

St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Armadale Drive, Leicester, LE5 1HF

Inspection dates 2–3 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	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.

- All groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils show great enjoyment in lessons and are excited by their learning.
- Teachers explain tasks well, so pupils understand what they have to do and are quickly engaged in their learning and no time is wasted.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are secure and happy, and quickly learn how to be good listeners and learners.
- Behaviour in lessons is good and often exemplary. Pupils are keen to do well, become engrossed in the tasks set for them and respond quickly to their teacher's instructions.
- Leaders have established a caring environment where pupils feel safe. Adults lead by example so that pupils care for each other and behaviour around school is calm and friendly.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' creativity and imagination. A strong emphasis on music, art and drama ensures good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The headteacher, well supported by the governors, has established a shared expectation that all teaching should be at least good. This has led to clear improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers fully stretch the most able pupils.
- Teachers' marking does not always help pupils to improve their work.
- The systems for tracking pupils' progress are not sufficiently thorough or easy to use, so leaders and staff cannot quickly identify any pupils who may be falling behind.
- Teachers are not being fully held to account for the progress their pupils make.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, two of which were jointly observed with the headteacher. They also made several short visits to lessons together with leaders.
- Meetings were held with pupils, parents, a representative from the multi-academy trust, members of the governing body and staff, including subject leaders.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including policies, development plans, minutes of meetings of the governing body, monitoring records, information about pupils' progress, safeguarding information and samples of pupils' work.
- The views of 10 parents and carers who responded to the school's questionnaire were considered (Parent View). In addition, 15 responses to the staff questionnaire were taken into account.

Inspection team

Mary Davis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Simon Griffiths

Additional Inspector

Martin Bertulis

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school converted to an academy in May 2012. When the predecessor school of the same name was last inspected, its overall effectiveness was judged to be good.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average, with the largest groups being of Indian heritage. An above-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language, but none are at an early stage of learning English.
- An average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils who are looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school is part of a multi-academy trust: a group of five local Catholic primary schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by ensuring that:
 - all teachers fully challenge the most able pupils
 - the marking of pupils' work shows them what they are doing well and what to do to reach the next level.
- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
 - staff and leaders use effective systems to track pupils' progress, so that any underachievement can be quickly identified and addressed
 - all teachers are fully held to account for the progress being made by pupils in their classes.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Nursery and Reception with basic skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics that are below those expected at their age. By the end of the Reception, children have developed their literacy and numeracy skills well and good learning and listening skills to prepare them for Key Stage 1, although standards are still below average.
- The good teaching now established in Key Stage 1 ensures that pupils continue to make good progress. At the end of Year 2 in 2013, standards in reading and mathematics were broadly average, although those in writing were below average. The school's assessments, confirmed by inspection evidence, show that this year, standards have risen in all three subjects with a larger proportion of pupils reaching the highest level in reading.
- The 2013 Key Stage 2 national test results were above average in reading and mathematics, and average in writing. The school's assessments show that standards have risen in all subjects this year.
- In 2013, although the proportion of pupils making expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics compared well to national levels, the proportions exceeding expected progress in writing and mathematics were below average. The school's assessments indicate that the progress made by the current Year 6 has accelerated and more pupils are now exceeding expected progress, particularly in writing and mathematics. An increasing number of pupils are being entered for the highest Level 6 in mathematics and reading.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. They are well supported in lessons by class teachers and by high-quality teaching assistants, so they are able to achieve their potential. There is no significant difference between the achievement of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds or those who speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils supported by the additional pupil premium funding achieve well because of the well-focused support they receive. In 2013 the eligible pupils in Year 6 were on average half a term ahead of their classmates in mathematics and reading, and two terms ahead in writing.
- Pupils show great enjoyment of reading. Right from the start, children learn how to sound out words and are confident to 'have a go' at reading unfamiliar text. When Year 1 pupils read their books to inspectors they were reluctant to stop and insisted that they were allowed to read the whole book. Systematic support to develop pupils' reading skills continues throughout the school. Teachers' high expectations of pupils' use of language mean that they use a wide range of vocabulary including technical terms. For example, in a Year 6 class pupils could use and explain complex words such as 'adrenalin' while in Year 2 pupils talked together about their preferred 'strategy' for tackling a problem.

The quality of teaching is good

- Leaders' close monitoring of all aspects of teaching throughout the year and the progress that pupils make over time, shows that teaching in most year groups from the Nursery to Year 6 is good or outstanding. Teaching observed during the inspection, together with the sampling of pupils' books, confirmed this.

- From an early age, teachers establish good routines for learning so that no time is wasted and pupils can be quickly engaged in the tasks that are set. Teachers explain tasks clearly and carefully and enable pupils to build their learning as the lesson progresses. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, different groups of pupils undertook a variety of activities related to number problems, first reinforcing what they already knew and then moving on to a greater challenge. Pupils showed a good understanding of how to work things out for themselves, while the teacher kept an overview of all the activities and intervened when she could see there was a problem or to check understanding.
- Most teachers plan carefully to make sure that work is of the right difficulty for all ability groups. Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those supported by the pupil premium are well supported. Teachers and teaching assistants work as a team, using skilful questioning to encourage pupils to think more deeply about their learning.
- Pupils told inspectors that lessons are fun, and during the inspection they enjoyed undertaking lessons outside or devising a drama. For example, in a Year 5/6 lesson observed, pupils devised a scene to show how a character was feeling in the Michael Morpurgo text they were studying. They made rapid progress as they used their good understanding of drama techniques, together with their teacher's reminders to use Level 4 features in their dialogue. Their performances were filmed and evaluated by other members of the class, enabling them to identify how they could improve further.
- Every teacher ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well and this forms the essence of learning in all subjects. For example, pupils have opportunities to work together in pairs or groups, promoting the ability to collaborate and to encourage each other to improve their work.
- Occasionally, teachers do not fully stretch pupils of the highest ability. They sometimes have to wait for others to finish, or find the work too easy.
- The effectiveness of teachers' marking varies. Although pupils are told when they have done something well, it is not always clear what precisely this is or what level has been achieved. Not all teachers provide helpful advice as to the next steps in learning, or how to achieve a higher level.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils show great enjoyment in their lessons and enthusiasm for learning something new. They are often totally engrossed in their tasks, and when listening to explanations or watching others perform, they are totally silent without being reminded to be so.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Parents and staff agree that pupils behave well. Pupils told inspectors that their learning is rarely disrupted, and that teachers are fair and ensure that 'anybody having a bad day' is managed well.
- Behaviour around the school is calm and orderly and pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. They show pride in their school and the value the care their teachers provide. They enjoy using the sporting equipment and playground marking, funded by the primary school sports funding, that enables them to keep fit and healthy.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils were clear that bullying is rare and that strong action would be taken to address racism or other discrimination. They say that

the school keeps them safe and there is always an adult who will help them. Adults lead by example, with the result that the school is warm and caring.

- The school uses rigorous systems to make sure that pupils attend regularly, and attendance rates are above average.
- The faith and family support worker provides help and support, particularly for families facing challenging circumstances. Close connections with the parish church and frequent visits by the parish priest also reinforce the school's family atmosphere. The school chapel, decorated with a mural painted by pupils, is a safe haven for pupils who need support or somewhere quiet to go.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has been highly effective in her drive for improvement. She has made it clear to staff that only good or better teaching will do. Staff morale is high and teamwork strong so that staff support each other. The quality of teaching is carefully monitored, and training and support are quickly provided to address any areas for development that are identified.
- Leaders have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and the development plan sets out appropriate priorities. This has included strengthening the senior leadership team with a new assistant headteacher, who has already been appointed for the coming school year.
- The curriculum is effective in supporting good progress, and is developing quickly to encourage a more creative approach. Exciting whole school topics such as the 'World Cup' and the 'Giant Egg' found in the playground stimulate the pupils' imagination and curiosity, and support the improvement in writing that is now being seen. The work of external experts enriches pupils' experience, including high quality music tuition and the sports coaching provided.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils learn teamwork and respect and tolerance of each other. The diverse heritage of the school's pupils is celebrated, as are the important days celebrated by other religious faiths. Pupils are proud of each other's achievements and rejoice in their successes.
- The new leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage is rapidly developing teaching and ensuring that activities are well matched to children's ability, enabling them to make good progress. Good teamwork between staff and good support provided by the headteacher are helping to build the capacity of new leadership of this key stage.
- The multi-academy trust provides opportunities for staff to share training and good practice. The link between these local schools with diverse intakes is also promoting community links, as pupils meet and work together on special projects.
- The school works hard to engage parents in the education of their children. The highly effective breakfast club provides exciting activities that promote pupils' enjoyment of school, and is valued by parents. 'Stay and play' sessions in the Early Years Foundation Stage establish relationships with parents from the start. Special activities such as the Fathers' Day event, where fathers could work on making something with their children, promote the teamwork between home and school.
- Leaders know every child as an individual and ensure that there is no discrimination and that all are equally included and able to achieve. However, the systems used to analyse progress, including that made by different group of pupils, lack clarity. As a result leaders and staff are not

focused as effectively on accelerating pupils' progress as they should be.

- Teachers are held to account through pupil progress meetings and monitoring of their teaching. However, the individual targets leaders set for them are not yet sufficiently linked to pupils consistently achieving well.
- Subject leaders and others who have particular whole-school responsibilities are increasingly driving improvement in their areas and taking responsibility for monitoring teaching and learning. Their capacity is being built through well-chosen training and collaboration on assessment with other schools in the trust. However, subject leaders' understanding and use of progress data is an area for development.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have a clear vision for the school. They have an in-depth understanding of how well it is performing compared with other schools. They have sought appropriate training and continually question and challenge the school's leaders, holding them to account for all aspects of its work. They visit the school regularly. The parish priest drops into lessons each week and knows each child by name so is able to check closely on their well-being. Governors know the strengths and areas for development in teaching and ensure that only good performance leads to appropriate pay rises and promotion. They check thoroughly that additional funding is used appropriately to close gaps in attainment between different groups of pupils. They ensure that safeguarding and health and safety practices meet current national requirements.

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	138115
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	444015

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	288
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Boynton
Headteacher	Andrea Leslie
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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