

St Joseph's RC Primary School

The Avenue, Walford Road, Ross-on-Wye, HR9 5AW

Inspection dates 27–28 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.

- The headteacher and an assistant headteacher from the federated high school have provided firm and determined leadership since the previous inspection. Well supported by the governing body, the leadership team has secured a number of improvements, including significant improvements in pupils' achievement.
- Pupils achieve well and reach standards that are above average by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Relationships between staff and pupils are very strong. Teachers use explanations and questioning well to promote good learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work together very productively to ensure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well in class and around the school. They say they feel very safe in school and are aware of how to keep safe in a variety of situations.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their consistently high levels of attendance.
- The governing body is very supportive of the school and fully involved in ensuring that this is an improving school.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has a very high priority in the school and is extremely effective.
- Real-life experiences gained from trips to places of interest, along with creative and imaginative use of subject matters such as art, music and sport, are helping pupils to learn successfully.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Despite recent improvements, attainment in writing is below that of reading because pupils do not develop and practise their writing skills across all subjects.
- Children in the Reception year do not have enough opportunities, or suitable resources, to develop their skills in the outdoor learning environment.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in seven lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also made a number of shorter visits to classrooms and heard a number of pupils read.
- Meetings and discussions were held with groups of pupils, governors, members of staff and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspection took into account the 18 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the outcomes from the school's recent consultations with parents.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including: the school's own information on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Clive Lewis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average and only a few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils eligible for free school meals and other specific groups) is broadly average.
- The school is part of a 'hard federation' with St. Mary's RC High School, Lugwardine. The headteacher and an assistant headteacher from St. Mary's have led and managed the school in the roles of headteacher and deputy headteacher since the federation was formalised under one governing body in April 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve planning and resources for the outdoor curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that children have the opportunities to choose activities for themselves and to fully develop their skills in the outdoor learning environment.
- Improve achievement in writing to the high standard of reading by ensuring that all pupils are provided with more opportunities to produce extended pieces of writing in other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with skills that are typically below what would be expected for their age, although this fluctuates greatly from year to year due to the small year groups. In 2013 the Year 1 phonics check (letters and the sounds they make) showed that pupils' skills were similar to those in other schools. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' standards are similar to the national average. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6 they have made good progress, particularly in reading and mathematics, and reached above average standards.
- The number of pupils who join or leave the school part way through their education is particularly high in some year groups – less than half of the current Year 6 cohort of 16 pupils joined the school in Reception, for example. Attainment in 2012 was significantly above the national average. The number of pupils leaving Year 6 in 2013 was very small, so the results of individual pupils had a particularly significant impact on overall standards. Though overall achievement was good in mathematics and reading, achievement in writing was not so strong.
- In the Reception class children work well together and quickly become confident in their learning and in the classroom routines. Systematic teaching of phonics, and good work across the school when pupils read with a teacher in a group and discuss what they are reading (guided reading), ensure that children acquire secure basic reading skills and develop an enjoyment of books. Year 2 pupils, for example, read accurately and with good expression. They know the difference between fiction and non-fiction writing and can work out what is likely to happen next in a story.
- Pupil premium funding has been spent well to support the learning of the small number of pupils for whom it is intended. Too few pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium to allow comment on their attainment without potentially identifying them. However, their progress is similar to that of their classmates because the funding has been used effectively to provide the support they need.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make at least good progress. Their needs are well known and good support from teachers and teaching assistants helps them to achieve their challenging individual learning targets.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils, parents and carers say that teaching is good and inspection findings endorse this view. A significant proportion is outstanding. The school uses every opportunity to encourage teachers to continue to develop and improve their practice and, unusually for a small primary school, teachers move around classrooms teaching to their strengths and expertise.
- Pupils' books confirm that teaching is good over time. They show that pupils learn well and make consistently good progress because teaching activities make them think deeply about their work. Teachers make good links between different subjects and to previous learning. This helps to promote pupils' confidence and enjoyment, as well as their spiritual and cultural development.
- All staff are determined to become even better in their roles and are beginning to share good practice with each other.
- Teachers manage the behaviour of pupils very effectively with the result that lessons are calm and purposeful and all pupils learn successfully. Pupils work hard and remain on task without the

need for constant adult prompting.

- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is checked rigorously and tracked as they move through the school. Termly meetings about pupils' progress are held to discuss the information gained. This new whole-school system provides secure information on pupils' progress as they move through the school. Teachers now have a better understanding of how well pupils in their charge are achieving and the action they need to take to support and help them to reach their challenging targets.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work with pupils who join the school during the year to establish their skills and ensure that they quickly start to make good progress.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults take every opportunity to extend children's language and numeracy skills by regularly asking them about the things that they are doing. Children settle quickly in the Reception setting. However, children have limited opportunities to develop their learning by freely choosing from a range of activities in the outdoor area.
- Good organisation in the classroom, coupled with high expectations of work and behaviour, ensures that teaching takes place in a purposeful and calm learning atmosphere. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Throughout the school this contributes considerably to the quality of learning. Pupils are extremely proud of their school and take great delight in talking about their work and their achievements. Older pupils are excellent role models for the younger ones.
- Pupils really enjoy coming to school and this is confirmed by their consistently high levels of attendance. Year 6 pupils told the inspector that they will be sorry to leave at the end of the year but, due to their regular visits to St. Mary's High School they feel more confident and better prepared for the move.
- The school is a calm, friendly and very orderly place in which to learn. Pupils are extremely well behaved throughout the school, in classrooms, in the corridors, in assemblies and in the outdoor areas. They listen attentively to teachers and respond immediately to instructions from adults. They move around the school with care and consideration for others. Pupils arrive punctually and well prepared for the day.
- The school works very closely with parents and carers to support pupils with emotional and social difficulties. These pupils receive good support to enable them to work and play safely with their peers. Poor behaviour is, consequently, very rare and there have been no recent exclusions.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and feel that very little occurs. They told the inspector that they feel very safe in school and are confident that any of the adults would help if they need it.
- Parents strongly agree that their children are safe in the school and are very positive about the quality of teaching and pupils' behaviour.

- The pupils respond extremely well to the spiritual, moral and social guidance they receive. They develop very positive attitudes to life and learning through the teaching of common values and expectations through assemblies and personal and social education in class.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has grown and developed significantly in a number of ways following the federation with St. Mary's RC High School under the strong leadership of the high school's headteacher and assistant headteacher.
- Teaching is good and often outstanding. The inspector agreed with all the judgements that were made jointly with school leaders who accurately monitor the quality of teaching.
- Leaders and middle leaders, including the governing body, know their school extremely well. They know what needs to be done to continue to improve pupils' performance and are successful at developing the learning needs of individual pupils within each class and group.
- The school pays close attention to developing teachers' skills. The setting of targets for teachers is used effectively to reward the best teaching.
- The school has a creative and stimulating range of subjects and activities, with an appropriately strong emphasis on improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted extensively and successfully. However, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the use of the outside area to support children's independent learning skills does not match the planning, range of activities or resources found inside the classroom.
- The school is deeply committed to all pupils achieving well, discovering new interests and developing their talents. The extra funding provided for the pupils supported through the pupil premium funding is spent wisely and its impact is carefully and regularly checked.
- Parents express strong support for the school. Their responses to the Parent View website were overwhelmingly positive about the school and almost all parents would recommend it to other parents.
- The school has used the primary sports funding well to provide additional physical education activities during and after school. These activities are led by a skilled sports coach, working with class teachers. This motivates pupils very well and is resulting in improved teaching skills among staff. This, in turn, is leading to improved physical skills, health and well-being. Systems are in place for the full evaluation of the provision.
- The local authority was very supportive to both schools during the federation process and since the hard federation has provided support only when requested.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body, which is responsible for both federated schools, knows the school very well. It is well placed, with a range of skills, experience and knowledge to continue to successfully support and challenge the school. Governors ask challenging questions about the quality of teaching and supporting leaders in monitoring it. They are kept very well informed by the headteacher, visit school regularly and canvass the views of parents. Governors regularly attend training in order to develop their expertise. This has ensured that they have a very good understanding of school performance information. They ensure that teachers' pay is linked to the progress of their pupils. They work with staff to ensure that safeguarding policies

and practices fully meet national requirements. They monitor the use of financial resources, such as the effective use and impact of the pupil premium and the sports 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	116911
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	431125

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Burbidge
Headteacher	Clive Lambert
Date of previous school inspection	15 May 2012
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