

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Blaydon

Croftdale Road, Blaydon-on-Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE21 4BG

Inspection dates 8–9 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
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.

- Strong, determined and ambitious leadership by the headteacher and senior leaders is raising pupils' achievement effectively.
- The behaviour of the pupils is outstanding. Pupils behave exceptionally well at all times. They show care and consideration for each other and a passion for learning.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe in a wide range of situations including when using the internet.
- Teaching has improved because it is well led and managed and as a result it is typically good throughout the school.
- Achievement is good. Standards are rising and pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Standards in writing have improved and are outstanding in Year 6.
- The attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs are improving in all subjects.
- Early years provision is good and children engage enthusiastically in their learning making good progress through their Reception Year.
- Governors have good knowledge of the school's performance and provide highly effective support and challenge to ensure pupils' achievement continues to improve.
- A major strength of the school is its purposeful and calm working atmosphere. This promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively and in turn contributes extremely well to pupils' excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils take a great pride in their school.
- Good care and guidance is provided for pupils' well-being. Parents value and strongly support the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching over time does not always provide enough challenge to extend and deepen the most-able pupils' learning.
- Pupils do not always have the opportunity to respond to teachers' marking comments.
- Assessment information is not used well enough by middle leaders to hold teachers to account for raising achievement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed lessons in all year groups. One of the lesson observations was carried out jointly with the headteacher and an Act of Collective Worship was also observed.
- Meetings were held with the Chair and six other members of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and senior and middle leaders.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation including information on pupils' attainment and progress, behaviour and safety records, the school's view of its own performance, records of the monitoring of teaching and learning and performance management, minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding documents.
- A discussion was held with the school council and informal conversations with pupils took place during lessons and at break times. Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked with them about the books they enjoyed.
- Inspectors took account of 58 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View). They also spoke with parents at the start of the school day. The inspectors also looked at questionnaires completed by 20 members of staff.

Inspection team

Don Parker, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Gordon Potter

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is similar in size to most other primary schools.
- A large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- All the children in early years attend full time.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The headteacher was appointed in May 2012.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school is oversubscribed with families waiting for a place.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding in order to improve standards and the rate of progress even further by:
 - making sure work is well matched to the learning needs of all groups of pupils and sufficiently challenging, including for the most able pupils
 - ensuring pupils are able to correct their work and act upon the advice and guidance in teachers' marking comments.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring middle leaders use assessment data robustly to enable them to hold teachers to account for raising achievement in the subjects for which they are responsible.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has successfully galvanised the staff into a highly effective team that ambitiously drives forward improvements in achievement. He is passionate about improving teaching and learning for all and his actions have resulted in pupils' good progress over time.
- School leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Robust monitoring systems are used effectively to evaluate the impact of strategies and this is contributing to the school's improved performance.
- The provision for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils is managed well and as a result, the gap in achievement between these and other pupils is closing. Pupil premium funding is used effectively to improve the progress made by disadvantaged pupils. This demonstrates the school's commitment to equal opportunities.
- Middle leaders are increasingly developing their role in checking the progress of groups of pupils in subjects throughout the school. Their priority is rightly to further improve the use of assessment data to evaluate the impact of actions on improving achievement.
- The school has begun to develop assessment methods in each subject for the new primary curriculum. Staff are currently working in partnership with other schools to establish systems for accurately tracking the progress pupils are making throughout the school.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that enhances pupils' learning by regular opportunities for outdoor learning and visits to the local area. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly effective and a strength of the school. As a result, there are strong positive relationships between staff and pupils that contribute to outstanding behaviour throughout the school.
- Pupils benefit from the many school links in other parts of the world and this is effectively used to encourage pupils to learn about other customs and traditions and reflect on rights and responsibilities. As a result pupils are aware of the need to tackle discrimination and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school makes good use of the primary school sports funding to increase the range of sports available at the end of the school day and enhance provision in lessons through specialist sports coaches. During the last two years there has been an increase in competitive sports matches and increased participation in after-school clubs. This is helping to promote an active and healthy lifestyle.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and the headteacher and staff very effectively work to support families in all aspects of school life. School attendance is above average.
- All staff and governors consider keeping pupils safe is their prime responsibility and safeguarding requirements are fully met.
- The local authority provides a wide range of professional development for the staff and has an accurate understanding of the school's performance. It is confident in the school's ability to improve further.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly effective and has a good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development. The governors are increasingly analysing the school's performance data and challenging leaders to improve teaching, learning and particularly pupils' achievement in reading. Governors use presentations provided by senior leaders at their meetings to challenge and hold the headteacher to account for further improving the school's performance. They ensure that performance management is robust, closely linked to improving pupils' rates of progress and informs decisions about staff pay increases. Governors make sure the spending of pupil premium funding has an impact on closing attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils. They manage the finances of the school well, including additional funding, such as primary sports funding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are very polite and courteous, showing consideration and respect to others. Relationships are exemplary: pupils work very well together in a variety of situations and take care of each other. The school's Christian ethos has a very positive impact on all aspects of the work of the school.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View are unanimous in their opinion that

children are well behaved in school. School records show that there are very few incidents of poor behaviour and that these are dealt with quickly and effectively by the school. Pupils do not feel there is bullying at school and one pupil stated, 'Sometimes pupils fall out, but it's not bullying'.

- Pupils have exceptional attitudes to learning throughout the school. They are always keen to learn and work particularly well learning from each other in the school's talk-partners system. On a few occasions there are lapses in pupils' concentration, but this is often a result of insufficient challenge in their learning.
- Pupils feel highly valued in the school and are eager to take on responsibilities. They enjoy taking part in events, such as sports where they represent the school with pride.
- Attendance has improved over the last three years and is higher than the national average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils show a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and say they feel very secure in school. They have been taught to keep safe in a variety of situations including the importance of internet safety and have a good understanding of risk in school and outside.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of all forms of bullying including cyber bullying. The school's work on anti-bullying is very effectively enhanced in English lessons in upper Key Stage 2 with pupils producing thoughtful writing on this topic. This helps to further promote all pupils' safety.
- Parents value the care provided for children by staff at school and believe that their children feel safe and are well looked after at school.
- Security systems are well established and rigorous.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good over time and as a result, pupils in all year groups learn well.
- The headteacher has determinedly strengthened teaching by ensuring lessons have clear learning objectives that are closely linked to pupils' previous learning and this has contributed to pupils making more consistent progress.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge of mathematics, reading and writing to plan lessons that motivate pupils to learn. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning and are making good progress.
- Teachers very effectively use their skills in questioning to reinforce previous learning and to extend and deepen pupils' thinking. For example, during a Year 1 writing activity, pupils were skilfully encouraged to consider the purpose of 'time connectives'.
- In the main phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is taught well and pupils are able to apply phonic skills in independent reading. However, work is not always well matched to the learning needs of pupils at the early stages of reading and writing and on occasion activities are either too easy or too difficult.
- There is good provision for pupils requiring extra support and activities are carefully matched to these pupils' learning needs. As a result, this group of pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Occasionally, work for the most-able pupils is not matched precisely to their needs because there is too much repetition of work that pupils already know and can do. This slows their progress and they do not achieve as well as they could.
- Pupils' books are accurately marked and teachers provide feedback to pupils about the quality of their work. However, feedback is not always consistent, particularly in mathematics, and pupils do not have enough opportunities to act upon the advice and guidance provided by their teachers.
- Teachers have high expectation of pupils' work and pupils show a pride in their work in all subjects. This is contributing to improved achievement in all year groups.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are very positive, promoting enthusiastic attitudes to learning which in turn results in good rates of progress. For example, during a Year 6 physical education activity, pupils' high levels of enthusiasm contributed to the significant improvements they made in the development of their gymnastic skills.
- Teachers make excellent use of learning opportunities outside the classroom. During the inspection, pupils in Key Stage 1 visited the local area as part of their work in geography. This inspired them and further enhanced their classroom learning.
- Pupils apply their English and mathematics skills well in other subjects, especially through topic work and this helps to reinforce their learning. This school year topics have included, local geography and history, cities and villages, Africa and anti-bullying. As a result of this work, pupils are further deepening their learning.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 were above average in mathematics and writing and the proportion of pupils making the progress expected of them in these subjects was above average. Attainment and progress in reading was below average. Boys' achievement in reading was below average and lower than girls' achievement.
- Current attainment, seen in pupils' books and listening to groups of pupils read, is rising. Attainment in Year 6 is above average in reading. The school's tracking information shows that progress in reading is good across all year groups and the gap between boys and girls is closing. This is a result of improved focus on learning objectives in teaching and the determination of leaders to ensure that every pupil makes at least good progress.
- Pupils read well across all ages and enjoy their reading. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 are confident and fluent readers who are interested in books and read widely at home.
- Standards in writing at the end of Year 6 in 2014 were well above average and pupils had made above average progress from their starting points. The current standard of work in pupils' books is outstanding and is a result of skilful teaching that provides frequent opportunities for pupils to deepen and extend their learning.
- Children start the Reception class with knowledge and skills typical for their age and as a result of well planned provision and good teaching they make good progress by the end of the Reception Year.
- Pupils make good progress in Year 1 and the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 screening check in phonics is in line with the national average.
- Standards in Key Stage 1 have improved over the last two years. Standards at the end of Year 2 in 2014 were above average in all subjects: pupils had made good progress through Years 1 and 2.
- The school's current tracking of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs shows this group have improving rates of progress throughout the school. This is a result of extra learning support that is increasingly well planned to meet their learning needs.
- The proportion of pupils exceeding expected rates of progress at the end of Year 6 in 2014 was lower in reading and mathematics than in writing. At times, the most-able pupils are not adequately challenged in lessons and do not always have the opportunity to act upon guidance from teachers on how to improve their work. As a result, this group does not make as much progress as it could.
- In 2014, there was a very small proportion of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 and it is not possible to make a reliable comparison with the attainment and progress of other pupils. However, current school tracking information and work in books shows that the attainment and progress for disadvantaged pupils throughout the school is improving and the attainment gap between disadvantaged and other pupils is closing. This is a result of better teaching, extra support and the effective use of pupil premium funding.

The early years provision is good

- Most children start the Reception Year with knowledge and skills typical for their age. They quickly settle into school and make good progress as a result of the stimulating environment and activities and good quality teaching. A large proportion of children attain a good level of development by the end of their Reception Year and are well prepared to start Year 1.
- Children behave very well and quickly become used to the routines of the class. They follow instructions and listen carefully to adults and each other and are good at taking turns. Activities are planned carefully to meet children's varying needs, abilities and interests and as a result, pupils learn well.
- Staff have high expectations and in 2014 the proportion of children attaining a good level of development was above average. The attainment of boys and girls was similar.
- Leadership and management of the early years is very effective. Assessment is used well to monitor progress and plan for the differing needs of all abilities. Safety is promoted in all areas of children's learning. As a result, children know the importance of health and safety: for example, they wash their hands willingly and thoroughly before starting their school lunches.
- Children are happy and confident and engage enthusiastically in learning. Adults skilfully intervene to support their learning in play-based activities.
- Parents are very supportive of their children's learning and the home-school diary is used well as an effective link with regular communication between teachers and parents.

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	108395
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	448377

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	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lisa Kendal
Headteacher	Andrew Ramanandi
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2010
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