

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Green Lane, Rawmarsh, South Yorkshire S62 6JY

Inspection dates

6–7 July 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
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

- Leaders have not done enough to ensure that teaching is challenging enough for all pupils to make good progress, including the most able and disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, the progress that pupils make is faster in some classes and slower in others.
- Improvement plans are not always sharply focused on making sure that pupils' progress improves. As a result, the checks made on teaching and learning are not effective enough in improving the quality of teaching and ironing out inconsistencies.
- Subject leadership has not improved enough since the time of the previous inspection. Subject leadership in science, history and geography, for example, is at a very early stage of development.
- Pupils, especially the most able, are not challenged enough to do harder thinking. This is particularly the case in mathematics.
- The curriculum does not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of other subjects beyond English and mathematics.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are too variable. There are times when pupils are too noisy and do not concentrate well enough. This can become a distraction for pupils who wish to get on with their work.
- The school's website does not fully meet the government's statutory requirements. Some policies have not been reviewed or updated, and there is insufficient information on the curriculum.

The school has the following strengths

- Since the previous inspection, standards have improved in early years, phonics (the sounds letters represent) and attendance.
- The headteacher has raised expectations and has introduced a set of non-negotiables for both staff and pupils. This has helped to improve teaching.
- The curriculum provides pupils with good opportunities to develop their moral and social skills, and to understand the importance of ideas such as tolerance, respect and democracy.
- Pupils and staff all agree that the school provides a safe learning environment and children enjoy coming to school. It is a caring and inclusive school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that all pupils, especially the most able and disadvantaged pupils, make consistently good progress by:
 - teachers making better use of what they know about pupils to ensure that learning is sufficiently challenging
 - making sure that teachers check more carefully whether pupils are fully clear on what they have to do
 - teachers using additional adults more effectively in some classrooms to stretch and challenge the most able
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to write at length in other subjects
 - ensuring that marking and feedback have a greater impact on pupils' progress across the wider curriculum
 - further improving communication with parents
 - making sure that all teachers tackle low-level disruption more quickly and effectively.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by making sure that:
 - middle leaders have a greater positive impact on improving the quality of teaching and pupil outcomes in their subject areas
 - the curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced so that pupils can develop their understanding of other subjects including science, history and geography, as well as deepening their understanding of other faiths and cultures
 - improvement plans and performance management targets are sharply focused on the impact that actions are to have on pupil outcomes
 - actions taken to close the gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils are evaluated carefully, and that lessons are learned to ensure that gaps narrow further, especially at key stage 2
 - a critical mass of governors develop the confidence and ability to challenge school leaders effectively at a strategic level
 - punctuality improves, and the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is more carefully checked and improved
 - during multi-agency review meetings, school leaders contribute to evaluating the impact that actions are having on vulnerable pupils and their families
 - school policies are reviewed in a timely manner and the school website complies fully with the government's statutory requirements.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Despite improvements since the previous inspection, leadership and management continue to require improvement. Teaching is not good enough, over time, to ensure that pupils in all year groups make consistently good progress and reach their potential. Leaders and governors acknowledge that the journey to become a good school is a much longer one than first thought.
- Middle leadership is mixed. It is not good enough to make sure that teaching is consistently good. Leaders are not thorough enough in checking whether teaching is improving quickly and is having the desired impact. This means that the good practice that does exist in classrooms is not shared or implemented well enough by other teachers. Middle leadership is less developed in science, geography and history, and this means the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make vary from classroom to classroom.
- Improvement plans are not as useful a tool for school improvement as they could be. Plans do not show clearly enough the intended impact that actions are going to have on improving pupils' progress and closing gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils. This makes it difficult for governors to check whether improvements are happening swiftly enough.
- The thematic curriculum does not always provide a broad or balanced curriculum experience for pupils. Subjects including science, geography and history are not well developed in some year groups. As a result, pupils have a weaker understanding in these areas. Elsewhere, this approach is having more success and teachers are more effective in using this thematic approach to help pupils to gain a broader and more balanced understanding of the world in which they live.
- The headteacher has an honest and accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She has introduced clear, 'non-negotiable' standards for both teachers and pupils to follow, and this approach is starting to bear fruit. Improvements can be seen in children's progress in the early years, improving outcomes at key stage 1, better pupil presentation and handwriting, and improved attendance.
- Pupil premium funding has a more positive impact in early years and key stage 1 than in key stage 2. Plans for how additional funding is spent are not clear enough. Leaders are not precise enough in detailing what the intended benefits will be for pupils, including those disadvantaged children in key stage 2, where the attainment gaps are widest. Consequently, leaders and governors do not have a clear view of which actions have had the greatest impact and which actions need either fixing or stopping as they are less successful in closing gaps.
- The primary sports funding has been used effectively to improve participation rates in sports and increase pupils' enjoyment of these activities. However, as with other plans in school, they are not clear enough in what the intended impact and improvements will be and how leaders and governors will know whether they have had a positive enough impact.
- Performance management is having some impact on improving teaching and is linked to salary progress, but there is room for improvement. Teachers' targets can be too general and imprecise. This makes it difficult to know how well teachers are doing and to hold them accountable for the progress that pupils are making. Targets are not always linked well enough to whole-school priorities or to ensuring that pupils make good progress. Newly and recently qualified teachers feel well supported and are making steady progress in developing their teaching and assessment of pupils. The headteacher is an effective 'gate keeper' in making sure that professional development is focused on school priorities and improving leadership.
- The curriculum is more effective in developing pupils' moral and social education, but less so in their spiritual and cultural awareness. Pupils' depth of understanding of different faiths and beliefs is underdeveloped. Examples around school show pupils celebrating world poetry day, and developing an appreciation of art through their studies of Picasso and portrait painting when studying Shakespeare. There are a range of extra-curricular activities including various sports, sewing and film clubs. However, participation rates remain low.
- Pupils have a good understanding of tolerance, respect and what democracy means. Numerous sporting opportunities, including rounders, hockey and athletics, are helping pupils to develop a good understanding of the importance of teamwork, cooperation, equality and friendship. Pupils also have a good understanding of democracy through their election process for the school council. They value the opportunity to vote and 'have a say'. The school council representatives have also demonstrated to pupils that they are listened to by senior leaders and governors. For example, the school council has helped to

introduce bike sheds and a trim trail in school.

- The school values the external support provided by both the local authority and the diocese. The school has particularly valued the support, brokered by the local authority, from a good school. This has helped leaders to develop new ways of working, back in school. However, over time, external support has not been good enough. The local authority, in particular, has not been effective enough in checking whether its work is having enough of an impact, and has not pointed out weaknesses in school improvement planning or performance management.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance is improving. The chair of governors is effective in showing other governors how to challenge school leaders. Questions are relevant and well directed. They help other governors to focus effectively on the progress that pupils are making, as well as keeping a careful watch on the management of the school budget.
 - However, governance is a work in progress, as currently not enough governors ask such questions of the school. Governors are developing their understanding and confidence in understanding pupil assessment information. However, in recent meetings, governors have focused too much on preparing 'responses' for their next inspection, rather than fully focusing on their strategic role in making sure that the school improves.
 - Governors are growing in confidence and ability. The 'getting to good' working party is providing a smaller group of governors with a detailed and regular insight into the progress that the school is making.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and meet statutory requirements. The single central register is updated regularly and suitable checks are made, including risk assessments of volunteers working with children. Staff have benefited from recent training, including spotting potential signs of radicalisation and extremism, general safeguarding updates and first aid training. Pupils and staff confirm that children are safe and well cared for. Effective child protection plans are in place for vulnerable pupils and are updated regularly. The school works well with other agencies and with parents. Child protection reviews include the views from the children themselves, when appropriate. However, it is not clear enough whether agreed actions from previous multi-agency meetings have been completed and whether they have made enough of an impact on the child and their family.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies both across the school and within classrooms, depending on what is being taught. Teaching is not effective enough in helping pupils, including the most able and disadvantaged pupils, to make the progress that they are capable of. As a result, teaching over time is not sufficiently challenging. For example, in mathematics lessons there are limited opportunities for the most able pupils to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- Teachers are not consistently effective in checking the quality of the work that pupils are producing. As a result, there are times when pupils find the work too easy and so are allowed to 'coast', while others are slow to start their work and valuable time is lost.
- Marking and feedback tend to be more consistent and effective in English and mathematics than in other subjects. Teachers do provide pupils with feedback in line with the school marking and assessment policy. However, this feedback does not impact enough on pupil progress, especially for the most able pupils. Feedback tends to focus on literacy matters and little subject-specific feedback is provided in helping pupils to improve their scientific, geographical or historical knowledge and understanding, for example.
- Questioning is variable. Sometimes teachers assume that pupils understand what they have been told and do not do enough digging to check that this is the case. As a result, pupils can be slow to start work as they are not clear what exactly they have to do. At other times, questioning is far more effective and teachers manage pupil discussions well. This helps teachers to identify pupil misconceptions quickly. For example, in one class the teacher asked pupils, 'Why do I like this line of the poem more than this one?' and this enabled a wide range of pupils to discuss their ideas in detail with the teacher and other pupils.
- Additional adults are used particularly well with less able pupils. These adults expect pupils to think for themselves, and so provide helpful guidance and advice but do not simply spoon feed pupils with answers. However, it is not always clear how teachers direct additional adults to stretch and challenge the most able pupils, particularly in lessons beyond English and mathematics.
- Pupils enjoy reading and read with confidence, sounding out unfamiliar words well. However, there are

times when books are not matched well enough to pupils' ability, especially that of the most able. As a result, they struggle to fully understand what they are reading. Pupils have purposeful and meaningful opportunities to write at length in some year groups and in some other subjects other than English. However, this is 'hit and miss', and often depends on the teacher's confidence and knowledge of the subject.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. This is a caring and inclusive school. One Year 6 pupil said that school was 'a place to come and learn and have fun with your friends'. Leaders have rightly identified the importance of mental health and well-being in both their pupils and staff, and, as a result, have started to take early but effective first steps in improving this.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. Older pupils, in particular, were very articulate in explaining how school had helped them to keep safe when crossing busy roads, the potential dangers of social media and how to make friends after an argument. Effective actions have also been taken to train some Year 5 pupils to be 'buddies' to younger children. This further reassures pupils that there is someone they can go to if they feel unsafe. Pupils benefit from external visitors coming to school, including Rotherham United FC. This is helping them understand the importance of physical activity, and eating a balanced and healthy diet.
- Attendance has a high profile across the school and, as a result, attendance rates are improving. Leaders are quick to contact parents when a pupil is absent from school. Leaders have also been proactive in altering term times to try to avoid pupils being absent due to holidays. Pupils value the rewards that are on offer for good attendance and look forward to using their 'attendance points' to buy things in the 'attendance shop'.
- Governors have also successfully raised the profile of good attendance through their 'attendance panels', where they meet to discuss attendance issues with parents. The school works effectively with external agencies, including the educational welfare officer, to ensure that individual pupils' attendance improves. Leaders check the attendance rates of groups of pupils regularly and effectively. Their attendance is improving. However, the checks on the attendance rates of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not as regular.

Behaviour

- Pupils' attitudes to learning require improvement. Despite displays around school emphasising the importance of raised expectations, perseverance and resilience, further work is needed in helping pupils to develop the habits of effective learners. In some classes, low-level disruption gets in the way of learning. There are times when pupils are too noisy, and spend too much time chatting and fiddling with pens, pencils and rulers rather than using them to get on with work. This behaviour makes it hard for others to concentrate and learn. Teachers do not consistently tackle this quickly enough and progress slows.
- The behaviour of pupils in and around school is stronger. Pupils are polite and courteous, and greet visitors with a 'hello' and 'good morning'. They play together well at break and lunchtimes. Punctuality at school varies and is an area that requires improvement.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is and the different types of bullying, including name-calling and racist bullying. Bullying logs, along with pupil discussions, show that cases of bullying are infrequent and instances of repeat bullying are few and far between. Pupils have confidence that bullying is dealt with well by teachers. Pupils are not afraid to raise concerns with an adult.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because, despite standards improving in the early years, in the Year 1 phonics screening check (on the sounds that letters represent) and key stage 1 not enough pupils are making consistently good progress. Over time, the proportion of pupils making good progress by the end of key stage 2 is variable.

- Disadvantaged pupils do not make good enough progress compared to other pupils, especially by the end of key stage 2. Attainment gaps have closed in reading and writing, but remain wider in mathematics. Consequently, not enough pupils are ready for the next stage of their learning journey.
- 2016 outcomes show that there are signs of improvement. Writing and mathematics outcomes have improved at key stage 2, especially in Years 5 and 6. Reading is a relative weakness by the end of key stage 2. The most able pupils do not make good enough progress over time in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because teaching is not demanding enough of some of these pupils, over time.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities also requires improvement. These pupils are making better progress in mathematics at key stage 2 than they are at key stage 1.
- Current assessment information also shows a variable picture in the progress made by boys and girls. Girls are generally making better and more sustained progress than boys across the school. Pupil progress is not checked well enough in other subjects, including science, geography and history.
- In the early years and key stage 1, pupils are making better and more sustained progress over time. However, not enough children leaving Reception without a good level of development catch up to be ready for the demands of learning at key stage 1. Over the last three years, outcomes in the Year 1 screening check in phonics have improved and are above the national average.
- 'Showcase' events provide parents with good opportunities to see and celebrate the work that their children are doing in school. They are proving popular and are improving links with parents. However, inspectors agree with the views expressed by some parents, that the quality of communication between home and school could be further improved, particularly in relation to how well their children are progressing.

Early years provision

is good

- Children start the early years with skills that are below those typically expected for their age. As a result of strong and proactive leadership, outcomes are improving, year on year, and children make good progress from their starting points.
- Current assessment information, coupled with inspection evidence, shows that boys' progress is improving. This is because leaders have been quick to spot the causes and tackle them well. There is now a more engaging and interesting curriculum which enables boys as well as girls to achieve well. Through the theme of superheroes, for example, boys in particular have made particularly strong progress. There are many opportunities, both in and outside of the classroom, to develop children's mark making, reading and number skills. Teachers and other adults are very effective in finding and exploiting opportunities for children to practise and develop these skills.
- Teachers and other adults are also very effective in making the most of their interactions with children. For example, one teacher seized upon the opportunity to develop boys' understanding of cooperation, collaboration and problem solving while they were building a den outside. Other adults also use observations of what children say and do to plan effectively for future learning. These are well captured in the children's learning journals.
- Leaders have worked well to create a stimulating learning environment for children. Dotted around the indoor and outdoor environment are engaging and effective opportunities for children to learn more about numbers, writing and letters. Effective and attractive spaces are used by children to read, both in the classroom and outside. Displays clearly show 'tricky words of the week', and the 'funky fingers' area allows children to develop their gross and fine motor skills in preparation for writing and mark making.
- Safeguarding checks are effective and help to contribute to children feeling safe. Sensible steps have been taken by the headteacher to support the newly qualified teacher and to ensure that leadership matters rest with the headteacher. This enables the teacher to focus on further developing and improving her teaching and assessment.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged children in early years is having mixed success. The progress of disadvantaged children fluctuates over time, and not enough attention is given to how additional funding will be used to ensure that gaps close more consistently over time.

School details

Unique reference number	106944
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	10011950

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	184
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Catherine Ratcliffe
Headteacher	Louise Pink
Telephone number	01709 710270
Website	www.rawmarshstjosephs.co.uk
Email address	sjprlpink@rgfl.org
Date of previous inspection	26–27 March 2014

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those who are eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not meet the requirements for the publication of information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a wide range of evidence during the inspection, including observations of teaching, some of which were undertaken with the headteacher. They also carried out work scrutinies in classrooms, including checking literacy, numeracy, science, and topic books and folders.
- Inspectors held meetings with school staff, including the headteacher, other senior leaders and staff in charge of aspects of the school's work. Inspectors also met with a group of newly and recently qualified teachers. They also met with two governors, a local authority officer and had a telephone conversation with the director of schools from the diocese of Hallam.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils during formal interviews, during lessons, and informally at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation related to the school's work, gathering the school's view of its performance and information concerning pupils' attainment, progress, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors scrutinised records concerning safeguarding, pupils' behaviour over time and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Inspectors analysed parental responses submitted during the inspection to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and nine staff surveys submitted to Ofsted. Eighteen parental written responses were also considered. Inspectors also spoke informally to a number of parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

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Colin Lofthouse	Ofsted Inspector

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