupils take pride in the way they present their work in all of their books. Work is marked well in their extended writing books and they are given clear guidance on how to improve their writing. However, this high quality of marking is not yet mirrored in other pieces of pupils' work. Sometimes, pupils do not have enough time to respond to the advice given.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are friendly, polite and courteous. The behaviour of pupils is good. Parents, staff and pupils agree with this. Pupils are very clear about the school's sanctions and reward systems. Behaviour is not yet outstanding because, where teaching does not capture the interest of pupils, their concentration wanders and they become slightly disengaged from their learning.
- Pupils take pride in their school environment and with their achievements. There is no litter or graffiti in the school environment. The school council has been active in achieving this by organising a competition on how to keep their school tidy and displaying the winning posters made by pupils around the school. Pupils are also proud of recently winning a prestigious award from the Royal Horticultural Society for their garden design.
- Pupils enjoy taking on a range of responsibilities such as being members of the school council, undertaking door duty roles and some of them volunteer to come into school during the holidays to help do various jobs around the school. All of the Year 6 pupils are known as senior students who model good behaviour to the younger ones. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school site is secure and risk assessments are rigorous and so pupils are kept safe at all times.
- Pupils say they feel safe. Parents and staff confirm this. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and free from danger, including when using the internet. Pupils understand the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They say bullying does happen, but it is rare. They are confident that any issues will be dealt with promptly by staff.
- The school takes a firm stance to tackle any poor attendance. Consequently, attendance is above average.
- The breakfast club gives pupils a settled and punctual start to their school day. The after-school clubs provides a safe environment for pupils to relax and socialise with each other at the end of the day.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has quickly gained a good and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. He has won the support of staff, parents and governors. All of the leadership team, including the governing body, are strongly committed and passionate for this to become an outstanding school. Leaders have successfully tackled the issues from the previous inspection in relation to attendance, the integral use of computer technology in lessons and the effectiveness of the governing body.
- The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is regularly monitored by the headteacher through a range of means, such as lesson observations and checks on pupils' work. Leaders have not been afraid to tackle any underperformance in teaching. All inadequate teaching has been addressed and newly qualified teachers are supported well.
- The roles of the middle leaders are developing well. They have good opportunities to participate in checking how well pupils learn and so they are successful in bringing about improvements in

their areas of responsibility.

- Senior and middle leaders gain plenty of information from their monitoring work and through the rigorous data tracking systems that they have about pupils' achievements, both personally and academically. However, this information is not always analysed thoroughly enough to see just how well different groups of pupils are doing, such as in their attendance and punctuality.
- The school provides excellent opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which is extending their knowledge of the world beyond the school environment. It contributes significantly to their personal development and self-esteem.
- The curriculum is enhanced by using good links with external organisations such as the 'Clonter Opera Theatre', which helped pupils to design their own set and create their own performance. The curriculum provides relevance for pupils, as it is stimulated and driven by their own ideas. This is why it is thoroughly enjoyed by pupils.
- Primary sport funding is used well to improve the confidence and skills of staff to deliver lessons in physical education so that the funding will have a lasting value. It has increased the number of pupils who take part in school competitions locally.
- The school has established strong partnerships with parents.
- The local authority provides light-touch support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The way that all members of the governing body carry out their roles and responsibilities has improved significantly since the previous inspection. They made sure that they had the necessary training so that they could improve the school's performance. There have been a few changes to the membership of the governing body, including the leadership, over the last three years. Governors are knowledgeable, passionate and insightful because they use all forms of data to undertake first-hand checks with staff and use the information to ask pertinent questions to challenge and hold school leaders to account.
 - The budget is healthy because governors keep a very close eye on it. The use and effect of the pupil premium and sport funding are checked carefully by the finance committee.
 - Governors have a good overview of how good teachers are rewarded and how underperformance is tackled in the school.
 - Governors ensure that all safeguarding policies and procedures meet statutory requirements so that pupils are kept safe at all times.

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	111386
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	444009

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	328
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Hathaway
Headteacher	John Donald
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2011
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