

St Joseph's Catholic Academy, Goldenhill

Mobberley Road, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST6 5RN

Inspection dates 22–23 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	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.

- Pupils make strong progress in their learning from joining the academy with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age.
- Pupils attain standards which are above average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Pupils achieve well. Pupils' achievement has improved well since Saint Joseph's converted to become an academy.
- All pupils made at least the progress expected of them by the end of Year 6 in 2014 in reading, writing and mathematics. Many pupils made more than expected progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in their learning because they are well supported by skilled teaching assistants.
- The quality of teaching is good. Reading is taught exceptionally well in the academy. Pupils speak of their love and enjoyment of reading which is promoted effectively by all staff.
- The achievement of disadvantaged and Gypsy, Romany and Traveller pupils is good because of the additional help provided to support their learning.
- Pupils feel safe in the academy and have a very clear understanding of the differences between bullying and other pupils being a little unkind to them. They proudly report they do not know of any bullying in their academy. Behaviour is good.
- Pupils' attendance has improved well and is now broadly in line with the national average.
- The Principal is well supported in improving the academy further by the Assistant Principal and the former Vice-Principal. The academy has benefited immensely from the support provided by The Newman Catholic Collegiate.
- The academy has improved well under the strong leadership of senior staff and academy board members and it continues to improve.
- Early years provision is well led and effective, getting children off to a flying start to their education.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small number of minor variations remain in the amount of progress pupils make in their learning in reading, writing and mathematics.
- On a small number of occasions, a minority of teachers do not follow the academy's marking guidelines and do not help all pupils improve as well as they should.
- Occasionally, a few teachers accept work from pupils which is not as neatly presented as it could be.
- There is a small amount of wasted learning time in a small minority of lessons which reduces the rate at which pupils learn.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning and teaching in lessons and part lessons, four of which were jointly observed with the Principal or Assistant Principal.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, academy staff and four members of the academy board, including the Chair. The lead inspector also met with two representatives of the multi-academy collegiate.
- Inspectors held discussions with parents and groups of pupils in the academy. Inspectors also spoke informally to pupils in lessons, during break and lunch times.
- Inspectors scrutinised the work pupils produced during lessons and in their books over time. They also listened to a small number of pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 read.
- Inspectors observed the work of the academy and looked at the latest academy data on pupils' achievement and the progress they are currently making. Other documentation scrutinised included development plans as well as safeguarding information, behaviour logs, attendance records and minutes of recent meetings of the academy board.
- Inspectors took account of the 11 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and 97 responses to a questionnaire circulated by the academy recently, as well as 33 responses from staff to the inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Declan McCauley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Michelle Beard

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Joseph's Catholic Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2013. When its predecessor school, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement overall. The academy is a member of The Newman Catholic Collegiate, a multi-academy company and trust.
- This academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils at the academy is above the national average. The term disadvantaged pupils is used to describe those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority. These pupils receive additional support from the pupil premium funding.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- About one fifth of pupils are from Gypsy, Romany and Traveller families.
- Children are taught in the Nursery on a full-time basis. Children in Reception attend full time.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to strengthen the quality of teaching in order to eliminate the few remaining differences in the rates at which pupils progress in their learning in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring pupils' work is always marked in line with the academy guidelines and helps pupils improve further
 - making sure that only the neatest work is accepted by all teachers
 - eliminating any small amount of wasted learning time in lessons.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Pupils thrive in their learning in a culture of high expectation, which has been successfully developed by a visionary Principal, ably supported by the Assistant Principal and a former Vice-Principal. Staff share the vision for all pupils to have the best opportunities to learn well and thus be successful in their lives.
- Middle leaders play a strong role in driving secure improvement in subjects for which they take responsibility. Together with senior leaders, they ensure that teaching is led well in the academy. Special educational needs and early years are led effectively by well-skilled leaders.
- Academy leaders and managers have a very clear view of the strengths and weaknesses across the academy. They have well-focused and structured plans to improve pupils' achievement further.
- Collectively, those with responsibility for leading the academy have established a cohesive, caring and successful learning environment in which pupils achieve well. All pupils are treated equally by staff, no pupils are discriminated against and good relations are promoted effectively.
- Pupil premium funding is used well, resulting in many disadvantaged pupils making greater progress in their learning than other pupils.
- The curriculum is effectively designed to support pupils' achievement well. It is successfully enriched by many opportunities for pupils to learn outside of the academy. Pupils in lower Key Stage 2 exploring the emotions of animals in zoos spoke excitedly about their forthcoming visit to a large zoo. They highlighted the opportunities the trip would provide for improving their learning. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- The curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. For example, the academy's values of tolerance for others and respect permeate everything which is done in the academy. Pupils regularly participate in events in the local community which help them to understand more about the principles of democracy. They took part in a discussion in the Stoke-on-Trent council chamber about democracy where they learned a great deal about the process. On 7 May, a number of pupils will participate in a day dedicated to the application and understanding of democracy and leadership skills alongside school council members from the other collegiate schools. These activities promote British values well.
- Effective arrangements within the academy for safeguarding are of a high standard and meet statutory requirements. Many checks are carried out before staff or volunteers are allowed to work with children. Comprehensive records of these checks are maintained well in the academy.
- The academy works well with a range of partners and gains greatly from the support they provide. The Newman Catholic Collegiate and the local authority provide good support and have helped the academy to improve well.
- Additional funding provided for sport is used well. This is a very sporting establishment where great importance is placed on pupils' fitness. A wide range of sports are offered to pupils and there are very high rates of participation. During lunchtimes, pupils can participate in a table tennis club; during the inspection, a number of pupils were observed taking part excitedly.
- The sports programme is overseen effectively by a passionate subject leader and a skilled collegiate sports teacher who expect every pupil to be involved in sports. Since the start of the academic year, fitness test data show pupils are becoming fitter. In addition to participating in sports, pupils are encouraged well to make healthy eating choices to improve their lifestyles.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Academy board members provide clear strategic direction for the academy. They are very well informed and knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses in the academy. Board members have an in-depth knowledge of how the academy is performing academically compared to schools nationally and also within the collegiate. This is because they regularly request and analyse performance data.
 - Members of the academy board have a clear understanding about the quality of teaching in the academy and are working actively to eliminate the minor variation in the rates of pupils' progress. Board members are linked to specific subjects in the academy. This enables them to gain a good understanding of how well subjects are taught and to ask pertinent questions about the impact that teaching has on pupils' learning. Board members reward good teaching well and carefully consider the amount individual teachers should be paid based on their performance. Any underperformance by staff would not be tolerated. The academy board manages the performance of staff well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite, well mannered and care for each other well. They regularly stop and hold doors open for each other.
- In lessons, pupils generally have good attitudes to their learning, which helps them to achieve well. Most pupils get on attentively with their work and do not distract others or disrupt learning. Teachers manage behaviour well so that learning moves forward at a fast rate.
- Pupils display a sense of pride in their academy. They are smartly turned out in their colourful uniforms. Many pupils produce very neat work, and take care of their books well.
- Pupils are very proud of recently receiving the prestigious Diana Award for their work on anti-bullying. They proudly report they are not aware of any bullying in their academy and explain that, if there was any, it would not be tolerated.
- Pupils have a very clear understanding of what constitutes bullying. They are able to recognise when other pupils are occasionally being unkind to them but not bullying them.
- Older pupils act as play buddies for younger pupils at break times and are positive role models for them.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- All 97 parents who responded to the academy's questionnaire agree their child feels safe in the academy. Pupils agree they feel safe and secure in the academy.
- Healthy living is very well promoted and pupils are encouraged to eat healthily through a variety of initiatives, such as the weekly cooking club.
- Teachers regularly attend training to help keep pupils safe. Recently, the Principal and a number of academy board members attended training on tackling radicalisation and extremism. This leaves them well prepared to take action, if necessary.
- Pupils now attend the academy more regularly because of the concerted effort of senior leaders and the local authority. Much has been done by the academy to promote regular attendance which has improved and is now broadly in line with the national average.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching over time, including in the early years, results in pupils' good achievement. Teaching helps pupils to attain standards which are above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improvements in teaching since converting to academy status have improved pupils' achievement effectively. Pupils' books show they are making strong progress in their learning.
- Reading is taught exceptionally well in the academy. Much money has been spent on new books and great emphasis is placed on helping pupils to read well. Pupils speak of their love of reading which is taught imaginatively throughout the academy. Pupils sat transfixed, listening to the story of *The Smartest Giant in Town* by Julia Donaldson. They learned effectively about repetition because they were so engrossed in the story.
- Pupils enjoy exciting opportunities to take part in a range of learning tasks designed to interest and motivate them well. Older pupils participated fully in a debate about graffiti and whether it is art or vandalism. Pupils considered their contributions carefully and explained their views with real panache.
- Literacy is taught well throughout a range of other subjects. In information and communication technology (ICT), for example, pupils experience many opportunities to develop their reading skills. ICT is used effectively to support learning.
- Mathematics is taught well throughout school, which helps pupils to make good progress and achieve well.
- Skilled teaching assistants work effectively during lessons and when working with pupils individually or in small groups to support their learning and progress well.
- Occasionally, a few teachers do not follow the academy guidelines on marking and do not ensure that pupils respond to marking designed to help them improve further. In mathematics, a very small number of questions are marked as correct when they are incorrect. This gives pupils the false impression that they have understood what they are learning. A small amount of untidy work is accepted by a few teachers who do not insist on pupils producing their neatest work.

- In a small minority of lessons, pupils' learning time is wasted when learning activities do not begin as rapidly as they should. This reduces the amount of progress pupils can make.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of children start at the academy in the early years with knowledge and skills which are below those typical for their age. Children's skills in communication, language and literacy are weaker than those in other areas of learning. From their individual starting points, children progress well in their learning and development to catch up rapidly by the time they enter Year 1.
- Pupils continue to make good progress to the end of Key Stage 1 where they attain higher than average standards in reading writing and mathematics. Progress accelerates further in Key Stage 2, so at the end of Year 6 pupils again attain above average standards.
- The proportion of pupils making expected or exceeding expected rates of progress by the end of Key Stage 2 were high in 2014. All pupils made at least expected progress. The latest academy data show that pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to make similarly good rates of progress in 2015. The proportion of pupils on track to make more than expected progress is particularly high in reading because of the emphasis in the academy on the importance of being able to read well.
- Groups of pupils, such as those from Gypsy, Romany and Traveller families, achieve well as do disadvantaged pupils. These pupils make good progress in their learning because they receive effective support to meet their specific needs.
- The latest academy data show gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils are closing well.
- From their individual starting points, gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally narrowed in 2014 from the previous year. Compared to other pupils in the academy, the gap narrowed in writing, remained the same in reading and grew wider in mathematics and also in grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- In 2014, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally was just under three terms in mathematics and around two-and-a-half terms in grammar, punctuation and spelling. In reading and writing, disadvantaged pupils reached similar standards to other pupils nationally. The gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the academy was nearly four terms in mathematics, nearly two terms in reading, nearly one term in writing and nearly three-and-a-half terms in grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- The most-able pupils achieve well. In 2014, at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, the proportions of pupils reaching the higher levels were above the national average. Attainment at Level 5 at the end of Year 6 was particularly high in reading in 2014.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because of the effective support provided by skilled teaching assistants to meet their specific learning needs.
- There remain a number of small variations in the rates of progress made by groups of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics, such as boys compared to girls and a small number of disadvantaged pupils.

The early years provision is good

- Early years provision at St Joseph's is effective. It is well led and managed, and the very cohesive staff team works effectively to ensure that children make strong progress from their individual starting points.
- The early years classrooms and outdoor area are bright, colourful and stimulating; these contribute effectively to children's learning and development.
- The proportion of children leaving early years well prepared to enter Year 1 at a good level of development was in line with the national average in 2014. The latest tracking data collected by the academy show that, currently, a similar proportion is on track to reach a good level of development at the end of this year.
- On starting in Nursery, children settle rapidly because the staff team works effectively with parents to ensure that children are happy and secure in the setting which is new to them.
- Staff encourage children to develop high levels of independence. There are many opportunities created for them to develop their communication and language skills. As a result, they gain rapidly in confidence and make strong progress in their learning and development.
- Areas both outside and indoors are safe for children. They behave well, are clearly happy, and feel well supported as they successfully develop their skills and broaden their experiences.

- Children have many opportunities to develop their skills effectively through the wide range of adult-led and child-initiated activities taking place daily in the early years. A group of children were observed participating excitedly in dough disco to help them improve their motor skills.
- Transition into Year 1 is seamless because the early years team works closely with Key Stage 1 colleagues to ensure that each individual child's needs are met fully. This enables children to make a good start to their more formal learning.

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	140148
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	462549

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	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angela Jones
Headteacher	Liz Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	01782 235393
Fax number	01782 235394
Email address	stjoseph@sgfl.org.uk

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