

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Walton Avenue, Penketh, Warrington WA5 2AU

Inspection dates	22–23 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	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has provided determined leadership in bringing about improvements to the quality of teaching and outcomes since the last inspection. Staff and parents typically comment that the school is now 'a different place'.
- Senior leaders, governors and staff alike share a vision for excellence and a relentless drive to improve.
- The quality of teaching is now good. As a result, all groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Governors have a very good knowledge of the school and provide effective support and challenge to the headteacher.
- Children get an outstanding start to school in the early years. They make excellent progress and rapidly develop their confidence and independence and a love of learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in the classroom, at breaktimes and around the school. They display highly positive attitudes to their learning.
- Pupils say that they feel safe, and show a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is strong. Pupils develop a good understanding of British values.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- At times, tasks are too easy or too hard for pupils.
- Pupils do not have enough chances to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- The impact of the work of subject leaders on raising achievement and the quality of teaching is not yet consistently strong in all areas.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils by:
 - ensuring that teachers' knowledge of pupils' skills and abilities is used consistently well to provide work which provides the right level of challenge
 - further develop and embed pupils' mathematical skills by providing more chances for them to apply their mathematical skills in different subject areas.
- Further develop the work of subject leaders in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in their subject.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The determined leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by other senior leaders, has brought about improvements in all areas of the school's work. Leaders, governors and staff share a strong sense of purpose and are ambitious in their vision for the school. They have established a culture of high expectation in which good teaching, learning and exemplary behaviour can flourish.
- Senior leaders have improved systems for monitoring the quality of teaching. They make robust checks on the quality of teaching. If any weaknesses are identified, they take rapid action to support and provide additional training. As a result teaching is now good.
- School leaders develop and implement improvement plans effectively. The outcomes of the thorough monitoring and evaluation that take place in school are used to set challenging targets for improvement. These targets are based on accurate assessments of where the work of the school can be further developed. For example, school leaders rightly identified that the teaching of writing was not as effective as that in reading and mathematics, and this led to actions that have improved how this aspect of English is now being taught.
- Subject and middle leaders provide helpful guidance and support to colleagues. There are particular strengths in the leadership of early years; there is effective leadership of English and mathematics. There remains, however, some variability in the quality of the impact of the leadership of other subjects in raising achievement and influencing the quality of teaching.
- The curriculum is well balanced and interesting. Pupil's progress in writing is enhanced by the many chances for pupils to apply their writing skills in other subjects. There are, however, fewer chances for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in other subject areas. Pupils benefit from a broad range of extracurricular activities to further enhance their learning, such as dance, handball, baking and football.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the curriculum, the school's Christian values, and assemblies. Pupils learn about other faiths and cultures as well as their own. They effectively learn about British values as, for example, they learn to be respectful of others, and develop an understanding of democracy as they vote for members of the school council.
- Additional funding is well used. Senior leaders and governors make careful decisions about how best to spend the pupil premium funding. As a result, the small number of disadvantaged pupils in the school make good progress and access all the activities that the school offers. Funding for primary sports and physical education is used effectively to further develop staff skills in teaching physical skills, and to provide more opportunity to participate in a range of sports competition and after-school clubs.
- Most parents express satisfaction and confidence in the school's work. Typically, they are enthusiastic about their child's happiness at school and the progress they make. A small minority expressed concern about the level of information they received about their child's progress. Inspectors found that the school had recently improved the level of information shared with parents and had improved its website to be more informative.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have effectively improved their skills and knowledge since the last inspection. They share the headteacher's passion for excellence, and provide strong challenge and support to senior leaders. They regularly visit the school to gain first-hand information. They collect the views of pupils and staff, and carefully consider the information provided for them by senior and subject leaders. As a result, they have a secure understanding of the strengths of the school and also areas where it can improve.
 - Governors manage carefully the finance and resources that are available to the school, including the pupil premium, and know the impact of spending on pupils' achievement. They have a clear understanding of how teachers' performance is managed and the links between this and their pay progression.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders, governors and staff work closely together and engage well with parents to ensure that pupils are safe. All staff receive regular training, including about preventing radicalisation and extremism, and are aware of how to identify whether pupils are at risk and the steps to take if they have any concerns. Good use is made of external support when it is required.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Staff establish very positive relationships with pupils and this has a positive impact on their good progress.
- Teachers are enthusiastic about their role and plan learning which enthuses and engages pupils' interest. Pupils are keen to learn and focus well on their activities and this aids their progress in learning.
- Where learning is most effective, staff provide challenge which meets pupils' abilities well, including the most able. For example, in a Year 3/4 lesson to develop reading skills, pupils worked with sustained concentration on reading and comprehension tasks, often working independently as the work was well matched to their needs.
- On occasion, teaching does not provide the right level of challenge, as tasks are too easy or too difficult. At these times, pupils do not make the progress they are capable of.
- Teachers make effective use of the school's marking policy to ensure that pupils receive regular feedback on their work and know how to improve.
- Staff pay careful attention to monitoring pupil's progress in learning. They swiftly identify where pupils may be lagging behind and put support in place to ensure that they catch up.
- Pupils write regularly for a variety of purposes, and this helps to promote their good progress in writing. For example, they enjoy writing letters, newspaper articles and character profiles as part of their work in history.
- Teachers develop pupils' mathematical skills through a range of interesting activities. For example, Year 1 pupils enjoy doubling the number of spots on a beanbag they have caught as part of a game. Although skills are developed well, there are too few chances for pupils to apply this learning in other subjects.
- Teaching assistants make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. They provide good support to individuals and small groups, questioning them well to promote learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy their time in school and thrive in the happy, caring environment. They develop as well-rounded individuals and confident learners. They show respectful attitudes towards others.
- Pupils relish their roles and responsibilities in school. Older pupils take on responsibility as 'special friends' to younger pupils. Other pupils act as 'play buddies' in the playground, or are elected to the school council.
- Pupils show a good understanding of bullying and are adamant that this does not happen at St Joseph's. They are confident that if it did happen, staff would deal with the problem effectively.
- Pupils show a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. Regular visitors to the school such as the police and St John Ambulance further develop this understanding. On occasion, staff miss opportunities to further develop pupils' understanding of safety.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are very welcoming and polite. They hold doors open for adults and for each other, and readily help one another to carry out responsibilities such as bringing snacks to the classroom.
- Pupils show highly positive attitudes to their learning. They listen attentively in lessons and fully engage in their activities. They are proud of their school and their work.
- Pupils' conduct around school is mature and disciplined. They move sensibly and quietly in and out at breaktimes and when going to the hall for physical education lessons. School records show that any incidents of poor behaviour are very rare and are dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- Attendance is rigorously tracked. Attendance is above the national average, and persistent absence is low, reflecting pupils' positive view of school.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Outcomes for pupils have improved since the last inspection and are now good for all year groups and are

outstanding for children in the early years.

- In Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress from their starting points and standards have risen since the last inspection to be significantly above the national average overall. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in the Year 1 phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) check has risen from below the national average in 2013 to above it in 2014 and 2015.
- Since the previous inspection, progress through Key Stage 2 has improved. The proportion of pupils making expected and more than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics compared favourably with national averages, but was weaker for writing. Standards have risen at the end of Key Stage 2 to be significantly above the national average overall in 2015.
- Current school information, and evidence gathered during the inspection, indicates that pupils currently in school in all year groups are making good progress. This includes progress in writing, which has improved as a result of a determined focus by school leaders to improve this area of learning.
- The small number of disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points as a result of effective support provided to meet their needs.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress. This is because they receive carefully tailored support from teaching assistants and class teachers who know the pupils well and help them to understand what they are learning.
- The most-able pupils make good progress and attain well. At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2015 the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in writing and mathematics was above the national average, and for reading it was significantly above.
- Pupils' good level of achievement and their enthusiasm for learning mean that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- Children join Reception class with skill levels which vary from year to year, but that are broadly typical for their age. They make rapid progress and by the end of Reception Year the proportions reaching a good level of development is well above the national average. Children are extremely well prepared to start Year 1.
- The school's information and evidence gathered during the inspection show that children currently in Reception classes are making rapid progress for starting points that were below those typical in reading, writing and mathematics, and broadly typical in other subjects. Some children have already reached some of the early learning goals for the end of Reception Year.
- Children are highly motivated and engaged in their learning. They confidently select their own activities and show a high level of concentration as they independently measure out water and flour to make their own play-dough.
- Children are keen to write and make marks, and take full advantage of the wealth of opportunities provided for them to do so. Children ask to label models they have made and often write their own sentences independently. They proudly show inspectors their writing on display.
- Children display a love of numbers and happily use their knowledge in play as they decide the different ways they could make the 10 pence entrance fee to their model park.
- Teaching is highly effective in providing a stimulating learning environment where challenges meet children's needs well. For example, more-able children are given challenging problems to solve, such as working out the missing number in addition problems written on toy eggs, and matching correct answers to numbers in an egg box.
- Staff establish high-quality relationships with children, which promotes children's self-esteem, confidence and an atmosphere of happy, purposeful learning. They are highly skilled in assessing children's learning and providing activities and questions, which ensure that learning progresses rapidly.
- Children display a high standard of behaviour. They are secure in the routines of the class and cooperate very well together in play to share resources. Adults are vigilant to ensure that children are kept safe.
- Highly effective leadership ensures that children's learning is very closely monitored and any gaps swiftly identified and followed up to ensure that they are closed. As a result, all groups make rapid progress.
- Partnership with parents is strong and parents are positive about their child's experience in school and the progress they make.

School details

Unique reference number	111373
Local authority	Warrington Borough Council
Inspection number	10002190

This inspection 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	311
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judith Ackers
Headteacher	Alan Saunders
Telephone number	0192 5723340
Website	http://www.stjosephs.warrington.dbprimary.com/
Email address	stjosephs_primary@warrington.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 November 2013

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average. Pupil premium is the additional government funding used to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals or who are looked after.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below average.
- In 2015, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning throughout the school. Two observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors scrutinised pupils' workbooks and listened to them read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and seven other governors, the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders. The inspectors also held a meeting with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information produced by the school, including information on pupils' progress and attainment, behaviour and attendance, procedures for safeguarding and the school's own evaluation of its work. They considered reports to the governing body, minutes of their meetings and the school's plans for further improvement.
- Inspectors considered the 199 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 22 parents who expressed their views via text message to Ofsted.
- Inspectors also took account of the 13 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the online pupils' questionnaire to consider.

Inspection team

Elaine White, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Nash	Ofsted Inspector
Anne McNally	Ofsted Inspector

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