

St Joseph's Primary, a Catholic Voluntary Academy

St Josephs Road, Handsworth, Sheffield, S13 9AT

Inspection dates 2–3 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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 and managers, including the governing body, have brought about good improvement since the school became an academy.
- The quality of teaching is managed well by leaders. Teaching has improved and is securing pupils' faster learning and progress over time.
- Governance is strong. Governors know how well the school is doing and provide clear direction for the school's future.
- Pupils behave consistently well. They are very keen to learn and enjoy the opportunities they have. They feel very safe in school. Attendance is above average.
- Teaching is consistently good. Adults question pupils well to keep them on their toes, and they check progress effectively during lessons.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well by teachers.
- Children in the early years are given a good start to their learning and make good progress. They are ready for their move into Year 1.
- Pupils achieve well from their starting points. Since the school became an academy, pupils' progress has improved. Assessments and inspection evidence show that good progress and improving standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are on track to be maintained this year.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is scope for some pupils of middle ability to make even more progress and reach higher standards in reading and writing.
- Pupils are not always expected to correct their work, so they miss opportunities to learn from their mistakes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a range of lessons across the school.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff members, a representative from the local authority and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors also took into account the views of 27 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors observed the school's work and examined a wide range of documentation that included: national assessment data and the school's own assessments of pupils' progress; minutes from governing body meetings; the school's own view of its work; curriculum information; samples of pupils' work and safeguarding documents.

Inspection team

Kevin Johnson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Paul Spray	Additional Inspector
Julia Foulger	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- St Joseph's Catholic Academy converted to become an academy on 1 March 2013. When its predecessor school, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory overall.
- The large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium funding is very low when compared with the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are broadly average.
- Children attend the Nursery part-time. There is full-time provision for Reception children.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement further by:
 - ensuring pupils of middle ability are suitably challenged in reading and writing in Key Stage 2, and they receive appropriate levels of support to make faster progress
 - maintaining the highest expectations of what middle-ability pupils can achieve
 - making sure marking and feedback from teachers are fully effective by ensuring pupils always correct their work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and governors have led the school successfully through its recent change to academy status. They continue to promote a purposeful ethos within which pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development thrives. Academic progress and standards are getting better.
- Leaders continue to work effectively with a network of other local schools and an external consultant. Leaders embrace this support well and the local authority has no concerns about leaders' ability to maintain the pace of improvement.
- Teaching and learning are managed well. There is a rigorous schedule for checking teaching quality throughout the school that includes teachers working with colleagues to improve the quality of their work. In addition, well-planned training for teachers linked to school targets ensures teaching continues to be effective.
- Additional teaching resources and increases in staffing levels since the school became an academy have also had a positive impact and contributed to pupils' improved learning.
- Senior leaders have a good grasp of the school's strengths and its future needs. They provide good challenge and support for the headteacher in forming an accurate view of the school's work. They have forged strong links with governors. For example, the deputy headteacher chairs the learning and development committee to ensure a good free flow of information and effective planning for curriculum developments.
- Middle leaders, who are responsible for developments in subjects, are very clear about their roles and are fully involved in the development of a good curriculum. They shadow one another to share good practice and ideas and, through professional training, keep up to date with subject skills and knowledge.
- The new primary curriculum has been adapted well. There are many enriching and exciting opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness so they are well prepared for their lives in modern Britain. However, more could be done to boost the learning for some pupils of middle ability in reading and writing at Key Stage 2.
- The curriculum for physical education (PE) and opportunities to promote pupils' well-being are enhanced well by the school's effective use of the primary school sport funding. Pupils say that they have noticed the substantial increase, over the past year, in the number of activities available and the vast majority of pupils are now involved in some way. Appointed sports ambassadors from Year 6 keep pupils active during playtimes. Teachers' skills have increased as a result of working alongside specialist coaches so the quality of PE teaching and pupils' fitness have improved.
- The pupil premium is used effectively. Despite the very small number of pupils who are supported by the additional funding, there is no lessening of leaders' determination to tackle discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. Provision for eligible pupils is good.
- Arrangements to keep pupils safe in school are well established. There are clear guidelines for pupils and staff members should safeguarding issues arise. A commendable feature is the sensitive and well-managed emotional support for pupils when it is needed. Attendance and pupils' behaviour are closely checked. The effectiveness of school actions is seen in pupils' above-average attendance and prompt arrival in school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have managed the school's change in status with confidence and clear vision. They know how well it is performing and challenge school leaders vigorously to bring about further improvements. Governors are familiar with national assessment data and use them effectively as a guide when discussing targets. Governors have a clear picture of teaching strengths throughout the school, and the understanding that they need to respond appropriately to school leaders' recommendations regarding teachers' salaries. The good range of skills and experience among governors ensures statutory duties are dealt with efficiently. Finances are managed well, including the checking of the impact of funding for disadvantaged pupils and improvements in sport.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy school. They are very keen to learn and apart from a very occasional lack of attention in lessons which is quickly challenged by teachers, they listen carefully and work hard. They work well together and frequently help each other out.
- Pupils are very courteous towards adults and equally mindful of others. They are invariably cheerful and never fail to open a door or offer to show visitors the way. At lunchtime in the dining room, their table manners are good. Pupils say behaviour is typically good and there is no falling out in the playground. They judge their own behaviour to be 'Eight or nine out of ten'.
- Pupils make a strong contribution to the everyday life and ethos of the school. They arrive punctually and smartly dressed and willingly take on additional responsibilities to help the school days run smoothly. Older pupils take on caring roles to help younger ones through their day. The school council is very active in organising events to raise funds for school projects and different charities.
- Pupils' all-round behaviour and positive attitudes are rooted in the very strong Christian values which they are taught. They respect cultural differences and mix harmoniously with others whatever their backgrounds. Pupils are clear about what is right or wrong and very keen to win house points for their good work and considerate behaviour.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Statutory requirements to keep pupils and adults safe in school are fully met. Staff are quick to report, record and follow up any concerns they may have about pupils' well-being.
- Pupils are given clear guidance about how to keep themselves safe and are very aware, particularly, of the potential dangers when using the internet.
- The school's promotion of anti-bullying keeps pupils aware of the different forms bullying can take and how to deal with it. Pupils state with conviction there is no bullying or really offensive name-calling in school. Pupils say they are really well cared for and they always feel very safe in school.
- The Rainbow support group is a good source of additional help when pupils' emotional well-being is at risk. Pupils can discuss issues that affect them personally in order to come to terms with difficulties they may face.
- Parents fully support their children's views and raise no concerns about the level of care provided for them.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have responded well to external support and advice as well as to their own shared judgements about their work. As a result, teaching is now consistently good and pupils' learning and progress have improved.
- Resources, including computers and electronic whiteboards, are used effectively to focus on pupils' learning; there is always a good measure of discussion before activities begin which enables pupils to tackle their work confidently.
- Improved assessments mean teachers have a clear understanding of pupils' abilities. They generally plan effectively for the different groups and set high expectations for achievement.
- In middle-ability groups at Key Stage 2, however, small numbers of pupils are not targeted robustly enough, for example, through more focused teaching in reading and writing sessions, so they make better progress and achieve a higher standard in their work.
- There is a good range of writing to be seen in pupils' workbooks across all year groups. Writing is supported well through a good emphasis on the use of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) in the early years, and of spelling, punctuation and grammar further up the school.
- Teaching assistants work well with class teachers and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Teaching assistants question pupils carefully and help them to think about what they are doing so pupils keep up a good pace of learning and make good progress in lessons.
- Pupils do not always respond to teachers' regular marking of their work. Therefore, mistakes that are pointed out are not corrected, and opportunities for immediate improvement are missed. As a result, pupils do not benefit fully from a timely boost to their skills and progress, particularly for pupils who

sometimes struggle with their reading and writing.

- Pupils' learning in mathematics is good. Pupils acquire the understanding of number they need by investigating number patterns and systems, and using what they learn to solve problems.
- Pupils in Year 2, for example, used practical equipment to help them learn their 2, 5 and 10 times tables before tackling word problems that put their new learning to the test. Year 5 pupils used their understanding of two- and three-digit numbers particularly well to find fractions (e.g. $\frac{1}{8}$ of 248) mentally, then applied that new skill to solving problems involving money calculations.
- There is good learning in science with interesting investigations linked, for example, to rusting screws and the use of pulleys to lift weights. Year 4 pupils make good progress in music as a result of the opportunity they have to learn to play the violin and there is good-quality art and technology work displayed around the school.
- In all lessons, teachers manage pupils well. Teachers are sensitive to individual needs and use praise and encouragement well to get the best from pupils. Consequently, pupils behave well. They feel secure and are more willing to give their best.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils achieve well by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.
- During the first full year as an academy, pupils' progress has speeded up and is now good; standards at Year 2 and Year 6 show rising trends. Current school assessments and inspection evidence, for example, from samples of pupils' work, indicate that good progress and improving standards are on track to be sustained this year.
- The result of the phonics screening check for Year 1 pupils in 2014 was below the national average. This was because a small number of pupils, mostly with additional learning needs, did not achieve as well as expected. However, they are making up ground quickly due to the good teaching of letters and sounds which is linked well to their writing. They are on track to reach the expected standard in Year 2.
- Pupils at the end of Year 2, in 2014, made good progress from their starting points to reach securely average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. All subjects show improvement on the previous year.
- Similarly, standards overall show improvement at the end of Year 6 in 2014. There was good improvement in mathematics and reading, while writing stayed broadly the same as the previous year. This was because some pupils of middle ability did not make fast enough progress in writing and reading.
- Improved teaching and resources, and more effective assessment, have quickened pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6. School data and inspection evidence show a substantial number of pupils are now on track to make more than expected progress by the end of the key stage. However, some pupils in the middle-ability range could do better in reading and writing.
- Pupils currently achieve well overall in reading. Year 2 pupils are very conscientious about practising their reading at home. They read confidently, with good understanding, and use their phonics knowledge well to make sense of unfamiliar words. Currently, almost all pupils in Year 6 are at or above expected standards for their age. Most read fluently, take note of punctuation and understand the hidden meanings in the text. Most speak confidently about the books and authors they prefer.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well from their varying starting points. Teachers plan well for their needs and the support pupils get for their learning is very effective. The teacher in charge of this provision has fostered very good relationships with parents and other support agencies. Pupils make good progress.
- Provision for the most able pupils has strengthened in the past year and some pupils reached the highest possible attainment in mathematics in 2014. Teachers plan specifically to challenge the most able pupils in lessons. Additionally, special groups are planned to boost the learning and progress of the most able and help move them on to the highest levels. Disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium funding make similar progress to others in the school. The number of eligible pupils in 2014 was very small and comparisons with national data may therefore be statistically unreliable.

The early years provision**is good**

- When children enter Nursery their abilities, generally, are below those typical for their age.
- Good opportunities for children to learn indoors and outside mean that the good progress they make throughout the early years prepares them well for Year 1.
- Children develop the skills they need to become independent and curious learners. By the end of Reception, achievement is good. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development is a little above that typical for their age.
- Effective teaching develops children's social skills well. Staff have high expectations of the children and good behaviour and cooperation with others are given high priority. As a result, children learn well about the importance of listening and sharing with others. They are encouraged to make decisions and have plenty of opportunities to choose the activities where they want to learn. Children also learn to play safely and be mindful of each other. They are well cared for in a safe and supportive environment.
- Teaching is good and so children make good progress. Children of all abilities, including the most able, disabled children and those who have special educational needs, are well provided for and have good opportunities to follow up, independently, what they are taught in focused groups. Outdoor areas are used well to encourage children's physical development alongside their learning in the other areas of development. Activities are well punctuated by teachers' questions and conversations to extend children's language development and stimulate their imagination.
- The early years provision is led and managed well. Staff are well trained and work as a cohesive team to plan and record children's progress. Parents are very much part of the partnership. They contribute to their children's assessments. During the inspection, some parents observed a phonics lesson as part of the plan for parents to help their children's learning at home.

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	139346
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	448003

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	254
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	L George
Headteacher	S Armitage
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
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