

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Vaagen Road, Canvey Island, Essex SS8 9DP

Inspection dates	10–11 May 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

- Since the previous inspection, school leaders have improved teaching and learning and raised standards with particularly rapid improvement in the current academic year. As a result of good teaching, pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Under the direction of the new headteacher, supported by a strong senior team and an effective governing body, the school continues to improve.
- Early years provision is good. It is well led and children now make faster progress than previously.
- Pupils feel safe and are well-cared-for within a school community that is attentive to their social, moral, cultural and spiritual needs.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress in the school. At key stage 1, they often perform better than other pupils. At key stage 2, any gaps are closing quickly.
- Pupils like their school and are proud of it. They work hard and behave well.
- Pupils' personal development is fostered well by a wide range of opportunities in and out of lessons. Through cooperating in extra sporting, social and church activities, pupils learn to practice respect and tolerance for others.
- Parents have confidence in the school and believe it to be improving.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics.
- Middle leaders are not yet fully involved in monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility.
- Pupils do not always accurately use grammar and punctuation in their extended writing.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards of teaching still further by ensuring that:
 - teachers improve pupils' command of punctuation and grammar in their extended and imaginative writing
 - pupils develop deeper problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics.

- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - expanding the role of middle leaders in monitoring the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- During the current academic year, the pace of improvement in the school has been particularly rapid. All members of the senior leadership team have taken up their post since the last inspection, three much more recently – including the headteacher. In a short time, school leaders have established a clear vision for improvement, raised expectations among members of staff and communicated this to parents. As a result, standards have risen rapidly. School leaders have addressed the areas for improvement highlighted during the last inspection. Gaps previously identified in the school’s planning have quickly been remedied. School leaders have a clear understanding of school priorities because they assess pupils’ performance closely and use that information to inform and shape their actions.
- The recently appointed special educational needs coordinator has further developed established practice. This has ensured that support for pupils who have special educational needs and disability is well-organised and is based on a detailed analysis of their needs. As a result, this group of pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Teachers are well supported in developing their knowledge and skills. Increasingly, the best practice is shared across the school with a strong component of colleagues learning from each other. Teachers confirmed that any training needed to help them improve their teaching, identified through performance management, was readily available. Full use is made of the support offered by the local authority and the partnerships the school maintains with other local schools and across the diocese.
- Middle leaders in the school, some of whom are relatively new to their responsibilities, are enthusiasts for their subjects. They play an important role in disseminating knowledge of their specialist area to the whole staff group and in leading training. However, their role does not include monitoring the quality of teaching and pupils’ progress in their subject areas, lessening their impact in raising standards.
- Good use is made of the government’s additional funding for the support of disadvantaged pupils. Detection of any underperformance is increasingly made early with interventions promptly applied to ensure that pupils quickly make up for any ground lost.
- The physical education and sports premium is used effectively. External coaches offer pupils specialist instruction which also helps to develop the skills of class teachers.
- The school’s curriculum is broad and balanced with due prominence being given to developing essential skills in English and mathematics. The academic subjects are complemented by a pastoral programme that draws on the school’s faith status to good effect. The close attention to the care of pupils gives them the security to do well in their studies. The school’s expansive site with ample play space and an on-site swimming pool are both used well to support a broad range of additional activities, including a gardening club.
- Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well within a school that has thought deeply about how best to deliver its faith and wider community roles. Modern British values of tolerance and democracy are embedded across the curriculum and further reinforced by the integration of key messages about moral behaviour into assemblies and extra-curricular activities.
- Parents confirm that they receive good-quality, regular information about the progress being made by their children. They are aware of the school’s priorities and attest to improvement since the last inspection. They confirm that the school works hard to develop a close relationship with families and they believe that their children are kept safe and secure in school.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Following the last inspection, governors were required to commission an external review in order to improve their effectiveness. Recommendations were fully implemented with the support of decisive and effective action by the local authority which established an improvement board to complement the work of the governing body and to provide advice to it. The board has assisted governors in raising their understanding of school performance measures and has helped them further to develop skills in holding school leaders more rigorously to account. Governor minutes show an improved level of pertinent questioning of school leaders based on a secure grasp of key performance indicators. Individual governors now have clearer responsibilities for individual areas in the school and report back to the full body in a way that increases overall understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Consequently, the governing body has played a significant role in helping school leaders to improve pupils’ outcomes.
 - Appropriate checks are made to ensure that additional government funding achieves the outcomes targeted in school planning. A close overview is maintained of pupil premium and school sports funding

to ensure value for money.

- The governing body has appointed new post-holders to every role in the senior leadership team over the past 18 months. They showed care and diligence in securing a skilled and aspirational team.
- Governors receive good-quality information from the headteacher to allow them to check that teachers' performance is managed well and that any advances in salary are closely linked to the progress made by pupils. They exercise the same diligence with regard to safeguarding.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders exercise due diligence in ensuring that policy and practice is maintained at a good level. Policies take account of recent changes announced by the Secretary of State, including the duty with regard to 'Prevent'. Care is taken to ensure a good level of appreciation of safeguarding responsibilities across the whole staff group.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers ensure that the classroom atmosphere is one always conducive to learning. Teachers expect good relationships to be the norm and a notable feature was the extent to which pupils cooperate well with each other in their work. Also, pupils felt sufficiently secure to be unafraid of 'risking' an uncertain answer and were happy to learn from any mistake made.
- Classrooms are bright and stimulating and reinforce key aspects of learning. They each feature an area dedicated to reading where displays, availability of books and the overall ambience encourage and foster a love of reading.
- Teachers' subject knowledge was typically secure and their explanations clear. New learning builds logically on pupils' prior knowledge and skills.
- Phonics (the link between sound and letters) is taught well. Children in the Reception year and pupils from Years 1 and 2 are accurately assessed and organised into small groups that allows close attention to be paid to individual learning. Pupils become confident readers because they have the tools to tackle new and unfamiliar words. In the past, progress in reading had not been sufficiently rapid. As a consequence, staff have paid close attention to its development and it is now firmly established across the curriculum and pupils read widely for a broad range of purposes.
- Teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' learning. They are included effectively in the planning for lessons and their interventions are well-judged to advance learning. In supporting those pupils requiring additional help they show a good level of understanding of each individual's specific difficulties and are able to implement strategies to accelerate progress.
- School leaders have raised the standard of assessment of pupils' work rapidly in a short time. Teachers have an accurate view of the progress being made by each pupil and adapt tasks in the light of their rate of progress. This was true of teaching in both English and mathematics, although in the latter pupils did not consistently have sufficient opportunities to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills. Writing skills are developed across the curriculum with opportunities routinely offered for extended writing in a range of subjects.
- Teaching in religious education included valuable time for reflection on moral themes and linked effectively to the further exploration of the same topics in assemblies and other settings.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Adults in the school model respect as a key quality and pupils emulate this. Pupils are encouraged to help and support each other and this is evident both in social times and in lessons.
- Pupils take pride in their work. They are happy to write at length and to take trouble over its presentation.
- Pupils relish the opportunities for taking on responsibilities in school. Year 6 pupils are very committed in their role as play leaders and take good care of the youngest members of the school at breaktimes. Those pupils elected to the school council by their peers consider it an honour and are very clear about their duty to play a part in improving the school. When interviewed, one of the priorities they described was to make sure that pupils got along well with each other. They also identified an impressive range of charities for which they had raised funds, as they had also done for their linked school in Malawi. Cake sales had been

organised and pupils spoke with keen anticipation of an up-coming fun run.

- Appropriate to their ages, pupils have a grasp of the different forms bullying might take, although they have very little direct experience of it. Pupils have absolute trust in the adults in school, would approach them instantly if any problems occurred and have complete confidence that they would be resolved quickly. Pupils appreciate the value of the internet as a learning tool but are given an understanding of the care they should take in using it.
- Pupils feel safe in school, something confirmed by their parents in surveys and informal discussion.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In the questionnaires completed and in discussions held, members of staff, parents and pupils described good behaviour as typical and a response to the high expectations in school. Incidents of any kind are rare and pupils were unanimous in saying that adults were approachable and could always be relied on to address any problems.
- Lunchtimes and other social times are congenial and orderly. Breaktime play was boisterous but friendly with due care for others. Pupils are polite to visitors and keen to talk about their school. The etiquette of holding doors open for each other is well established even among the youngest pupils and a token of pupils responding to high expectations with regard to courtesy in school.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They arrive at lessons eager to start and keen to learn. Any occasional lapse in attentiveness is in response to a lack of certainty in a task or a less stimulating part of a lesson and is quickly resolved by teachers.
- Attendance is improving and is approaching the national average. School leaders take vigorous action in respect of any persistent absence, liaising with other agencies to make a concerted effort to ensure improvement.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Typically, pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Older pupils are prepared well for their transition to the senior school, part of which is ensuring that they develop greater independence. Year 6 pupils very much enjoyed being in St Joseph's but were also looking forward to moving on to their secondary school, and felt they were ready to do so.
- In 2014, Year 6 pupils did better than the national average in mathematics, reading and writing. This had been an established pattern over previous years. However, results in 2015 dipped: pupils performed below the national average in mathematics and reading. In reading, pupils did not make enough progress from their starting points. The performance of boys was a particular concern. Inspectors paid close attention to school records and the work of pupils currently on roll. Standards are now higher and the upward trend of pupil progress has been restored. Year 6 pupils have made particularly rapid progress from a below average position at the end of Year 5, and are at least in line with age-related expectations in all subjects.
- In 2015, key stage 1 pupils were broadly in line with national expectations in writing, below in mathematics and above in reading. Assessment of current work shows that standards are now higher and rising at a good pace.
- Those pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress. Numbers are too few to draw overall reliable conclusions. However, inspectors examined the progress made by individuals and confirmed that effective, well-targeted and timely support is ensuring that pupils make good progress.
- The small number of disadvantaged pupils make good progress. In the 2015 key stage 1 tests, they achieved as well as the national average for other pupils in reading, better than the national average in writing and as well as other pupils nationally in mathematics. On all these measures, disadvantaged pupils performed better than their classmates in the school. Teachers are alert to the reasons for any underperformance and are quick to intervene to provide necessary additional support so that this is rectified. As a result, gaps are narrowing rapidly.
- Those pupils from minority ethnic groups and pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in common with other pupils.
- National tests in 2015 indicated that pupils had not advanced sufficiently quickly in their reading. In 2015, the proportion of girls attaining the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check matched the national average but that for boys did not. Improved attention to the teaching of phonics has raised standards. Pupils with different degrees of competence in reading, across the school, made ready use of the skills they had

learned in order to tackle more difficult or unfamiliar words.

- Pupils write at length and inspectors saw examples of extended, imaginative writing across the curriculum; for example, in religious education and in the journals pupils maintain as well as in English. However, the good progress pupils made in mastering more complex grammar and punctuation in specific exercises was not matched by consistent use of these skills when drafting extended pieces and this has been a limiting factor in reaching the highest standards.
- Fundamental knowledge and skills in mathematics builds steadily. Pupils move to more advanced, efficient methods of calculation early and develop security in them at a good rate.
- The most-able pupils typically make good progress. School leaders have explicitly increased the level of challenge offered and the number of pupils working at higher levels has increased. This was particularly evident in Year 6 where the redrafting of imaginative written work to improve dramatic impact has improved markedly during the course of the year.

Early years provision

is good

- The early years provision is well-led and the early years leader has a good understanding of further development plans.
- In 2015, the proportion of children who attained a good level of development was broadly in line with the national average. School leaders have been vigorous in tackling underachievement and current standards are higher. By the end of the Reception year, children are well prepared to begin Year 1, having made a vigorous start to acquiring first skills in literacy and numeracy.
- The teacher organises a broad range of stimulating activities. They are skilfully linked so that, for example, a single story shared led to many associated activities including construction, counting and writing. Although a high degree of freedom is available to children in choosing what they do, learning opportunities are made enticing so that few children miss the opportunity quickly to join in. The balance between giving children the opportunity to choose activities and guiding them is carefully judged.
- Learning activities are thoroughly integrated into the day. For example, the boots for outside play and learning are labelled with names and numbers; children independently read the names of classmates as well as their own. In building a farm, children were prompted to name the geometrical shapes they would need in construction and wrote lists, making plausible attempts at word formation, to plan their activity. There were numerous situations in which children were able to practise their writing and teaching assistants were skilful in supporting them in doing so. Children were able to talk confidently about the activity in which they were involved.
- The additional government funding for disadvantaged children is used efficiently to ensure that progress for those below expectations accelerates at a good pace.
- Children's personal and social development is fostered by well-established routines, whereby children are expected to take turns, tidy away carefully and be helpful to each other. Children behave well, even the youngest showing that they already appreciate what is expected of them. Children cooperate well in activities: they share equipment readily and talk animatedly about what they are doing. The adults around them are attentive to this and reinforce their learning by making suggestions or observations to extend the game.
- Children's progress is monitored very carefully and recorded in their 'learning journeys'. Planning for each child's next steps is thorough. Parents are kept fully abreast of how well their children are progressing and are helped to reinforce learning at home. Liaison with other agencies is thorough.
- Parents confirmed that the introduction to the Reception class is carefully planned and that nervous starters are well looked after and quickly gain in confidence.
- Standards of safeguarding are maintained to the same good standards as they are in the rest of the school. Members of staff are well-trained and able to respond to the needs of pupils who are at an early stage of communication skills so that any indications of concern are quickly detected.

School details

Unique reference number	115152
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10011823

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	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	D O'Halloran
Headteacher	Jacqueline Walker
Telephone number	01268 683903
Website	www.st-josephsrc.essex.sch.uk
Email address	admin@st-josephsrc.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 June 2014

Information about this school

- St Joseph's is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The school has no Nursery class.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, supported by the pupil premium, is below average. This is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average; and the proportion of pupils believed to speak English as an additional language is below average.
- 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 headteacher took up her post in January 2016. All senior leaders have been appointed since the previous inspection of the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school, with almost all observations being undertaken jointly with senior leaders. They also looked at pupils' work in books.
- Inspectors took account of the 23 responses made to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and to written submissions made as part of that response. Two pupils completed Ofsted's online survey. The 10 responses by members of staff to the Ofsted questionnaire were also scrutinised. In addition, inspectors considered a survey of parental opinion which school leaders had undertaken.
- In addition to informal conversations, inspectors met with three groups of pupils and with representatives from the school council.
- Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders.
- A meeting was held with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and with a representative from the local authority. A telephone discussion was held with the diocesan director of education and with its schools' adviser.
- Inspectors examined school records covering key aspects of the work of the school. These included those recording pupils' progress, minutes of governors' meetings, attendance and logs relating to pupils' behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Paul Copping, lead Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Richard Hopkins

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2016

