

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Bristol Road, Portishead, Bristol BS20 6QB

Inspection dates	2–3 March 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The new headteacher has high aspirations for the school and has increased the pace of improvement since she arrived.
- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and a strong drive to improve it further.
- Senior leaders have enhanced the management of the school. This has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Attendance has improved and the number of children who are absent frequently has fallen to zero.
- Leaders and teachers have established a caring ethos in the school which has resulted in a safe, nurturing environment.
- Pupils, staff, parents and governors are proud of their school.
- Teaching has improved since the last inspection, so that it is now good for all subjects.
- The pupils are courteous and behave well. The school has changed its procedures for managing behaviour. Behaviour has improved during this school year.
- The progress that pupils make during Key Stage 2 has improved, especially in mathematics, and is better than the progress made by all pupils nationally. A large proportion of pupils achieve above-average results at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Children in the Reception class are assessed carefully on entry and during the year to plan activities that support their development. As a result they make good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough consistently outstanding teaching.
- Teachers do not always use information about what children can and can't do effectively enough to plan lessons that meet all pupils' learning needs.
- The school's new assessment system does not always provide the highest-quality information for leaders, governors, parents and teachers.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Use the best practice in the school to further improve teaching by ensuring that:
 - teachers consistently use information about what pupils can and can't do in order to plan lessons that meet all pupils' learning needs
 - the marking policy is simplified and applied consistently.

- Further develop the new procedures for assessing and recording pupils' achievements in order to provide high-quality information for teachers to plan their lessons, to aid leaders in judging the effectiveness of teaching and individual support for pupils, and to provide more useful information for parents and governors.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The new headteacher has high aspirations for the school and has worked well with other leaders, including governors and staff, to increase the pace of improvement at the school since she arrived in September. Last year the deputy headteacher and other leaders worked with the local authority in order to improve teaching, particularly in mathematics, and pupils' learning has improved as a result.
- Other leaders in the school have worked hard to improve provision over the past two years and have updated curriculum plans, provided guidance and training to teachers, regularly checked the quality of teaching and learning and worked with other schools to improve teaching. Teachers and learning support staff have welcomed this and teaching has improved as a result.
- Last year, although attendance was good overall some groups of pupils had lower attendance than others and there were several pupils who missed large amounts of time. The headteacher has enhanced procedures and there have been improvements for almost all groups of pupils so far this year.
- The headteacher has also worked hard to improve behaviour, which was a concern for a few parents. This work has been effective and will be continued to cement the high standards that the inspectors observed during the inspection.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils have the opportunity to experience a wide range of subjects, backed up well by extra-curricular activities. The school choir showed a high standard of performance in the rehearsal observed by an inspector and displays showed the success that the school has had in sporting events. These activities and other clubs make a strong contribution to pupils' development. The physical education (PE) and sport premium for primary schools has been well used to develop PE and sports activities and there is increased involvement in physical activities by pupils.
- School leaders make good use of pupil premium funding so that last year pupils eligible for the funding made more rapid progress than other pupils in the school and other pupils nationally. As a result the attainment gap for such pupils is narrowing at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- The school leadership delayed changing the school's assessment system until this year in order to focus on improving the quality of teaching. School leaders have reviewed the new system and have identified that it could be developed further so that it provides more useful and reliable summaries of the progress that pupils make that can be used to plan learning and interventions. School leaders are concerned that it does not yet record enough detail about pupils' learning in some subjects and year groups; nor does it yet provide clear enough information for parents about the progress made by their children.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Strong, caring relationships are developed through the inclusive ethos of the school and the clear focus of the curriculum on pupils' personal development. Pupils could give good examples of their experience of democracy through participation in the school council, which, together with the active teaching of British values, such as valuing diversity and the opinions of others, prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- School displays reinforce the values of the school, encouraging respect for other cultures and religions, and using anti-bullying messages to stress that there should be no intolerance based on race, gender, disability or other characteristics. Pupils' reaction to these displays and the teaching that they receive is evident in the support and care that they show for all members of the school community. Leaders and governors' actions to promote equality and foster respect are strong.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have high aspirations for the school and are determined that it will be successful. Together with other members of the school community they have recently refreshed the vision for the school so that it supports the ethos and culture of this caring community.
 - Following the last inspection they commissioned an external consultant to improve their work and this has been successful. Governors showed that they have a very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, are heavily involved in monitoring improvement plans, and provide good support and challenge to the school leaders. They visit the school regularly and individual governors are linked to leaders in the school to support and challenge the work that they do.
 - The governors have an in-depth knowledge of the academic performance of each year group and have agreed additional investment with the headteacher in order to address issues such as improving reading and transition to Year 1. They have a good understanding of how money is spent; for example the pupil and sports premium, and carefully check that this spending is effective. They make sure that

salary increases are appropriately linked to the effectiveness of leaders' and teachers' contribution to pupils' outcomes and school improvements.

- Governors showed a good knowledge of the school's work to improve attendance and behaviour and make sure the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and a safe culture has been established in school.
- Governors regularly check school policies relating to child welfare and safety and the central record of staff and volunteers.
- Staff training about how to protect children is up to date. Displays, pupil questionnaires and discussions with pupils during the inspection show that pupils are aware of how to stay safe. This includes the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, and of protecting one's identity when online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Leaders have successfully focused on improving teaching, especially the teaching of mathematics, since the last inspection. The new policy documents, guidance, collaboration with other schools such as the Strawberry Line Federation of Sandford and Winscombe schools, and training that staff have received has helped them improve so that teaching is now good. Inspectors saw some very strong practice in the school that can help to improve teaching further and iron out any remaining minor inconsistencies in some lessons.
- In the best lessons teachers provided very clear descriptions of what the pupils were learning in that lesson and how this fitted in to the work within that topic. Teachers made good use of information they had gained from marking and other assessments of pupils' understanding to target work precisely so that pupils made good progress in their learning. Teachers encouraged pupils to select activities that stretched their understanding, and intervened when they felt the pupils could achieve more. Imaginative and creative activities and resources provided challenge and interest to the pupils and they responded by working hard. This approach ensured that all pupils, including the most able, made good progress in their learning.
- In a few lessons pupils were unsure about what they were learning. Additionally the activities that they were doing did not allow them to make rapid progress as they were not well enough linked to what the pupils could already do. In mathematics teachers use different systems of describing what pupils still need to do to master a topic area in the pupils' books. Some of these are too complicated to support pupils' understanding, particularly for lower-ability pupils.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they use this to question pupils and address any misconceptions they may have. They plan activities that enable pupils to practise their skills and support this by setting regular homework. Pupils confirmed that this homework, which included spellings, multiplication tables and daily reading, usually helped them to learn. However, some parents and pupils commented that some homework tasks lacked variety and didn't provide sufficient challenge.
- Teachers work hard to mark pupils' work and provide suggestions for them to improve in line with the school's policy. However, some aspects of the policy are not applied uniformly between subjects and teachers, and the wide range of symbols used was confusing for some pupils.
- Teachers use informal checks of pupils' understanding well to adjust learning tasks in many lessons and to plan for the next lesson. However, the new assessment system does not yet provide enough useful information about what pupils know and does not fully support teachers and leaders in planning and monitoring.
- Parents attending the parents' evening on the first day of the inspection appreciated the quality of the information that they got directly from teachers, but Parent View, the online questionnaire, revealed some historical concern about the quality of the information they get about their child's progress. The school's leadership is aware of the need to improve the way assessment information is recorded in the system so that it can provide more useful reports for all stakeholders.
- Phonics is taught well in Reception and Year 1 and the proportion of children achieving the threshold in the phonics test has been above the national level for the past three years. However, the support for those children who did not reach the threshold on their first or second attempt is not always strong enough for them to make good progress with their reading as they move up the school. The headteacher has been discussing plans to improve support for weaker readers in the future.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are courteous and respectful, and take good care of each other; this was evident from Reception to Year 6. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy meeting their friends and learning together. One pupil said that they like the fact that they know everyone and that their class 'is like a family'.
- Pupils feel safe at school and staff and parents agree. Pupils have been taught about how to keep safe and could list examples of this, such as road safety. Teachers take care to ensure that issues like internet and phone safety are dealt with in class and some pupils take responsibility for supporting others with this in their role as e-safety monitors. Routines in and out of class are well established and pupils move quickly and safely around the school when moving between activities.
- The pupils were not concerned about bullying as they feel that it doesn't happen and that the teachers would deal with it if it occurred. There are 'worry boxes' in each classroom that pupils can use to raise any concerns anonymously if they feel that they are not able to discuss them with an adult face to face. Parents and staff agree that bullying is not an issue. Pupils have learned about other cultures and religions, and would not countenance anyone using derogatory language or making comments about another person based on their culture, race or religion.
- Pupils are committed to carrying out the school's core values. This was evident in their support for each other, their good behaviour and how polite they were. They enjoy the wide range of lunchtime and after-school clubs which are contributing to their healthy lifestyles and social development. As a result of the caring ethos of the school, and the range of sporting opportunities that they have, their physical and emotional well-being is developed strongly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Before and after school, in lessons and during breaktimes inspectors saw children behaving well. In the past few years there have been no incidents of bad behaviour that are serious enough to merit exclusion from school. In one class where behaviour had been an issue during changes to staffing last year there have been good improvements recently.
- The new headteacher has changed the behaviour policy and introduced greater consistency in the way teachers deal with any behaviour issues. She has been keen to respond to the concerns expressed by a small number of parents and has worked hard to address these. As a result of the changes made there has been a strong improvement in the behaviour of some pupils. Inspectors visited each class more than once to check the way that pupils behaved in a variety of situations and did not see any poor behaviour. The headteacher and school leaders are keen to continue to pursue successful strategies with those pupils who sometimes do not behave well so that their behaviour continues to improve.
- The large majority of parents, staff and pupils think that behaviour is good at this school.
- Attendance levels are better than the national average. Persistent absence figures had risen last year but are currently at zero. The school has good procedures for reducing absence and this has had the effect of improving the attendance for some groups of children who had lower attendance rates last year. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, while improving compared to last year, is still not high enough.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Since the last inspection progress has improved in reading, writing and mathematics, and as a result of this good progress pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is high. The progress of the most-able pupils is now good and in 2015 a very high proportion of pupils achieved results that were well above average in the Key Stage 2 tests. Pupils are therefore well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Reception teachers quickly assess children's needs at the beginning of the year and as a result of very well-planned provision pupils make good progress during the early years. As a result of this good teaching and very well-targeted additional support the children achieve better than the national average at the end of the year and are well prepared to do well in Year 1.
- Good teaching of phonics has led to outcomes from the phonics check being consistently above national. However, the new headteacher is keen to improve pupils' phonics skills further, especially for those who are still working to acquire these skills as they move up the school. The English lead has introduced

changes to heighten the profile of reading, including new books and changes to the way reading is taught. Teachers and other adults read regularly with pupils, especially those who need more opportunities to read. Inspectors could see the effect of these changes; records show that pupils are reading more often, and the enthusiasm with which so many pupils approached World Book Day showed their love of reading.

- Outcomes at the end of Key Stage 1 have fallen slightly since last year in reading and writing, although they remain above the national average. This was particularly true for writing, and the English lead has reviewed the teaching of writing and introduced improvements that are addressing this fall.
- Pupils' performance in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 rose last year and there has been a steady increase in the progress that pupils make in mathematics during Key Stage 2 over the past four years. Consequently outcomes in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 are now the highest out of reading, writing and mathematics, and results for all three are well above the national figures.
- Disadvantaged pupils who finished Key Stage 2 last year made strong progress and so the gap between their performance and other pupils nationally is closing. This gap is also closing for disadvantaged pupils as they finish Key Stage 1. There are small numbers of disadvantaged pupils in some classes and while their progress is generally good a few make slower progress than others. The progress of the small number of lower-ability pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability varies in different classes but this has not been strong enough overall over the past few years. This year the school leadership has focused on support for these pupils in order to improve this situation and this is starting to have an impact.
- The school's system for assessing the progress that pupils make in their learning is being developed and due to this, and the changes in the curriculum from last year, information about how well pupils are progressing is not yet fully reliable. Inspectors took great care to check this information against what they saw in lessons and in pupils' work and their observations matched with leaders' rationale for enhancing the system.

Early years provision

is good

- The leadership and management of the early years are good. The early years leader has high aspirations for the children, and has ensured that good organisation and careful planning lead to good achievement
- Children make good progress during the year due to the high aspirations of staff and the good teaching they receive. Staff assess children's learning regularly and provide targeted interventions to ensure that any gaps in children's experience or understanding are addressed. Every day a wide range of exciting activities are provided, linked to what children need to learn, and teachers ensure that all children are challenged in their learning. As a result of this successful approach outcomes at the end of the early years are high and children are well prepared for Year 1.
- The early years leader makes good links with pre-school providers to ensure a smooth transition to school and is quick to assess the children when they arrive. Discussions with parents including home visits support this process and parents can also contribute to their child's assessment during the Reception year. This allows teachers to organise targeted provision to move all children on from early in the autumn term.
- The leader has appropriate plans in place for further improvement based on her analysis of assessment information. For example the slightly lower outcomes in writing last year have led her to work with the English leader to improve provision by ensuring that children have more opportunities for more extended writing. They are also working together to further enhance transition to Year 1.
- Children learn in a safe and nurturing environment. Staff listen to the children and praise them for their achievements. Teachers work hard to support the needs of all children. Teaching is good because children are excited in their learning by activities which are well matched to their stage of development, experiences and interests.
- Staff are careful to ensure that all children are safe. Procedures to safeguard children are effective and the statutory welfare requirements are met. Due to the high aspirations children behave very well, and are taught to take care of their classmates; a typical remark was, 'My teacher has said that if I bump into someone (in a pedal car) I have to say nice things'.

School details

Unique reference number	109238
Local authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	1009219

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Helen McNab
Headteacher	Mrs Elaine Jackson
Telephone number	01275 848367
Website	www.st-josephs.org.uk
Email address	stjosephs.pri@n-somerset.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 March 2014

Information about this school

- St Joseph's is an average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is average.
- The majority of the pupils come from White British backgrounds. English is an additional language for a small number of pupils.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2015. All of the previous year and some of the year before the deputy headteacher was acting headteacher of the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Since the last inspection the school has received support from the local authority and during this year from the Strawberry Line Federation of Winscombe and Sandford schools.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons; eight of these observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- A wide range of documents were scrutinised, including records relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures and the school's analysis of how well it is improving. The inspectors examined the school's systems for checking pupils' progress and records of checks on the quality of teaching. They took account of local authority and governing body reports.
- The inspectors spoke with pupils during lessons, during break and lunchtime, and heard their views in two meetings with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors paid close attention to the views of parents as shown by the 90 responses to Parent View, the online parent questionnaire, and through discussion with parents who were attending a parents' evening at the end of the first day of the inspection.
- An inspector listened to individual pupils read, and observed the choir and after-school clubs. Both inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects and classes.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and governors. They took account of the 29 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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