

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

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

Inspection dates 18–19 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- The headteacher and the governing body have not taken robust action following significant concerns expressed by parents and staff. Confidence in the school leadership is at an all time low.
- The systems to check how well teachers, including the headteacher, perform are weak. Governors are not holding the school to account rigorously for the performance of all teachers.
- Since the school was last inspected, the headteacher has not led improvements to teaching and learning effectively. Teaching does not help all pupils achieve well enough across the school.
- Teaching is not providing enough challenge to enable more able pupils to progress to higher levels, particularly in writing.
- The work set by teachers is often too easy or too hard. It is not planned at the right level of difficulty for all pupils to make rapid progress, particularly in mathematics.
- Teachers do not always give pupils advice on how to improve their work and reach a higher standard. Marking does not regularly give pupils an insight into their errors of composition, spelling, grammar, punctuation and presentation.
- The leadership of special educational needs is ineffective. Communication with parents is extremely poor. The quality of support provided for disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is inconsistent.
- Some pupils in Key Stage 1 do not always show positive attitudes to their learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the early years enjoy their learning. Parents are pleased with how well their children settle into school.
- Pupils attend school regularly. They feel safe because of the warm relationships with teachers.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning in Key Stage 2.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited 12 lessons. Four were observed jointly with the assistant headteacher or the higher level teaching assistant, who is a member of the senior leadership team responsible for pastoral care. An observation was made of the teaching of phonics (letters and sounds they represent).
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 read to an inspector and talked about their reading.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils during lessons, lunchtimes and playtimes. Two groups of pupils discussed their views about the school with inspectors. Pupils in each group were chosen at random. One group comprised of pupils from Years 3, 4 and 5. The second group comprised of pupils from Key Stage 1 and 'buddies' from Year 6.
- Pupils' English, mathematics, some topic books and the Early Years Foundation Stage learning journals were scrutinised to establish the quality of work and progress.
- Discussions were held with the assistant headteacher, the early years leader, the mathematics and English subject leaders, and the pastoral leader. Inspectors were unable to speak to the special educational needs leader (headteacher), who was absent from the school during the inspection. A discussion was held with the assistant headteacher and pastoral leader about special educational needs. The lead inspector held meetings with four members of the governing body, the external consultant supporting the school, and with the Director for Schools and Colleges of Clifton Diocese.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documentation. This included the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, teaching, learning and assessment policy, marking policy, the minutes of the governing body meetings and records of governor visits to the school, records of lesson observations and the management of staff performance, information on pupils' progress and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Account was taken of 104 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View. Inspectors spoke to a number of parents arriving at school with their children. Inspectors held meetings with two groups of parents and had meetings with individual parents, as well as responding to phone call requests from parents. Inspectors received letters and emails via the school office from parents. Questionnaires were returned from 15 members of staff, whose views were considered.

Inspection team

Jane Neech, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Stuart Bellworthy

Seconded Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- Early years children attend the Reception class full-time.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is lower than average. The pupil premium is additional government funding which supports pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been significant staff changes since the last inspection. The assistant headteacher is relatively new to the post, the early years leader took up the post in January 2015. There are two newly qualified teachers in the school. There are interim measures for school business management.
- The governing body is led by a single Chair and Vice Chair, where previously there were three Co-Chairs.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club.
- There is a range of after-school activities.
- St Joseph's Nursery School shares the school site. The nursery is managed separately and was not part of this inspection.
- A complaint concerning a serious allegation is currently under investigation by the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the capacity of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - improvement plans focus sharply on moving teaching and learning to consistently good, contain targets that are challenging and evaluations that state if actions taken are successful or not
 - the leadership of special educational needs effectively meets the needs and interests of pupils who are disabled pupils and those with special educational needs
 - middle leaders responsible for subjects or other aspects of the school are supported and trained to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement
 - checks on teachers' performance are carried out robustly and targets set are explicitly linked to raising the achievement of identified groups of pupils
 - the governing body holds the school fully to account for the standard of education, and that the governors are trained and equipped to do this well
 - governors and leaders engage with parents to re-establish parents' confidence in the school.
- Improve teaching so that it is consistently at least good by making sure that:
 - teachers set work at the right level of challenge, particularly for more able pupils, in writing and mathematics
 - teachers' marking and feedback helps pupils improve the quality of their work, especially in English and mathematics
 - the support for disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is planned well enough to meet the pupils' needs.
- Accelerate progress and raise attainment, especially in writing and mathematics, by ensuring that:
 - pupils write in all subjects, not only in English lessons
 - teachers pay greater attention to pupils' progress in spelling, punctuation, grammar, handwriting, presentation of work and written composition

- the children in the Reception class have frequent opportunities for writing when selecting their own learning and in adult-led learning sessions
- pupils apply what they know in mathematics in other subjects, such as in science
- homework tasks for writing are closely linked to the work in lessons.

An external review of governance should be carried out to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- School leaders, including the headteacher, have failed to lead the school well. Since the previous inspection, school leaders have not taken decisive action to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Leaders have not fostered good relations with parents or responded appropriately to concerns raised by parents. As a result, a significant number of parents do not have confidence in the school's leadership. The governing body has not resolved the situation. Governors have neither reassured nor communicated effectively with parents.
- The school's capacity to improve is negligible. The headteacher has not engaged with staff well enough to improve teaching to good or better. The quality of teaching and pupils' academic achievement still require improvement.
- The school's improvement plan, the teaching, learning and assessment policy and the marking policy are ineffective. Evaluations of actions taken by senior leaders and governors do not focus sharply on the impact of those actions on improving standards. Work to establish a culture where good teaching, learning and effective feedback can flourish has been slow. For this reason, inspectors strongly recommend that the school should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.
- Systems for rewarding effective teaching are not well established. The approach to the formal management of teachers' performance is not rigorous. Targets set for teachers are too vague and not linked sharply enough to the school improvement plan. Targets do not help teachers focus well enough on raising the achievement of key groups of pupils.
- The leader responsible for special educational needs does not track and analyse the progress, behaviour and attendance of these pupils tightly. Liaison with parents of children who are disabled or who have special educational needs is weak.
- School leaders are not consistently demonstrating a successful commitment to ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed in all aspects of their education. As a result, not all groups of pupils in the school are making the progress of which they are capable in English and mathematics.
- The assistant headteacher and senior leaders, alongside middle leaders, are new to their posts or inexperienced. English and mathematics subject leaders check on the quality of teaching and learning. They lack guidance from senior staff on how to contribute more directly to sustainable school improvement.
- An external consultant is supporting the school's work. As a result, the assistant headteacher has collated useful information on how well pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, those supported by pupil premium funding, and able pupils, are achieving. This is a positive step towards identifying pupils who are at risk of underachieving.
- The pupil premium funding is not used well enough to enable disadvantaged pupils to make good progress. However, the funding used to support disadvantaged pupils does help to widen their experiences, for example through out-of-school activities. The school tackles discrimination by giving pupils access to available opportunities, such as residential trips, and visits out, which are part of the curriculum.
- The primary school sport funding is used in part to promote equality of opportunity in sport by increasing pupils' participation in out-of-class sport. This has boosted pupils' performance in sport, leading to an increase in competitive events, such as football and gymnastics. Parents say that their children are developing healthy lifestyles and enjoy the sporting activities the school offers.
- The school has planned for the new curriculum. There are opportunities to experience a range of subjects. Visiting teachers give pupils the chance to learn how to play a musical instrument. Pupils say they enjoy being creative and using their imagination in art. Leaders recognise that pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are not yet fully developed across a range of subjects, for example using mathematical skills to compare results from science investigations. Pupils are adequately prepared for their next steps in education.
- The school promotes pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development well through the school values and Catholic ethos. The school's values of respect and tolerance underpin pupils' views about fundamental British values and growing up in modern Britain. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the skills they will need as adults, living and working in a diverse society. At school, pupils recognise that they are part of a community where lifestyles and traditions are different. The British values of democracy and respect for institutions and others are promoted through collective worship, religious education and class events.

- Safeguarding and child protection procedures meet requirements. Procedures have improved in the last six months. All adults working at the school are checked, so that pupils are safe. Systems for the day-to-day management, care and protection of children are established.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The work of the governing body has not improved since the last inspection. The governing body has not grasped the nettle when problems have arisen and so parents' concerns have escalated. Governors articulate a desire for the school to be good or better. However, they have not held a mirror up to themselves to assess how well they are challenging and supporting the school's work. Some governors do not have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Nor are governors realistic about how the school is doing compared to the national picture. Governors are unsure how well different groups of pupils are achieving. Despite training delivered by the diocese, governors have been reluctant to challenge underperformance. Governors have not ensured that pay awards, for both teachers and the headteacher, are closely related to performance.
 - The governor for safeguarding has been assiduous in ensuring that all requirements in relation to safeguarding are now met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because pupils' attitudes to learning, including the care with which pupils present their work, are not consistent across the school.
- In Key Stage 1 some pupils' attitudes to learning are not always positive when learning does not capture their attention. Pupils take less care with the presentation of their work. They fiddle with equipment and chat. This disinterest is a barrier to their learning.
- The behaviour of pupils in Key Stage 2 is better than in Key Stage 1. Where lessons are interesting and teachers' expectations are clear, pupils behave well. They work with energy and enthusiasm.
- Pupils generally move around the school calmly. They are polite and respectful. During the inspection, pupils visited the church to attend a mass for St Joseph's Day. Church members complimented pupils on how well they had behaved.
- Pupils enjoy playtimes. They are active, making full use of the opportunity to use up surplus energy. They walk sensibly back to their classes, refreshed and ready to learn. During the inspection, pupils enjoyed the lunchtime St Joseph's Day celebration school picnic. This showed how pupils from all backgrounds get along well together at social times.
- The school's behaviour policy was last reviewed in November 2014 and March 2015. Leaders ensure that all staff are consistent in their approach to pupils' behaviour. School records show that, initially, there was a rise in exclusions. Staff took a zero tolerance approach. However, both pupils and staff currently report that behaviour has improved. Exclusion rates have fallen.
- The school follows up on pupil absence. The school does not follow up on the absence of different groups of pupils, such as those who are disadvantaged, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. Some parents who responded to Parent View, and a few spoken to by inspectors, disagreed that their children were safe in school. The view of three quarters of the parents who responded to Parent View was that their children were safe. Parents spoken to during the inspection felt that teachers were doing a good job in keeping their children safe.
- The school site is safe and generally clean and tidy. Changes have been made to parts of the building, such as ensuring doors shut safely. Visitors are checked when they arrive at school, sign in and are given badges, so everyone knows who the visitors are.
- Discussions with pupils revealed that they understand how to keep themselves safe. They talked to inspectors about the potential risks from using the internet unwisely. They were clear about who they should talk to if they had a worry or concern.
- Pupils talked to the inspectors about different forms of bullying. They understood about the harm done by both physical and emotional bullying, such as persistent name calling. They said that behaviour of this sort was at odds with the school's values of love and tolerance. Pupils say that their school values help them understand the importance of respecting yourself and the safety of others.
- Leaders have made improvements to the checking and recording of safety matters. All staff are now

checked prior to their appointment. Staff and governors have a better understanding of recording. Staff training in child protection procedures is regularly updated.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Pupils' books and rates of progress show that teaching and learning require improvement. Teachers are not yet consistently using the information gained in the classroom, and from their marking and assessments, to set different activities for pupils with different needs. Pupils' progress, particularly in writing, is therefore inconsistent.
- Teachers do not always check pupils' work closely enough during lessons to find out how well pupils are getting on. As a result, teachers do not spot quickly enough those pupils who find work too easy or too difficult so pupils do not make enough progress. For example in one Key Stage 1 mathematics lesson and one literacy lesson, the work set was too easy which slowed pupils' learning.
- Teachers' marking too often does not explain to pupils how to improve their work. The best marking picks up on pupils' misunderstandings and helps pupils improve their learning so that they make good strides forward.
- The teaching of reading, including phonics is improving pupils' ability to work out unfamiliar words in texts. Pupils in Key Stage 1 now have more opportunities to read to adults and so read with confidence.
- Where teaching promotes good learning, teachers challenge pupils to work hard. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, the teacher intervened part way through to challenge the more able pupils further. This led to their deeper understanding of the properties of triangles. Whereas, in one Key Stage 2 science lesson, work set was less challenging for the most able pupils when comparing the results from an investigation.
- The deployment of teaching assistants does not always support learning and behaviour. Teaching assistants are not routinely given teachers' plans for lessons, so are not able to support pupils' learning effectively.
- Homework is better used than previously. Pupils in Key Stage 2 told inspectors that their homework in mathematics is much better now. Tasks follow on from the work in lessons.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because not all pupils have not made enough progress over time. In the first year following the previous inspection, pupils' average point scores in national assessments at the end of Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics were broadly in line with that of most schools. In 2014, attainment point scores from national assessments were slightly above average in reading and mathematics. Attainment in writing was below average. Pupils are approximately one term behind where they should be.
- In 2014, at the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was slightly below national average. During their time in Key Stage 1, pupils have not made enough progress in writing. School information and work in pupils books shows that some pupils are between one term and one year behind where they should be.
- In 2014, at the end of Year 6, the most able boys achieved the higher level, Level 5, in mathematics. The most able girls did well in reading. At the end of Year 2 a few pupils achieved the higher level, Level 3, in reading, writing or mathematics.
- School information shows that gaps are closing in reading. In Key Stage 2, all pupils are on track to reach at least expected levels in reading at the end of Year 6. In Key Stage 1, pupils are making better progress.
- In 2014 the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonic check was broadly in line with the national average. Current information suggests that Key Stage 1 pupils are making better progress. School assessments show that results are set to rise to at least in line with the national average. There is a greater focus on phonics, the teaching of reading and regular opportunities to read.
- In writing, pupils are not doing as well as they should in composition, spelling, punctuation and grammar. Presentation aspects of writing, for example letter formation and style of handwriting, are not always as good as they could be. In mathematics, progress for some pupils is not yet good enough.
- Due to the very small numbers of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, meaningful comparison with national attainment information is not possible. However, close monitoring and work in books indicate that, across all year groups, these pupils' progress requires improvement.

- There is better identification of pupils' needs through the work of the assistant headteacher in setting up assessment systems. However the school lacks a consistent whole-school approach to assessment.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Children start the Reception class with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age, particularly in their creative, imaginative and physical skills. Some children are able to recognise numbers to 10 and count to 10. Children are less competent in listening and early writing skills. Children have a range of pre-school experiences. About three quarters come from the nursery setting on the school site.
- Children are adequately prepared for Year 1. In 2014, three quarters of the children achieved a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is in line with the county and national figures. However, the boys did not do as well as the girls in school, or boys nationally. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has not been doing her job for long. She is keen to make the improvements necessary so that all children achieve as well as they can. The early years team meets regularly to check how well the children are doing. They use information from observations of what children can do to plan activities. As yet, there are not enough opportunities for children, particularly boys, to practise early writing skills.
- There are good links with pre-school providers. Home visits are made before children begin school, to ensure a smooth start. Relationships with parents are warm. There are opportunities for parents to work and play alongside their children. Parents told inspectors that they are encouraged to contribute to their children's learning journals. Parents appreciate this record of their child's achievements at home and at school.
- Teaching requires improvement. The provision of outdoor activities in the area next to the classroom is adequate. Some of the equipment lacks the sparkle to enthuse and excite the children, for example the resources to engage all children to write.
- Generally, children behave well. Children enjoy whole class activities which develop their social and physical skills. Everyone working together to keep a ball rolling on a parachute is a challenge. Children showed that they knew how to join in safely with this activity. A few children, who found cooperation more difficult, were well supported by adults.

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	137371
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	453437

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	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Collette Culligan
Headteacher	Sheila Jones
Date of previous school inspection	19-20 February 2013
Telephone number	01380 723084
Fax number	01380 723546
Email address	head@stjosdevizes.wilts.sch.uk

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