

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, SWF

Trinity Square, South Woodham Ferrers, Chelmsford, CM3 5JX

Inspection dates 15–16 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders, including governors are ambitious for pupils. Staff share their vision for the school and are equally committed to improving both teaching and achievement.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have worked effectively to raise pupils' standards in mathematics and spelling, punctuation and grammar by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils make good progress and leave Year 6 with standards that are above average.
- More-able pupils do particularly well. The proportions of pupils reaching higher levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 improved to above average in 2014.
- Children's achievement in the well-managed Early Years setting is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are very polite and respectful. The work of the school to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are good. They enjoy their work and take part in a wide range of sporting and other activities.
- The school works effectively with other schools to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well-promoted.
- Parents who completed the Parent View survey or spoke to inspectors were extremely positive about their experiences with the school. Most would recommend the school to others.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not consistently check that pupils, especially those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, fully understand their work before moving on to more difficult topics.
- Leaders do not ensure that the best practice in teaching is shared with other staff.
- Teachers set tasks at the start of lessons that are sometimes too easy. A few pupils become distracted when they are not given more challenging work quickly enough.
- Pupils who join the school at other than the usual times are not always assessed quickly or accurately enough to ensure that teachers can build on what they already know, understand and can do.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes and observed teaching and learning in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, French and science. Two of these visits were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body, and representatives of the local authority.
- Fifty five responses to the on-line Parent View survey, as well as comments made on Parent View and to inspectors were considered.
- Inspectors analysed 32 responses to a questionnaire from staff. They talked to pupils both formally and informally.
- Information relating to the attainment and progress of pupils and groups of pupils across the school was considered. Inspectors looked at work in books, both in lessons and in a separate exercise, as a joint activity with senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's self-evaluation, logs of behaviour and safeguarding and other documentation.

Inspection team

Najoud Ensaff, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynda Beale

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average sized primary school. It shares its building and play ground with a neighbouring primary school.
- The headteacher is executive headteacher of another local primary school and has been used by the local authority to support other schools since 2011.
- Around 9% of pupils are disabled or have special educational needs and are supported through school-action. This proportion is average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs (6%) is below average.
- Around 14% of pupils are supported through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and looked-after children); this proportion is below the national average.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds; few speak English as an additional language.
- An above-average number of pupils enter the school other than at usual times.
- Three new teachers joined the school this year. The special educational needs co-ordinator has been absent due to illness for some time.
- The Early Years Foundation stage is made up of a part-time morning pre-school class and a full-time Reception class.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are the national minimum standards and progress expected by Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to outstanding by ensuring that:
 - teachers check that pupils, especially those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, are secure in their understanding before moving on to new work
 - tasks given to pupils at the start of lessons are always appropriately challenging, so that pupils concentrate well and progress quickly onto more difficult work.
- Improve leadership by ensuring:
 - pupils entering the school at other than the usual times are assessed quickly and accurately and that teachers use the results of such assessments to set work that is well-matched to the pupils' abilities
 - share the best practice in teaching more widely so that pupils make sustained progress across all subjects and year groups.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders, including governors, are ambitious for pupils and set high expectations for pupils' behaviour and achievement.
- Leaders have successfully maintained the good overall effectiveness found at the previous inspection. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 improved in 2014, following a slight dip in 2013, with higher proportions of pupils leaving with above average results.
- Pupils' performance in the spelling, punctuation and grammar tests also improved in 2014, as did results at the end of Key Stage 1 and in the Key Stage 1 check on phonics (linking sounds and letters).
- Staff and parents fully share leaders' ambitions for the pupils. The school is an orderly community where staff and pupils interact with courtesy and conduct themselves well.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted well. Leaders ensure that there is little difference between the achievement of different groups of pupils and that good relations are consistently fostered between all pupils. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Leaders ensure policies are kept up to date and that they receive regular reports of any racist and bullying incidents, however few.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and provides a good range of extra activities outside of school hours. The support it provides for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is particularly good, especially in teaching pupils about respecting others' values and beliefs, the rule of law and preparing them for life outside of school.
- Senior leaders are well-supported by subject, key stage and phase leaders. They all have a clear and accurate view of the strengths and areas for development in their areas of responsibility, so are proving effective at raising standards.
- Senior leaders' evaluations of the school's performance are based on their careful analysis of the school's context, the impact that pupils entering the school other than at usual times has, and individual pupils' needs. They are not so successful, however, in ensuring that these pupils are assessed quickly and that teachers use the resulting data to plan activities that are well-matched to the pupils' abilities.
- Leaders carefully monitor the effectiveness of interventions, paid for through the use of the pupil premium funds, to support disadvantaged pupils. These are proving successful in helping such pupils make up the ground they have lost in the past.
- Extra funds for sports have been used well to improve the skills of teachers, for example in dance, and to increase access to competitive tournaments and swimming. This has had a positive impact on pupils' participation and achievement in sports.
- The management of teachers' performance is good. Leaders monitor teaching and pupils' progress effectively through a range of activities including lesson observations, focused learning walks, scrutiny of pupils' work and pupil progress review meetings. They ensure that most weaknesses are quickly rectified.
- Teachers have good opportunities to undertake relevant training to help them to improve their work. As a result, leaders have, for example, successfully improved the teaching of phonics (linking letters and sounds) and spelling, punctuation and grammar. However, leaders do not provide enough opportunities for teachers to observe and learn from the best practice evident in the school.
- While there is some strong practice in teaching in the school, there remain a few weaknesses relating to how consistently teachers check pupils' understanding and set suitably challenging tasks at the start of lessons.

- As a well-regarded school, the school has received limited support from the local authority.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good understanding of the data used to judge the school's performance. They play a good part in drawing up the school's own evaluation of its performance and the subsequent plans for action. Governors have received effective training and this, together with the increased range of expertise on the governing body, have enabled them to hold senior leaders to account well. They ask searching questions, for example, about the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. They ensure that there is a strong link between pay progression and teachers' performance, and that any underperformance is tackled.
 - Governors make sure that the school promotes key values, such as tolerance and understanding of the beliefs of others, and carefully check that the school's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are very polite and respectful, conducting themselves extremely well. They are courteous to one another and inspectors observed a great deal of care and consideration in the way that pupils treated one another.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning which help them to achieve well over time. Older pupils recognise the value of education to their future life and work.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and the school has improved the attendance of pupils who previously attended less regularly.
- Pupils said that behaviour in lessons was good but that occasionally pupils were distracted by others. Inspectors saw that behaviour in lessons was good but occasionally, where teaching was not strong, pupils became distracted. Behaviour logs and comments from parents also support the view that behaviour is good, rather than outstanding.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say that they feel completely safe because 'teachers take such good care of us'.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe in a range of situations, such as walking to school, what to do in case of a fire or flood, and how to maintain personal safety when using the internet. Their excellent understanding of the difference between right and wrong and the 'golden code of conduct' at the school means that they have a very good understanding of what constitutes a safe situation.
- Pupils understand about the different forms of bullying, such as verbal, physical, racist and homophobic bullying. They said bullying was very rare and they were confident that even the most minor incident would be dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Staff are well-trained to keep pupils safe and their thorough risk assessments ensure pupils are kept safe both on site and during external activities.
- Site security is a priority for governors and procedures for ensuring that visitors to the school and staff undergo appropriate checks are fully in place.
- Logs held by the school and comments from pupils and parents all support the view that practice in

keeping pupils safe is exemplary.

The quality of teaching is good

- As a result of the good teaching they receive, pupils make good progress from their starting points and, consequently, pupils' achievement is good by the time they leave. In the main, teachers have high expectations of their pupils, including the more able, and set them work that challenges them and makes them think hard.
- Teachers and pupils share positive working relationships and their well-established routines ensure pupils settle quickly to their work and achieve well over time.
- Teaching in both English and mathematics is good. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to practise and apply their literacy skills across other subjects, such as religious studies. The short, sharp highly focused activities on specific skills, such as the daily 'grammar blasts', alongside guided writing and reading lessons, help pupils to achieve well in English.
- Teachers now provide pupils with more opportunities than previously to apply their mathematical skills to solving problems. Together with increased mental mathematics practice and better use of information technology, these opportunities have helped pupils to achieve well in mathematics.
- Pupils' work is carefully celebrated through, for example 'work of the week' books and on walls, and this alongside praise from teachers motivates pupils to work hard and make good progress.
- Teachers mark pupils work regularly and provide useful guidance to pupils about how to improve in marked work. Pupils were able to talk with confidence about what they had learnt and what they needed to improve. They spoke about the times they were given to 'fix it' which enabled them to correct or edit work in lessons.
- Teachers work closely with parents. Their strong partnership and excellent communication through home record books help pupils thrive. Classwork is supported by appropriately planned homework.
- Where teaching is strongest adults use questioning effectively to check on pupils' learning and to move pupils on at the right time. This was seen in a Year 2 literacy lesson, where pupils were well-supported in understanding mistakes in their work as a result of good questioning from additional adults, and where questions from the teacher deepened pupils' understanding of a reading text.
- Additional adults and assistants are used effectively in lessons and the individual attention pupils receive helps their progress. The support for disadvantaged and disabled pupils, including those who have special educational needs, is generally well-planned. Occasionally, teachers' checks on learning are not effective and these pupils are sometimes asked to apply their skills too soon, without understanding fully the material they have covered. As a result, for a few pupils, progress slows.
- Work is usually set at the right level, and pupils are challenged well. This was seen in a Year 6 mathematics lesson where the most-able pupils worked on interpreting pie charts and answered questions relating to this while other pupils learnt about line graphs. Occasionally teachers set work at the start of the lesson that is too easy for individual pupils whose concentration levels drop when they are not moved on to more demanding tasks quickly enough. On other occasions, the work given to pupils who enter the school at other than the usual times is either too hard or too easy for them.

The achievement of pupils is good

- From broadly typical starting points into the Early Years, pupils make good progress. They leave at the end of Year 6 with standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. Such pupils usually attain in line with, and often better than, other pupils nationally in English and mathematics, because their progress is better. In 2013, they were

around two terms ahead of other pupils nationally in writing and mathematics, and one term ahead in reading. However, they lag behind other pupils in school in all three subjects by between one and two terms.

- The most-able pupils make good progress and attain well. The proportion of pupils attaining higher levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 improved significantly in 2014 to above average.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs generally achieve well and make good progress. However, while additional adults and teachers support pupils learning well in lessons, occasionally their checks on learning are not effective in making sure that these pupils fully understand material before they are asked to apply their skills.
- Learning across subjects and year-groups is good but very occasionally pupils' achievement slows when they are given work which is not set at the right level or if they are not asked to move on to more challenging material quickly enough. This is particularly noticeable for those pupils who join the school at other than the usual times where teachers have not been quickly given assessments of what they already know, understand and can do.

The early years provision is good

- Children enter the Early Years with skills and levels of development that, over time, are broadly typical of this age-group.
- Only about half of the children who attend the school's pre-school move on to Reception. Up to a third of children who join the Reception class have had no pre-schooling and enter with skills which are sometimes below those typically found.
- Children make good progress so that, when they leave Reception, the proportion who has achieved a good level of development is above average.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a good understanding of children's skill levels and the progress that they make. Assessment is robust with children's needs identified at an early stage and supported effectively both in school and through excellent partnership with parents. She has correctly identified strengths and areas for development in provision, for example, boys' writing.
- Children's learning is well-supported through a good range of purposeful activities which help children's skills across a range of areas to develop. For example, children in the pre-school were well supported in their understanding of shape, while their fine motor skills and communication skills were developed carefully by the well-organised activities teachers had prepared. Those in Reception were challenged to count and to add numbers to ten and most did so successfully.
- Children move around safely and are supported in developing their social and personal skills through well-planned group work. Logs of accidents are kept and staff are appropriately trained to ensure children are kept safe.

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	115201
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	443965

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	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Mills
Headteacher	Sarah Ginzler-Maher
Date of previous school inspection	13 July 2010
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