

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

St Joseph's Place, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 1DD

Inspection dates 19–20 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Requires improvement 3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement 3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement 3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement 3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement 3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- The rate of pupils' progress varies across the school and is not consistent enough to ensure that all pupils achieve well.
- Inconsistencies exist in the quality of teaching, partly as a result of the school's staffing difficulties, but mainly because some teachers do not challenge pupils enough, encourage them to work independently or have sufficiently high expectations of the quality and quantity of their work.
- Attendance is below average.
- A large minority of parents and carers who responded to the online survey do not believe that the school handles misbehaviour well. Inspectors consider that the school could do more to work alongside parents and carers to overcome any incidents of poor behaviour.
- There are shortcomings in the knowledge of some subject managers and their analysis of the impact of the school's work on pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths:

- Teaching is improving and an increasing proportion is now good.
- Pupils' progress is often good, especially for the older pupils. Pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6, including pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, are attaining at higher levels than the previous year.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Pupils' behaviour is generally good and the school has many positive strategies to encourage good behaviour. Most pupils feel safe in school and that the school deals well with any incidents of misbehaviour.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have a clear view of the strengths of the school and what needs to improve. There is a determined approach to improving pupils' progress which is leading to increasingly effective teaching since the school opened.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 11 lessons, including visits to the Early Years Foundation Stage and the nurture unit, as well as guided reading and linking sounds to letters (phonics) sessions.
- They listened to a sample of readers from Year 2 and Year 3.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at progress and attainment data, the school's development plan, curriculum plans, governing body documentation, and policies and procedures. Those relating to health and safety and safeguarding of pupils were carefully scrutinised.
- Inspectors took account of the 52 responses to the online Parent View survey as well as the letters from parents and carers delivered to the school.
- Discussions were held with senior and other leaders, teachers, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Chair of the Curriculum Committee, pupils, parents and carers and the School Improvement Partner.

Inspection team

Michael Pye, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Christine Huard

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Joseph's Catholic Primary converted to become an academy school on 9 September 2011. When its predecessor school, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The school is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are predominantly of White British heritage. The next largest minority ethnic group consists of White pupils from a range of backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding, which provides additional funding for looked after children, children of service families and, in this school, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average. The main needs of these pupils relate to behavioural, social and emotional difficulties.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has recently introduced a nurture unit to help support pupils who find it difficult to settle to school life.
- Since it opened, there has been a high staff turnover.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eradicate the inconsistencies in teaching so that it is consistently good or better to improve pupils' progress and attainment by ensuring that all teachers:
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to learn independently
 - provide opportunities for pupils to start work in lessons at an appropriately challenging level
 - have higher expectations of the quality and quantity of work that pupils complete.
- Maximise the impact of leaders and managers through ensuring that:
 - subject leaders have increased responsibility, especially with regard to the tracking of pupils' progress across the school
 - action plans have measurable targets that are used to help the school judge the effect of any actions taken and that subject plans show how they support whole-school development priorities.
- Devise strategies to work more closely with parents and carers to ensure:
 - improvements in pupils' attendance
 - that they have a better understanding of the school's methods for dealing with behaviour.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils have not made consistently good progress since the academy opened because of the staffing changes and inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. As a result, they are not achieving as well as they should.
- Data show that pupils including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make inconsistent progress, given their starting points when the school opened, with examples of rapid progress in some years and slower progress in others. This.
- Evidence from lessons and in pupils' work shows a picture of improving progress, especially for the older pupils.
- In 2012 pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 was average in reading but below average in writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics was well below average in 2012. Current work and data show that pupils in Year 2 and Year 6, including the small number from minority ethnic backgrounds, are attaining at higher levels this year.
- Children enter Reception with skills and knowledge that are below the expected levels for their age. On entry, there are particular weaknesses in reading, number and understanding of the world. Inconsistencies in teaching mean that children's progress in the Reception class is not good enough and they leave Reception with weaknesses in aspects of literacy and numeracy.
- Small numbers make national comparisons of some pupil groups unreliable. The school's analysis shows that there are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.
- In 2012, based on their average point scores, the attainment of the small number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and in receipt of the pupil premium was below average in English and mathematics in 2012. Although the progress of these pupils is in line with that of others they are not closing gaps fast enough.
- Pupils read regularly in school. Reading standards are average. When reading, pupils are able to separate the sounds in words, for example 'fl...our', but lower attainers find some difficulty in correctly pronouncing letter sounds and blending them together.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching mean that not all groups of pupils make rapid progress across all years.
- In some classes, teachers talk for too long a period, which limits the pupils' opportunity to learn independently.
- Teachers set extension work as part of the planning for a lesson. However, in the majority of lessons, pupils do not move on quickly enough to move on to this more challenging work.
- There are differences in teachers' expectations of what pupils can do and achieve. Not all are adept at ensuring that pupils, from the start of each lesson, are given work that challenges them at the appropriate level. This was seen in one lesson where all pupils were asked to draw and label a diagram, which meant that the higher- and middle-attaining pupils in particular were not challenged sufficiently.
- In pupils' books, there is evidence that some teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of the presentation, quality of handwriting and quantity of pupils' work.
- In the more effective lessons, teachers start by identifying what pupils already know; this was seen in a mathematics lesson for older pupils where the teacher explored their understanding of coordinates and quadrants.
- Regular observations and feedback from senior leaders are having the desired effect on improving teaching.

- Most lessons proceed at a fast pace and pupils are motivated by a good variety of activities. This was seen in an English lesson for older pupils, for example, where they were asked to form opinions about various images, such as a snake and a homework book. This was followed by discussions in pairs and teamwork to develop a role-play scenario. This work contributed well to their social development.
- Positive relationships in lessons help to ensure that pupils want to get involved in their learning and are motivated to do so. This was evident in a Year 1 linking sounds and letters (phonics) session where pupils showed obvious enjoyment as they played 'hangman' using 'nch' words.
- Marking in literacy is usually good, and pupils are given clear guidance on how to improve. However, inconsistencies exist in the quality of marking, especially in mathematics.
- Teachers deploy their teaching assistants effectively. On occasions, as in one lesson for younger pupils, the teaching assistant's knowledge of letter formation and writing was not secure. However, a strength in the school is the good level of teachers' subject knowledge which allows some effective focused questioning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- Attendance is below average. The school has introduced a number of strategies to improve attendance but not all parents and carers are responding.
- Pupils are adamant that behaviour is good, that they feel safe, and that the school deals with incidents well. Inspectors agree that in the vast majority of cases this is true. However, many parents and carers who completed the Parent View survey, and those who wrote letters to inspectors, do not feel that this is the case. Inspection evidence reveals that the school does not engage well enough with parents and carers on this issue or shares its strategies for managing behaviour.
- Pupils say that there is very little bullying. When asked, an older pupil 'corrected' the inspector and instead of saying that 'incidents happen', the boy said, 'small incidents and not very often'. Others nodded their agreement.
- The school has reviewed its behaviour policy and has introduced many positive strategies to support pupils. The full effect of these changes, such as restorative justice, is not yet evident. The introduction of the nurture unit has been successful in meeting the particular needs of pupils who find life in school difficult.
- Assemblies promote pupils' spiritual, moral and social development well. Pupils have ample opportunities to explore and reflect on important issues which extend their spiritual awareness well.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. They enjoy the curriculum themes, say that teachers make learning 'fun' and that they have a good range of things to do in lessons.
- School councillors confirm that they have lessons about how to stay safe, particularly relating to internet safety. They contribute to decisions about charity fund raising, such as the support for a Kenyan child. Older pupils help younger pupils and this reflects the willingness of pupils to contribute to their school community.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Not all subject leaders have sufficient experience to maximise their impact on the school's development. Their analysis of data and their knowledge of standards across the school in their subject area are insufficiently developed. Shortcomings in action-planning result in missed opportunities to contribute fully to whole-school improvement.
- Even so, subject leadership responsibilities have been allocated well. In some subjects, they are having a positive impact on school development. For example, the introduction of grouping pupils by ability in mathematics lessons was trialled by the subject leader and has contributed to

rising standards in this subject. In English, a focus on comprehension during guided reading has helped to fill a gap in pupils' skills and contribute to faster progress.

- Senior leaders' continuing drive for improvement is based around improving teaching and pupils' progress within a community committed to identifiable values. Staff and governors share this vision, although it has been made more difficult by the turnover in staff. Nevertheless, improvements have occurred in teaching since the school opened, although not all the inconsistencies have been eradicated, and in pupils' progress, which indicate a secure capacity to improve further.
 - Increased accountability is one result of the progress meetings, which allow the quicker identification of pupils who require further support. The school's tracking system adequately identifies rates of progress but does not show clearly enough the levels of achievement of different groups of pupils.
 - The pupil premium budget is spent appropriately on personnel and resources that aid learning, including the nurture unit. In the unit, pupils have individual learning programmes which contribute well to their progress.
 - Staff see performance management as a good developmental process. Targets focus appropriately on teaching, pupils' outcomes and professional development.
 - The curriculum provides positive opportunities for supporting literacy and numeracy. Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is developed well through the different themes, and the wide range of visits and visitors to the school.
 - External partnerships benefit pupils well. Links with local schools bring positive developments in areas like the transition arrangements to secondary school.
 - Links with parents and carers include details about the curriculum, which help them to support their children's learning. Not enough has been done to fully engage with parents and carers about the importance of regular attendance and aspects of the school's approaches to managing behaviour.
 - External support is 'light touch'. The headteacher has acted with commendable speed to seek support at a time of staff turbulence.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors visit the school regularly and receive oral and written reports from leaders, which enable them to have a secure understanding of the school's work. This allows them to raise questions of the school, especially about the quality of teaching and the performance and progress of pupils. They have a clear understanding of how attainment at the end of Year 6 compares with the national picture. They use performance management to set challenging targets for the school. They are clearly committed to the policy that pay rewards for teachers and leaders must link to the individual's quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Governors are aware of the expenditure relating to the pupil premium but are only slowly developing their understanding of how well these pupils are achieving. They are fully involved in strategic planning, and have regular reports on progress towards fulfilling the school's priorities.
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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	126488
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	403697

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ciaran Dunne
Headteacher	Sheila Jones
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01380 723084
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