

# St Joseph the Worker Catholic Primary School

Highview Crescent, Hutton, Brentwood, CM13 1BJ

**Inspection dates** 2–3 October 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Under outstanding leadership by the headteacher, senior leaders and staff are united in their drive to ensure continued improvements in teaching and learning.
- Pupils of all abilities and in all year groups make outstanding progress. The standards pupils reach by the end of Year 6 are consistently higher than national averages and have been so since the school's last inspection.
- Teaching is outstanding because teachers provide their pupils with memorable learning experiences which inspire them to learn exceptionally well.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They are friendly, courteous and polite. This reflects their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils love their school and they love learning. Punctuality is very good and attendance is above average.
- Leaders at all levels make accurate judgements about the quality of teaching. Rigorous checks on pupils' progress ensure that any pupil at risk of falling behind in their work is suitably supported.
- The school is making good progress in developing its preferred assessment arrangements. These fit well with the requirements of the new National Curriculum.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They support the school well.
- Teaching in the Early Years is outstanding and prepares children very well for the next stage in their learning.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons. Each class was visited at least once. Three of these observations were jointly observed by the headteacher.
- Additional visits were made to lessons to observe the teaching of phonics (the teaching of letters and the sounds they represent). Inspectors also observed pupils during their breaks and at lunchtime.
- Inspectors attended a whole-school assembly and took afternoon tea, by invitation, with a group of pupils from Year 5 and Year 6.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, a group of teachers with special responsibilities, the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors.
- The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- A number of pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read to inspectors and shared their views on reading.
- Examples of pupils' work were examined. Pupils explained to inspectors how their work is marked and how they respond to this marking.
- A wide variety of school documentation was examined. This included the school's self-evaluation and development plans, data related to pupils' current progress, minutes of governing body meetings, the management of staff performance and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safety.
- Inspectors had informal discussions with parents before and after the school day. They took account of the 69 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View, and letters received during the inspection. Questionnaires were completed by 19 members of staff, and these were also considered.

## Inspection team

Judith O'Hare, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Deborah Morris

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school. There is one class in each year group from Reception through to Year 6.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. A small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- A below-average proportion of pupils is eligible for pupil premium funding, which is additional funding the school receives to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The proportion of pupils supported through a statement of special educational need, or with an education, health or care plan, is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and progress in writing further, and increase the proportion of pupils achieving the very highest levels in writing by providing all pupils, especially the more-able, with better opportunities to use and apply their writing skills in subjects other than English.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is an inspirational and outstanding leader. She is supported by an effective leadership team. Their dedication and commitment to the school ensures that everyone in this thriving, learning community feels respected and valued. There is a relentless drive towards continued improvement and this is shared by governors, staff and parents.
- Management of teachers' performance is rigorous and is sharply focused on the progress pupils make. Leaders ensure that all staff receive appropriate training and support to help them be effective in their roles. For example, specialist coaches work alongside teachers to help them develop their teaching sports skills. Teachers and teaching assistants plan lessons carefully together to ensure they give high-quality support to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Teachers assess their pupils' work and progress on a regular basis. This helps them to understand how pupils are performing, to identify any gaps in their learning, and to set appropriate targets for improvement. Extra support is provided swiftly where needed to ensure that all pupils make rapid progress. The school recognised, for example, the need to stretch more pupils to reach even higher standards, especially in writing. Prompt action was taken to address this shortfall. Evidence seen in pupils' work in reading, writing and mathematics shows that pupils are now meeting their more-challenging targets.
- Leaders, managers and governors have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Self-evaluation processes are thorough: key school priorities, as identified for action in the school development plan, are rightly focused on ensuring that all pupils thrive in a safe and respectful environment, that they enjoy learning, and achieve well.
- Work is already underway to refine and develop the school's preferred approach to assessment and to ensure this reflects the new National Curriculum. The school is working in collaboration with other local schools and with the local authority to do this. The local authority has also provided good support for assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils are excited by the subjects they study at school. They told inspectors how much they enjoy learning and how the topics and themes they cover help them to develop their reading, writing and mathematics skills in a way that is fun. Enrichment activities, such as visits to local places of historical and cultural interest, are many and various. Pupils have frequent opportunities to engage in sporting events and to take part in residential trips. The number of clubs and extra-curricular activities available is vast and uptake is high. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported very well. The school places a high emphasis on tolerance and respect for all, and this prepares pupils very well for life in modern Britain.
- The school's use of its pupil premium funding is supporting disadvantaged pupils effectively. The funding has been used to provide additional support time from specialist teachers and teaching assistants, as well as extra learning resources to support home learning. The impact of this spending can be seen in the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- The additional sports premium is used to provide extra resources and expert tuition. Pupils now benefit from access to some new and more unusual activities, such as fencing and karate, which the school could not have otherwise afforded. Pupils describe their school as 'very sporty'. The quality of teaching in physical education has improved as a result of the expert coaching for staff.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted well. All statutory equality requirements are met. All groups of pupils make at least good progress. They are kept free from any kind of discrimination and bullying.
- Parents are highly complimentary about the leadership of the school. They are kept fully informed about their children's work and progress. The school operates an 'open-door' policy and parents are frequent visitors. Friday mornings in Reception, for example, buzz with excitement as parents work alongside their

children to help them with their reading.

- The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are outstanding. Children in Reception acquire knowledge and skills quickly and make outstanding progress. This enables them to make a good start in Year 1.

#### ■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body is a dedicated, enthusiastic and efficient team. Governors, between them, have a wealth of professional expertise which helps them, for example, to ensure that the school maintains financial stability and that safeguarding procedures are secure.
- Governors routinely undertake training, including data analysis related to the school's performance. This helps them to keep up to date. They are regular visitors in school and take part in activities such as learning walks and discussions with parents, pupils and staff. Consequently, they understand how well pupils are achieving in comparison to pupils elsewhere.
- Governors understand their roles and responsibilities. They are aware of national developments and hold the school to account in ensuring the curriculum on offer is fit for purpose and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. They are engaging with the school's work to refine and develop assessment processes to ensure that teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment and progress are accurate and that parents receive information which is clear and helpful.
- Governors set challenging targets for the headteacher and regularly assess those set for other teachers at the school. They know what the quality of teaching is across the school and are rigorous in ensuring that teachers' pay rises are dependent on them enabling pupils to achieve successfully.
- The governing body knows how the school has spent the pupil premium funding and the difference this has made to eligible pupils' performance. Governors are equally aware of how and why the additional primary sports funding is being used and its impact on pupils' sporting skills and well-being.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils love their school and wear their uniforms with pride. They have impeccable manners and are polite and courteous. Children in the Reception class think carefully and follow all instructions without fuss. Throughout the school, pupils consistently demonstrate their commitment to maintaining high levels of cooperation with each other and with their teachers.
- Pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour have a strong impact on their learning and are among the reasons why pupils achieve so well. Pupils readily and confidently engage in discussions about their work and are encouraged to do so. Inspectors were frequently stopped by pupils, keen to show examples of their work and to talk about what they had been learning. Afternoon tea with the headteacher is a regular event. Invitations to these weekly get-togethers are eagerly anticipated by all groups of learners.
- Pupils concentrate well in class, listen to their teachers and strive, at all times, to do their best. Written work is immaculately presented, with good attention paid to correct spelling, punctuation and grammar. Necessary corrections highlighted in books are responded to as a matter of course. Pupils told inspectors, 'If you put things right immediately, you remember so you don't make mistakes again.'
- Pupils readily take on roles and responsibilities. As well as acting as members of the school council, organising and running clubs and charity events, older pupils are given the opportunity to become one of the team of special school helpers, the 'St. Joseph Workers'. Pupils take special pride in the rigorous selection and voting process they go through in order to be elected.
- Pupils enjoy helping one another; for example, organising playground activities and helping with reading. In one lesson observed, Year 3 pupils worked on their science project and combined this with an opportunity to help Reception children to get to grips with their counting skills when measuring waist-size and height.
- Pupils' enjoyment of coming to school is evident in their above-average rates of attendance and good punctuality. There are good systems in place to ensure the school quickly follows up on any absence.

Attendance at the early morning breakfast and activities club is high. Pupils frequently stay later than the end of the school day to join in extra learning sessions, activities and clubs.

## Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe is outstanding. The school makes sure that safeguarding procedures meet all requirements. The school site is safe and secure. Staff are checked rigorously for their suitability, and all visitors to the school are carefully checked and monitored. The processes in place to risk assess all activities, trips and visits are rigorous. Parents receive regular and helpful information about safety issues; for example, matters relating to e-safety when using computers.
- Pupils understand the importance of safe behaviour. They say they have no concerns and feel totally safe in school. Pupils appreciate the opportunities they have to take part in learning activities such as road safety, 'bike-ability' and fire drills. Pupils' opinions are fully endorsed by parents in their responses in the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are very clear about the meaning of right and wrong. They treat everyone with kindness and respect. They take great pride in 'doing the right thing'. Incidents of bullying or any form of harassment are extremely rare. Pupils spoken to were unable to recall any incidents of unacceptable behaviour. They are confident that, should any incident occur, there is always an adult on hand to help and support. When asked about this aspect of school life, one pupil said, 'We love our school and we love our teachers. They are there for us.' The school's systems for managing any unsafe or unacceptable behaviour are rigorous and transparent.
- Staff have consistently high expectations for behaviour in the classroom. Consequently, there have been no permanent or fixed-term exclusions for a number of years. Pupils understand fully the link between positive behaviour and successful learning. Rewards and incentives, such as stickers and certificates, are received with pride. Pupils across the school were very keen to show these to inspectors and to explain how and why they had achieved these awards.
- Case studies examined during the inspection provide good evidence of the school's successful work with pupils who experience difficulties. The school works in close partnership with a number of external agencies and this is helping pupils and their families to develop strategies to support pupils' learning and behaviour. Consequently, all pupils are gaining the skills they need to achieve well and to become responsible citizens.

## The quality of teaching

### is outstanding

- Teachers' enthusiasm is infectious and inspires pupils to learn. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. They combine this with personal knowledge of the pupils they teach to plan learning experiences which are both challenging and fun. Pupils' response to this approach is evident in their high levels of engagement in class and in the rapid progress they make.
- Pupils listen attentively in class and concentrate well. In a Year 5 English lesson, for example, pupils achieved well because they used ideas they had considered in discussions to help them create an imaginative play script about life at 'Hogwarts School'.
- From Reception through to Year 6, all lessons proceed at a brisk pace and there are no interruptions to learning. This is because pupils enjoy good relationships with their teachers and because of the high emphasis placed on mutual tolerance and respect.
- Classrooms are vibrant learning spaces. High-quality examples of pupils' work on display celebrate learning and inspire pride in good achievement. All pupils, including the most-able as well as those who are disadvantaged, are encouraged to do their best. Pupils respect their learning environment and ensure they play their part in keeping their classrooms neat and tidy.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very effectively. They set a very high standard and are careful to ensure that all pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Presentation in pupils' books is immaculate.

Pupils pay careful attention to their handwriting and endeavour to consistently apply correct rules for the use of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils spoken to all recognised the importance of this.

- Reading, writing and mathematics are taught well. Pupils have good opportunities to use and apply these skills in subjects other than English and mathematics. Pupils are encouraged to read widely, and they do. They have access to high-quality information and communication technology to support their learning. The school's current focus on improving writing skills has benefited pupils. Nevertheless, teachers acknowledge that more-able pupils do not have as much opportunity as they could to develop their writing skills in subjects other than English.
- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to plan effective lessons which support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. These pupils make good and often outstanding progress. Through skilful use of questioning, teachers and teaching assistants accurately assess pupils' learning and progress. This challenges all pupils to develop their thinking skills. Pupils listen well and have good communication skills.
- Pupils' classwork and homework are marked regularly. The helpful tips and reminders which teachers give provide pupils with clear advice on how to improve their work; for example, the adjustments they need to make to spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils appreciate the support they receive and respond positively to this marking.
- The very good balance between indoor and outdoor activities in Reception ensures that children learn to use and apply key reading, writing and mathematics skills while developing their natural curiosity about the world. Pupils throughout the school also benefit from this practical approach to learning.

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- Achievement across the school is outstanding. The standards pupils achieve from their different starting points are considerably above national averages and have been so since the time of the last inspection.
- Most children start in Reception with skills and abilities which are typical for their age. Thanks to high-quality teaching, they make rapid progress and so reach or exceed a good level of development in all their learning goals by the end of the Reception Year. This prepares them very well for entry into Year 1.
- High-quality teaching throughout Key Stage 1 ensures pupils continue to make rapid progress. Since the last inspection, pupils' achievement by the end of Year 2 has remained above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Results achieved by pupils in the Year 1 screening check in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) have also remained above those seen nationally.
- In Key Stage 2, the school ensures that pupils continue to achieve standards considerably ahead of national results in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2013, attainment at Level 4 and Level 5 in all three subjects was above average, although more-able pupils did not match this impressive performance in writing at Level 6.
- In 2013, pupils in Year 6 made slower than expected progress over Key Stage 2 in relation to their above-average Key Stage 1 assessments. The school has taken prompt and precise action. In 2014, attainment and progress results for all pupil groups were above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Current pupils continue to make rapid progress and are on track to attain even higher results in 2015.
- There were too few Year 6 pupils eligible for pupil premium funding to report on their attainment without identifying individuals. This funding is used well to support eligible pupils throughout the school. These pupils make the same outstanding progress as their classmates.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good and often outstanding progress, given their starting points. This is because of the tailored support they receive from adults, including teaching assistants.

**The early years provision is outstanding**

- Children of all abilities make outstanding progress. The vast majority leave Reception with levels which are above those expected for their age. This is because they have good opportunities to share in a wide range of stimulating learning activities, both indoors and outdoors. Teachers and teaching assistants support childrens' learning well by asking questions which challenge them to think.
- From the very start of the Reception Year, children are given clear routines to follow. This helps them to settle well and make a positive start to learning. Teachers routinely model the good behaviour they expect. They are polite and respectful to everyone and encourage children to be the same.
- Children understand the difference between right and wrong behaviour. They are keen to participate in all activities and enjoy helping to keep their learning space neat and tidy.
- Teaching in Reception is outstanding. Adults understand the needs of children very well. Assessments made at the start of the year are accurate and pinpoint each child's precise learning needs and progress. Teachers make very good use of this information to plan appropriate learning activities.
- Learning activities are planned well and there is a good focus on early reading through the acquisition of phonics. Children quickly learn to apply their writing and mathematics skills while engaging in the activities they choose for themselves.
- Parents appreciate the opportunities they have to review their children's progress. 'Learning journals' are very detailed and include accurate and helpful information. Friday morning family reading sessions are well attended. They help parents to understand how their children are learning and how to support them at home.
- Leadership and management of the Early Years are outstanding. Assessments of children's attainment and progress are accurate and used well to inform teachers' planning of activities. This ensures that all children make rapid progress.



## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	115183
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	449366

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	210
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Chair</b>	Adam Goldsmith King
<b>Headteacher</b>	Bernadette Rossiter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 October 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01277 227282
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