

St Joseph's RC Primary School

St Joseph's Drive, Ordsall, Salford, Greater Manchester M5 3JP

Inspection dates

27–28 April 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Achievement in mathematics, although improving, is not yet good. Standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 remain significantly below average. This is why pupils' outcomes and the school's overall effectiveness still require improvement.
- Pupils, including the most able, do not have enough opportunities to develop mathematical reasoning skills. Mathematics has a lower profile than literacy in the early years.
- Not all leaders know how to use assessment information to improve pupils' achievement, teaching and the curriculum in their subjects.
- Governors are not using assessment information well enough to ask leaders probing questions about pupils' achievement and teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is an inspirational leader who has successfully improved teaching and achievement while establishing and strengthening subject leadership.
- The school has improved significantly since its last inspection. Parents, governors, staff and pupils agree.
- Across the school, teaching and assessment are now good. As a result, the pace of learning has stepped up and standards are rising.
- Pupils are making good progress in reading, writing, spelling, punctuation and grammar. Standards are rising rapidly in these areas.
- Disadvantaged pupils are achieving better than in the past.
- Nursery and Reception children have lots of opportunities to explore and learn through exciting activities. Early reading and writing skills are taught particularly well.
- The curriculum ensures that pupils enjoy learning, appreciate its importance and understand what it means to be a good citizen. The promotion of British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is rooted in the school's practice.
- Pupils are very well behaved. They are friendly, polite and go out of their way to be helpful. They deserve their good reputation in the community.
- The school takes good care of its pupils, who say that they feel safe in school. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in mathematics across the school by:
 - ensuring more consistency in the development of pupils' reasoning skills and ensuring that there are opportunities for pupils to solve mathematical problems, especially the most able
 - ensuring that mathematics is given as high a profile as reading and writing in the early years provision
 - quickly implementing the school's plans for training the new mathematics leader to enable this role to be assumed as soon as practicable.

- Continue the effective work that has been done to establish and develop middle and other leaders by:
 - ensuring that they have a thorough understanding of the school's assessment information and published performance information about different groups of pupils, and use this to further improve achievement and the quality of provision in their subjects.

- Improve governance by:
 - providing update training for all governors to refresh their understanding of performance information about pupils' achievement and how this can be used to hold school leaders to account
 - ensuring that the records of governors' meetings adequately reflect the extent to which governors ask challenging questions of leaders about pupils' academic performance, teaching and the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- St Joseph's is well on its way to becoming a good school and there is no doubt that the headteacher's inspirational leadership has been the catalyst for the improvements that have occurred. On taking up his position, the headteacher had to deal with some significant disaffection and resistance to change. However, his high expectations and ambition for all pupils and staff won through and lifted the aspirations of all.
- The headteacher's regular and rigorous checks on the extent to which teaching promotes good learning have eliminated weak teaching and brought about the much-needed consistency to raise achievement. Restructuring the school's leadership to appoint a deputy headteacher ensured that the headteacher was ably supported in this work. A more rigorous performance management system, linked to pay progression, has been put in place and is working effectively.
- Teachers are appreciative of the headteacher's precise and expert feedback on how they can improve their teaching. They have benefited from visits to other schools to observe good practice and from the training organised to address individual and whole-school improvement priorities. Newly qualified teachers and teachers in the early stages of their career are mentored well and receive good support and professional development opportunities. This is enabling them to make a very positive contribution to the quality of teaching and learning at the school.
- Very effective leadership resulted in some marked improvements to pupils' outcomes in the school's 2015 national end of key stage tests and assessments. The proportion of children attaining a good level of development at the end of Reception also increased.
- In all the subjects tested and assessed in 2015, disadvantaged pupils made better progress than in the previous year. Moreover, with the exception of writing at the end of key stage 2, the attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and pupils nationally narrowed, reflecting leaders' effective use of the additional funding the school receives to improve outcomes for this group of pupils.
- While there have been some improvements to outcomes in mathematics, these have not been as marked as in English. When the previous leader left last year, the deputy headteacher temporarily took on the additional role of mathematics leader and ensured that pupils' work reflects the requirements of the new national curriculum. However, while teaching is more consistent, with some clear strengths, the school is still on its journey to ensuring good achievement in mathematics, particularly for the most-able pupils.
- Much research has gone into choosing a new mathematics curriculum that will raise achievement and meet the school's needs. A new mathematics leader has been appointed from within the school and will commence this role at the beginning of the new academic year. Training in preparation for this role is planned.
- The development of subject leadership in the 18 months since the headteacher was appointed has not been as rapid as in some areas. However, this is due to the relatively large number of staff changes and the addition of newly qualified teachers who are not allocated leadership responsibilities in their first year of teaching.
- Nevertheless, although a number of staff are new to their leadership roles, they are ambitious, keen and have good subject knowledge. The headteacher, deputy and other more experienced leaders are nurturing them well. While they undertake a variety of tasks appropriate to their roles, such as checking pupils' work, not all know how to use assessment information to improve achievement and provision in their subjects.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs or disability is managed adequately, with priorities to further increase the level of parent and pupil involvement in identifying learning targets and refining these to reflect smaller steps in pupils' progress.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and ensures that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The promotion of literacy skills has a high profile and these are developed well in a range of subjects. Pupils are also given exciting opportunities to develop communication skills, confidence and teamwork. These include the Year 6 after-school debating club, Year 5 pupils' recent performance of Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' at Manchester's Contact theatre and Year 1 and 2 pupils' work with the British Broadcasting Corporation in making a children's television programme.
- Pupils are learning to speak Italian and there is good emphasis on skill development and appreciation of art and music from different cultures. A wide range of rich and regular visits enhances learning in many subjects, such as the Music for Youth Primary Prom. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development and their appreciation of British values are rooted in the curriculum. The curriculum is enriched by a variety of extra-curricular activities, including lunchtime and after-school physical education (PE) and sporting activities.

- Very effective use is made of the additional funding received to develop PE and sports provision. Specialist PE teachers and coaches ensure good learning in this aspect of the curriculum, while at the same time increasing the knowledge and skills of the school's own staff who work alongside them. Midday assistants have received training to better enhance the development of pupils' skills and confidence during lunchtime games.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, including those linked to pupils' achievement, although the latter are expressed in fairly broad terms.
 - Records of governors' meetings show that questions are asked about resources, safeguarding, premises and finance. Governors play a productive role in supporting and challenging these aspects of the school's work.
 - Governors say that they have regular discussions about pupils' achievement. However, the records of their meetings show little evidence of this or of governors asking probing questions about achievement and provision to hold school leaders to account. Although new governors' induction training includes elements relating to this aspect of their responsibilities, there has been minimal recent training to ensure sufficient skill on the governing body in this area, despite a recent skills audit.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and the school provides a safe and harmonious environment in which pupils thrive. Supervision of all activities is good. All safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and staff are well trained in their responsibilities. Relevant checks are carried out on members of staff and all individuals who work with the pupils.
- Where pupils need further support for their health or well-being, the school involves appropriate specialist agencies in a timely way and works supportively with parents. The school has recently employed its own family support worker to enhance this aspect of its provision.
- There are rigorous safeguarding systems to investigate persistent absence. If parents do not inform the school of the reason for their child's absence, this is quickly followed up.
- Pupils who attend the before- and after-school club are well cared for.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and the pace of learning has gained momentum. As a result, pupils are achieving better outcomes. Even in mathematics, where outcomes are not yet good, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved, enabling many more pupils to progress at the expected rate, including disadvantaged pupils.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds made by letters) in the early years and key stage 1 is strong. This enables pupils to quickly develop good reading skills that support their learning in many subjects. This is built upon well in key stage 2 where good teaching ensures that pupils gain a wider variety of skills and levels of understanding, such as inference. Teachers' own enthusiasm for reading and their skill in helping pupils to understand the strategies authors use to engage readers promotes good learning in this area.
- Across the school teachers have high expectations of pupils' writing and plan interesting activities to help them develop well as writers. In addition to ensuring that writing skills are taught well during literacy lessons, teachers are very successful in promoting good opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects so that skills are regularly practised, reinforced and become embedded. This is demonstrated particularly well in pupils' work in history and geography, such as in Year 1 pupils' writing about the seasons, Year 4 pupils' poems about volcanoes and Year 6 pupils' 'blogs from Viking gods'. Regardless of whether writing is in literacy lessons or other subjects, teachers expect the same high standard of spelling, punctuation and grammar and pupils take care over this aspect of their writing.
- In mathematics, pupils have some good opportunities to use reasoning skills and explain their strategies for solving problems. For example, older pupils investigated square numbers and younger pupils thought hard about how different sizes and shapes of containers might affect their capacity. However, pupils' work over time shows inconsistency in the opportunities they are given to deepen their mathematical understanding in this way, which limits their learning, particularly for the most-able pupils.

- Teachers are excellent role models and in a range of subjects they ensure that pupils develop empathy, respect and tolerance.
- Physical education and sport are taught well, often by trained coaches with considerable expertise. This has had a considerably positive impact on pupils' skills, confidence and discipline, as well as their ability to work cooperatively with each other.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge and knowledge of individual pupils enables them to pitch questions at the right level of challenge to ensure good involvement of all in lessons. Teachers maintain a good overview of pupils while they are working so that they know when they are ready to move on.
- Teachers' verbal feedback to pupils is ongoing and effective. Feedback through marking adheres to the school's expectations, offering praise, challenge and support. Pupils say that they value this and that it helps them to improve.
- Teachers are very successful in developing good, supportive relationships with pupils so that pupils try hard to meet their expectations. Where needed, teachers have effective strategies for managing rare inappropriate behaviour.
- Teaching assistants generally make a good contribution to teaching and learning. For the most part they are well briefed by teachers and diligently undertake the work they are given. They too engender friendly and supportive relationships with pupils.

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 very happy to be a member of the school's community, with one stating 'We are one big family'. Pupils wear their smart uniforms with pride and present their work well.
- Although improvements are needed to some parts of the fabric of the school, classrooms are bright and attractive with displays that both support and celebrate pupils' learning.
- Classrooms and corridors are alive with strong messages that promote pupils' personal development, including how to stay safe and healthy, appreciate the beauty of the natural world, artists, musicians and explorers. British values and the beliefs and customs of various cultures in the world and Britain are reflected well throughout the school.
- Pupils say that they enjoy school and were vociferous in recounting to inspectors the improvements that have occurred. Pupils appreciate the games and equipment that are available during these times.
- Pupils like and respect their teachers and appreciate their efforts in planning work that they say is 'fun and exciting'. One pupil explained, 'There's just a great bond with the teachers – we just click.' This contributes to pupils' good attitudes to learning.
- All of the pupils spoken to said that they felt safe in school. In discussions, pupils showed a solid understanding of different types of bullying and of how to stay safe, for example when using the internet or mobile telephones.
- Whether it be as a member of the chaplaincy team or eco council or during discussions about wider world issues, such as the refugee crisis, the school ensures that pupils gain a good understanding of what it means to be a member of a community, moral and social issues, and community obligations.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are very clear about how they are expected to behave in lessons, when moving around the school and at playtimes. They rise well to the school's high standards.
- Pupils are polite to visitors, greeting them respectfully, standing aside and opening doors. On visits out of school, pupils' behaviour has also drawn very positive comment from members of the public.
- In lessons, most pupils listen carefully to their teachers and take a full part in the activities they are given. They persevere with tasks, readily work together and offer help to each other when needed. When their classmates are explaining or presenting work they listen respectfully and give good encouragement to those who are less confident.

- At playtimes pupils play well together. Older pupils look out for younger ones and the chaplaincy team keeps a good overview and helps sort out any minor disagreements. Pupils' good behaviour continues in the dining hall where they sit in 'family groups' and chat sociably.
- In discussions with inspectors, most pupils felt that behaviour was good. They said that there is very little bullying and explained that while there are incidences of racist and homophobic language everyone knows that this type of behaviour is wrong and not tolerated by the school.
- All of the parents who responded to the online questionnaire and who spoke to inspectors during the inspection agreed that behaviour was good.
- Attendance is broadly average. Although rates of persistent absence last year were above the national average for some pupils, this was mostly due to illness. The need for good attendance is high on the school's agenda and this message is regularly communicated to pupils and their parents. Holidays in term time are not sanctioned.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- While outcomes have improved since the previous inspection, including in mathematics, pupils' achievement in this subject continues to lag behind that in reading and writing.
- At the end of Year 2 in 2015, pupils' attainment in mathematics was better than in 2014. However, it remained significantly below average. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils was lower than that of other pupils nationally. The gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally narrowed across subjects, but less so in mathematics than in reading and writing.
- The attainment of Year 6 pupils in 2015 in mathematics was significantly below average. However, their progress from the end of key stage 1 reflected a more positive picture, especially for disadvantaged pupils. Nevertheless, while most pupils made the expected progress, from low starting points, few did better than this. Consequently, there was little shift in attainment from the previous year.
- The 2015 mathematics performance data, particularly for Year 6, reflects historic weaknesses in provision noted in previous inspection reports. The current situation in mathematics is more positive because of the improvements in teaching. Work in pupils' books shows an improving picture of attainment and progress across the school. However, more work is needed to ensure good achievement.
- The picture in reading and writing, including pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling, was generally much more positive in the 2015 end of key stage tests and assessments. Current pupils' work shows that the improvements have been sustained or improved upon. Across the school, pupils' writing reflects good development of skills and increasing knowledge and competence in writing for different purposes.
- The 2015 Year 6 reading tests reflected significantly better achievement than in 2014. Standards were broadly average and many pupils made good progress; almost all of the disadvantaged pupils made the expected progress.
- Year 6 pupils' attainment in grammar, punctuation and spelling improved significantly in 2015 and was slightly above the national average. No notable gaps were evident between disadvantaged pupils and pupils nationally or non-disadvantaged pupils in the school.
- Considerably more Year 1 pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, attained the expected standard in the phonics screening check. Of the Year 2 pupils who did not attain the Year 1 standard in 2014, 100% did so when rechecked in 2015.
- The end of Year 2 reading and writing assessments showed significant improvement, bringing attainment in line with the national average. Given pupils' starting points, this reflected particularly good progress. Current pupils in key stage 1 are achieving well in reading and writing and are now much better prepared for work in key stage 2.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disability make mostly good progress in relation to their prior attainment and capabilities.
- School leaders are very aware of the need to ensure that the most-able pupils reach their potential and have identified this as one of the school's priorities. However, while few pupils attained the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics, the proportions of pupils moving closer to the higher levels increased in all subjects, though to a lesser extent in mathematics. Analysis of this group of pupils' work shows that they are generally achieving better than they have in the past, but this is more variable across year groups in mathematics.

- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well. By the time they leave the school, many of these pupils have made good progress. In the past two years this group of pupils have attained more highly in reading, writing and mathematics than pupils whose first language is English.
- In discussion, pupils expressed their enjoyment of a wide range of subjects. Literacy, mathematics, science, physical education, art, music and history were all mentioned as 'favourites'. Quality work in pupils' books and on display around the school shows that the school provides pupils with good opportunities to achieve well in these subjects.

Early years provision

is good

- The skills of a large proportion of children entering Nursery are below those typical for their age. Good teaching ensures that children receive a good start to their education. As a result, children achieve well in relation to their starting points and are well prepared for work in Year 1.
- Children's good progress was evident in the 2015 assessments made at the end of Reception. The proportion of children attaining a good level of development increased significantly from the previous year and was above the national average. The vast majority of disadvantaged children attained this level and made good progress in all areas, including reading, writing and mathematics.
- Although this year's Reception children might not attain as highly, this is due to the range of starting points within the year group rather than limitations in the provision.
- Within this positive picture, and while the children make mostly good progress in mathematics, there is scope to raise the profile of this area of learning so that it matches that of reading and writing.
- Right from the start, children are taught about letter sounds in a fun way that they really enjoy. As a result, the majority of current Nursery children can accurately identify initial sounds, for example of objects in a game of pass the parcel, and pick out rhyming sounds in songs and stories.
- A love of books and reading is continually developed and all around there are opportunities for the children to read and write. For example, Nursery children made little books about the creatures they found in the outdoor garden and bug hotel and Reception children recorded facts about dinosaurs and the ingredients they needed for vegetable soup.
- Reception children achieve a good level of accuracy in using their phonics skills to read and write. Simple words and phrases at the beginning of the year develop into more complex sentences as the year progresses, as seen in the children's accounts of their visit to Jodrell Bank.
- From the outset, children's enthusiasm for learning is fully capitalised upon. Teaching staff involve themselves expertly in children's play, exploiting the learning potential of this very well. Good questioning and the staff's interactions with the children extend children's knowledge and language skills.
- The additional pupil premium funding has been used very effectively to support children's language development and social skills. Children with special educational needs or disability are supported very well.
- The indoor and outdoor environment provides many exciting activities and resources that capture children's interest and develop their creativity and innate curiosity to explore and investigate. As a result, the children sustain their concentration in activities.
- Reception children relished working like scientists and showed wonder at how they could make a dough volcano erupt by adding vinegar to baking soda. They understood the need to wear goggles for safety and learned how to use scientific equipment properly. Others worked independently to devise their own puppet show, organising roles and resources before inviting their teacher to watch their performance.
- Leadership of the early years is strong, with very effective use made of assessment information to determine the next steps for children's learning.
- From the outset, all staff continuously foster the children's good behaviour and personal development. Good manners are expected and particularly well promoted at snack time. The children learn to take turns, say please and thank you and understand about healthy foods. They play well together with few squabbles, and grow considerably in confidence.
- There are good relationships with parents who are keen to support their children's learning. Parents appreciate the insight into their children's experiences and progress provided by the children's learning journals. Parents appreciate the opportunity to contribute to these and the information they are given to support their children's reading.

School details

Unique reference number	105965
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	102207

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paula Howe
Headteacher	Anthony Schilling
Telephone number	0161 8721062
Website	www.stjosephsordsall.co.uk
Email address	stjosephsordsall.rcprimaryschool@salford.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 December 2013

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school
- Just over half the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is high. Just under a third of the pupils speak English as an additional language, but none are at an early stage of learning to speak English.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support is high (the pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and who are in the care of the local authority).
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is high. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above average.
- Children attend the school's Nursery full time and the vast majority transfer to the school's Reception class where they also attend full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- A new headteacher was appointed after the school's last inspection. The headteacher took up his position at the start of the summer term 2014. At the same time, a deputy headteacher role was created in place of the previous two assistant headteacher roles and filled by an existing member of staff. The last inspection's recommendation for a review of governance occurred but most of the current governors began their term of office after this review. The governing body reconstituted on 1 September 2015.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in each class. They checked pupils' work, listened to them read and reviewed the school's assessment information about their attainment and progress.
- A joint lesson observation was undertaken with the headteacher.
- Inspectors held two formal discussions with pupils and spoke to others informally in lessons and at playtime and lunchtime.
- A range of documentation was reviewed, including the school's evaluation of its work, safeguarding information, records of pupils' behaviour and attendance, the school's improvement plan and information about teachers' performance.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders and representatives from the local authority and the Roman Catholic diocese of Salford.
- Separate discussions were held with three governors. One of these was with the chair of governors, by telephone, because she was on holiday at the time of the inspection.
- Twelve responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) were considered, including written comments from five parents. Inspectors also spoke to parents as they brought their children to school.
- Inspectors considered six responses to the online pupil questionnaire and 14 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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