

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Christchurch

Dorset Road, Somerford, Christchurch, BH23 3DA

Inspection dates

10–11 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
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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		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children make outstanding progress in the early years, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. They reach high standards by the time they leave the Reception Year.
- More pupils make faster progress in reading, writing and mathematics than nationally expected. Pupils' results are typically high.
- Teachers know their subjects well and ensure that pupils' learning is of good quality. Leaders at all levels give teachers very good support that enables them to develop their performance and effectiveness.
- The school strongly prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. It develops pupils' understanding of different cultures and faiths very well.
- Pupils are courteous and well behaved. They concentrate well on their learning, especially when teachers make their expectations clear.
- The school takes very good care of its pupils. Its work to keep them safe is rigorous and highly effective.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors have developed the roles and effectiveness of other leaders very well. Leaders across the school contribute strongly to school improvement as a result.
- The headteacher, other leaders, and governors have high expectations, so pupils' attainment continues to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Teachers do not always give pupils clear advice about how to improve their work, or check that their advice, including written comments, is followed up.
- Teachers do not always make their expectations clear to pupils, which causes a few pupils' learning and behaviour to dip in quality.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors saw learning in every class. They observed one assembly, 10 lessons and pupils' behaviour in the playground and at lunchtime. Six lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Discussions were held with pupils, four members of the governing body, the headteacher and other members of staff. Discussions were also held with two representatives from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed many aspects of the school's work, including support for pupils who need extra help. They heard pupils read and examined pupils' work in their exercise books and on classroom and corridor wall displays.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents, including plans for what pupils should learn in each subject, plans for the school's future development, and records of the school's use of additional funding. They also scrutinised the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe and pupils' attendance records. They considered the governing body minutes, records of how pupils' learning is monitored and records of how the quality of teaching is checked.
- The views of parents were taken into account through discussions with several parents. The inspectors also took note of 38 responses to the online Parent View survey, one message and one letter.
- Staff views were taken into consideration by looking at questionnaires completed by 18 staff members and through discussions with several members of staff.

Inspection team

Steven Popper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Simon Cowley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a slightly larger than average-sized primary school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after children) is much lower than the national average. There are very few eligible pupils in the school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is much lower than in most other schools. There are very few disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs in the school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Early years children have one full-time Reception class provided for them.
- The special educational needs coordinator joined the school in September 2014. The early years leader joined the school in September 2013 and took up her leadership responsibilities in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers' marking is consistently effective across the school by:
 - making certain that all teachers give pupils clear advice about how to improve their work
 - making sure that pupils reflect on and act upon this advice.
- Ensure that teachers communicate their expectations of learning and behaviour clearly and consistently throughout lessons.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and governors have ensured that their high expectations are understood and shared across the school. All staff have a deep sense of responsibility towards pupils' well-being and learning, which are therefore both good.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching carefully. They make sure that teachers receive effective support that enables them to teach to a consistently good standard.
- The headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher, has developed the effectiveness of leadership across the school. Middle leaders are much more efficient than they were at the time of the previous inspection. They contribute strongly to improvements made to teaching and to pupils' attainment, particularly through nurturing other staff's skills and subject knowledge.
- Senior leaders have successfully introduced a new approach to tracking pupils' progress. They scrutinise pupils' progress very carefully and use their analysis to provide teaching that meets individual pupils' needs.
- Leaders at all levels plan school improvement carefully and successfully, both in the short and long term. The headteacher, governors and other leaders have a clear vision of how they would like to develop the school.
- The broad range of subjects taught is good. Pupils explore them in depth. The school makes certain that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, a recent 'Food in Faith' week developed pupils' understanding of key features and similarities between major religions in a very considerate and thoughtful fashion. In addition, the school strongly promotes the importance of valuing one another. Such work illustrates the school's highly effective work to promote equal opportunities and guard against intolerance and discrimination of any sort.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is spent effectively. The school has provided training in physical education teaching, which has developed teachers' skills and knowledge of the subject. Pupils' confidence, engagement and performance in physical education and sport have increased accordingly, particularly in gymnastics and dance. Pupils are provided with a wide range of sports activities, such as tennis and golf.
- Other additional funding, including additional government funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium, is spent well, including through the provision of a 'nurture room' that is used according to need. Disadvantaged pupils are cared for well and make good progress as a result.
- The school's safeguarding work meets statutory requirements and is highly effective. The school makes very good use of its knowledge of individual pupils to minimise risk and keep pupils safe.
- The local authority has given appropriate support to the school. It has helped school improvement well through, for example, providing training to staff and governors, and helping the school introduce its new approach to tracking pupils' achievement.
- The school has developed and maintained very good relationships with parents. A very large majority of parents who offered an opinion thought that the school was well led. Several parents who spoke with the inspectors offered high praise about the school's communication and support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Governors are well organised and have high expectations. They have a good understanding of information about pupils' progress and results. Governors use their knowledge of pupils' performance to challenge leaders well and hold them to account. Governors have a good overview of the quality of teaching in the school. They check that leaders' expectations and management of staff performance are high enough, and that strong performance is properly acknowledged and rewarded. Governors have also contributed strongly to the continuing improvement of teaching. They know what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance. They have used school funds carefully to enable the deputy headteacher to give other staff support of high quality. Their impact on school improvement is good.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils typically have a love of learning and concentrate on their work well. Their positive attitudes to learning help them make good progress.

- Pupils are friendly, respectful and courteous. They behave well and look after each other during morning break and lunchtime. Pupils are considerate of others when moving around the school. They follow the school's 'golden rules' without needing reminding.
- The school manages pupils' behaviour well. School records show very few incidents of poor behaviour over time. The school has responded well to the very small number of incidents that have occurred. School records show how some individual pupils' behaviour has been improved by the school.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of their responsibilities towards others. For example, pupils contribute to the school's 'play and behaviour committee'. Pupils also support a range of international and local charities, including a nearby charity which supports homeless people.
- There are a few times when teachers do not communicate their normally high expectations of behaviour as clearly as possible. Some pupils can lose focus and become distracted or silly during these moments, with the result that their learning slows down. This is why the behaviour of pupils is not outstanding.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Staff supervise pupils very carefully at all times. The school keeps pupils safe from the adjoining road and public areas. Pupils show a very good understanding of how to keep themselves and each other safe.
- The school keeps pupils safe from bullying and other forms of poor behaviour. Pupils who talked to the inspectors showed a very good understanding of different types of bullying and explained how they used different strategies to avoid bullying and show their disapproval of it. Pupils also said that there was no bullying in the school and that staff would deal promptly with any that did occur.
- School documentation shows that the school has given very careful thought to how to guard pupils against any discriminatory behaviour or language, whether racist or related to sexual orientation.
- The school promotes e-safety very well. Pupils are aware of the importance of keeping safe when online. They have a very strong understanding of key ways to avoid risk.
- Attendance is higher than in most other schools and continues to improve. There is very little persistent absenteeism in the school. School leaders make careful use of information about pupils' attendance and behaviour to ensure that pupils are given the support they need to keep safe and flourish.
- Most parents who offered an opinion thought that the school managed behaviour well and that their children were safe, happy and well looked after at the school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has improved since the time of the previous inspection and is consistently good across the school. Most pupils make good progress and achieve well as a result.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects. They give pupils precise and effective explanations during lessons, and use questioning well to tease out pupils' understanding. Teaching assistants also give pupils clear guidance. Pupils consequently learn well.
- The school's teaching of reading is effective. Pupils quickly develop a love of reading and an ability to apply their phonics knowledge (linking letters to the sounds they make) when reading unfamiliar words, so that many pupils make fast progress in reading.
- The teaching of writing is good. Pupils practise and apply their writing skills across a wide range of subjects. Because of this, their writing expertise develops well.
- The school's teaching of mathematics challenges pupils well and carefully develops their skills and knowledge, leading to pupils, including the most able, making good progress in the subject.
- Most teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning and offer pupils good levels of challenge. However, there are moments when teachers do not convey their expectations consistently or clearly enough. Pupils' learning can slow during these moments.
- Teachers' marking varies in effectiveness. Teachers do not always give pupils clear advice about how to improve their work. Not all teachers consistently check that pupils make good use of the advice, including the written advice, they receive.
- A very large majority of parents who offered an opinion thought that their children were taught well in the school.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. Their progress and results are typically above national averages.
- The school's results in the Year 1 national phonics check are higher than average. This is because the school's teaching of phonics is consistent between the Reception Year and Year 1.
- Pupils' results in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1 were above average in 2014. Pupils' results in writing dipped on those of 2013, but the work of Year 2 pupils currently in the school indicates that these pupils are achieving a higher standard than those in the previous year.
- Pupils' results in 2014 were above average at the end of Key Stage 2 but dipped a little on those of 2013. Year 6 pupils currently in the school are producing work of a higher standard than seen in Year 6 in the previous year.
- The most-able pupils' results at the higher levels are above average in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 and in all subjects at the end of Key Stage 2. Their results in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 2 are particularly strong. This is because of the high levels of challenge that this group of pupils receive. The most-able pupils make fast progress in reading, writing and mathematics across much of the school.
- There are very few disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in the school. Because of this, it is not possible to generalise about the achievement of this group of pupils. However, the school meets the needs of individual pupils well, with the result that they often make faster progress than other pupils in the school.
- Similarly, there are very few disadvantaged pupils in the school. Because of this, it is not possible to generalise about their achievement and how it compares to that of other pupils nationally. Sometimes, disadvantaged pupils make faster progress than other pupils, and sometimes, their progress is slower. Overall, their progress is in line with that of other pupils.
- Almost all parents who offered an opinion thought that their children made good progress in the school.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children join the school with skills typical for their age, with lower skills in reading and writing and higher skills in mathematics. They make rapid progress and end the year having attained very high standards. Their strong academic and social achievements prepare them very well for learning in Year 1.
- Early years teaching is outstanding. The early years leader makes very good use of the indoors and outside to promote children's learning across the whole range of subjects. Staff listen to children very well and stimulate them to explore and make discoveries.
- Teaching staff enable children to develop highly positive approaches to learning. Children learn to value achievement. They engage in their activities very thoughtfully and with high levels of concentration.
- Children share resources well and treat them with care. Their behaviour is outstanding as they behave very considerately towards one another.
- Staff keep children safe at all times and look after children very well. Children feel safe and at ease.
- The school develops children's appreciation of the wider world exceptionally well. For example, inspectors observed children developing their understanding of Judaism very effectively during a religious education lesson.
- Early years staff frequently communicate with parents about their children's progress and well-being. Several parents who talked to the inspectors offered very high praise about communication in this part of the school.
- Leadership and management of the early years are outstanding. The early years leader, in conjunction with senior leaders, has been very effective in improving the early years provision. For example, she has strongly developed the use of assessment in the Reception class. She and other staff evaluate children's learning and progress in all subjects regularly and in detail. The early years leader uses her knowledge of individual children's strengths and gaps in achievement to plan activities that are matched very closely to their needs. This is a key reason why children make very good progress during their Reception Year.

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	113848
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	449596

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	288
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brigid Hincks
Headteacher	Louise Buxton
Date of previous school inspection	5–6 May 2010
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