

Saint Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Newtown Road, Malvern, Worcestershire WR14 1PF

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	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Require 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

- Efforts by new leaders, including governors, to rectify issues found at the previous inspection have been interrupted and constrained by continuing changes in leadership and staffing. This has slowed down improvement since the last inspection.
- Leaders have not yet ensured that pupils are consistently well taught and make good progress. There are gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. As a result, pupils' achievement requires improvement.
- Some subject leaders are not effective enough in monitoring and improving provision in their areas of responsibility.
- The quality of teaching varies too much across the school. Teachers and teaching assistants do not consistently adapt their teaching well enough to challenge pupils, including the most able, to make the best progress they can.
- Pupils are too often unclear about how to improve their work because the feedback they receive from their teachers is imprecise.
- In mathematics, a small minority of teachers lack the knowledge and skill to fully develop pupils' ability to solve problems.
- The quality and accuracy of pupils' handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar are weak.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher, aided by the acting deputy and governors, is moving the school forward as stability is being restored after a difficult period of staff turbulence.
- Provision and outcomes for children in the early years are good. Teaching is effective and children make good progress.
- Leaders have refreshed pupils' interest in learning, for example through more stimulating outdoor learning activities.
- The school sustains an atmosphere of mutual respect that underpins the pupils' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Staff diligently secure pupils' welfare and keep them safe. Pupils and parents support this view.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy very supportive relationships with staff and with each other.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching, learning and assessment, by:
 - developing teachers' skills in checking how well pupils are learning and by adapting activities so that pupils of all abilities are appropriately challenged
 - making sure that all teachers follow the school's marking policy so that pupils are clear about how to improve their work
 - improving teachers' subject knowledge and ability to develop pupils' problem-solving skills in mathematics.

- Raise pupils' attainment and achievement in mathematics and writing, by:
 - ensuring that teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to organise their thinking and apply logical skills to solve problems in mathematics
 - teaching pupils more effective ways to produce legible handwriting and accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, by:
 - making sure that subject leaders have the skills needed to monitor and improve provision in their areas of responsibility
 - ensuring that agreed actions to improve teaching and pupils' outcomes are implemented equally well in all classes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, continuing changes in staffing, including at different levels of leadership, have hampered the efforts of new leaders to secure and sustain good teaching and learning.
- The new headteacher and recently appointed deputy headteacher work well as a team, and, especially during this academic year, have made changes to improve the school. However, some changes have not been implemented effectively in a few classes and changes in staffing have hampered the success of some actions. There has not been sufficient time for several more recently introduced actions to fully rectify some of the issues identified at the previous inspection.
- Some staff changes and uncertainty have continued this academic year. Some recently appointed middle leaders have the skills to fulfil their roles effectively; for example, new leadership of the early years has brought rapid improvement to the early years provision and teaching.
- Staff turnover has interrupted the development of some other middle leadership roles. Consequently, some subject leaders lack the skills to monitor and evaluate what is happening in the subjects they lead. They are not clear about the aspects needing most attention and as a result teaching and pupils' progress have not improved consistently enough. This is most evident in weaknesses in mathematics, including in pupils' achievement and in the subject knowledge and ability of a small minority of teachers to develop pupils' problem-solving skills.
- Nevertheless, the new headteacher, well supported by the governing body, has worked hard this academic year to re-establish a clear sense of direction for the school. The headteacher has accurately identified the areas requiring most improvement and has effectively restored staff morale, having established a more positive culture for learning.
- The headteacher has also gained the full support of parents, who, in their responses to the Ofsted questionnaire, overwhelmingly indicated that they would recommend the school to others. Parents also expressed their appreciation of the support they have received when they have experienced difficult family circumstances.
- The headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have introduced new systems to more accurately assess pupils' progress and check teaching and its influence on pupils' progress. Teachers are now held more to account by targets linked to school priorities and pupils' achievements. This is starting to accelerate pupils' progress. This is especially illustrated now by the strong provision and outcomes in the early years and the teaching in some other classes. These improvements show that the school's senior leaders and governors demonstrate the capacity for more sustained improvement.
- Increased attention is given to improving staff training. Moreover, there is now effective management of staff performance, which is improving the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. For example, teachers have improved the way they question pupils in lessons to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. However, improvements have not been in place long enough yet to secure consistently good teaching and learning in all classes.
- All staff diligently promote the caring atmosphere that pervades all aspects of the school and are particularly sensitive to the needs of pupils new to the school and those from differing backgrounds. Staff make sure that all pupils are protected from radicalisation and extremism.
- Leaders and staff are highly supportive of each other and the pupils they teach. Staff ensure that discrimination is not tolerated, but the variable quality of teaching in some classes weakens equality of opportunity for some pupils, including the most able. Even so, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, especially those with complex needs, are sensitively included in the full range of school activities.
- Leaders have successfully planned a curriculum that is suitably broad and balanced and covers all areas of the national curriculum. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are included across subjects. However, in mathematics there is not always enough focus on developing pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills and this slows down progress in these areas.
- The school provides a good range of extra-curricular clubs and visits. These include sport, singing and other cultural and community-based activities, such as the 'seeds of life' visit to the local church, that widen the experiences provided for pupils and enhance their personal development.
- Leaders have further enhanced the curriculum this year by providing an increased range of opportunities for pupils to learn outdoors. These include making better use of the school's extensive woodland and wildlife areas than in the recent past. Learning activities outdoors are having a positive influence on pupils' progress,

including the most able pupils, by capturing their interest and enthusing them to find things out for themselves. They are also having a positive influence on pupils' personal and social skills by teaching them how to live and work together.

- School leaders ensure that learning opportunities strongly enrich the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These include, for example, links with a school in Tanzania and involvement in the Malvern Garden Show. Teachers carefully plan assemblies, topic work and religious studies to provide time for reflection. They also emphasise and develop the pupils' understanding of values such as respect, tolerance and understanding of different faiths and cultures effectively. By these means the school sensitively promotes its Catholic ethos alongside British values and successfully prepares pupils for life in modern Britain.
- The school makes effective provision for the above-average proportion of pupils who arrive and leave within the school year. Staff assess and identify pupils' differing needs quickly, and if additional support is required it is given.
- The school has improved the way it uses additional funding for disadvantaged pupils since the previous inspection and now uses it effectively to help them learn as well as their classmates. For example, the introduction of the breakfast club has raised pupils' confidence and readiness to learn by providing a calm and inviting start to the day. The strengthened provision in the early years also means that children's needs are being met at an earlier stage.
- The primary physical education and sports fund is used well to increase opportunities for pupils to engage in a wide range of sports. It is also used productively to provide specialist coaching to develop teachers' expertise and pupils' skills and fitness. For example, an increased number of younger pupils in key stage 1 are participating and extending their coordination and balancing skills during the 'balance ability' club.
- Instability in staffing and leadership at the school has reduced the impact of support provided by the local authority. Even so, it has provided good support for governors and continued advice and training for established staff that has helped to strengthen the school's ability to improve.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have improved the way they check the work of the school and hold leaders to account since the previous inspection. Governors meet their statutory obligations and, for example, make sure that additional government funds are used well to quicken the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
 - Although some of their actions to rectify weaker aspects of the school's work have been hampered by continued instability in staffing, governors are now equipped effectively to drive improvement more strongly. This is because, in close consultation with the local authority, they have taken determined strategic action this academic year to strengthen senior leadership.
 - Governors have provided beneficial challenge and support to the new headteacher, for example in her determined efforts to use checks of teachers' performance to reward good teaching and to eliminate weak teaching. Their action in support of the new leadership of the early years to improve provision in this stage has also proved to be successful.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher and governors have updated safeguarding procedures over the past year. In particular, they have ensured that staff are suitably trained. Consequently, all safeguarding policies and procedures meet statutory requirements and are fit for purpose. Senior leaders are especially diligent and effective in liaising with outside agencies and parents. They are prompt in making referrals when they have concerns and sustain a close watch on those pupils considered at risk to keep them as safe as possible.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good enough to enable pupils to overcome gaps in their knowledge and skills. A lack of consistency, especially in mathematics, still leads to varied rates of progress across classes and subjects.
- The teaching of mathematics requires improvement. Actions to improve the teaching of mathematics have been weakened by continuing changes in leadership responsibilities and staffing. Consequently, pupils are not given enough opportunity to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills or to use and deepen these skills further across the range of subjects. Even so, the more accurate teaching of pupils' basic numeracy skills is bringing positive improvement to pupils' confidence in working with numbers.
- In classes which have experienced settled teaching, new initiatives have promoted a faster pace of improvement. This is seen in teachers' assessments of pupils' progress and their good work and learning

seen during the inspection. For example, teachers have also improved the way they develop the pupils' speaking and listening skills and now teach phonics (letters and the sounds they make) and reading well.

- Teachers also question pupils effectively to reinforce learning and to challenge them to think more and use correct vocabulary. This has brought quicker progress this academic year, especially in Years 4 to 6.
- The pupils' improving speaking, listening and phonics skills are having an increasingly positive effect on their learning, but have not yet been in place long enough to increase the proportion of pupils reaching age-related expectations in reading and writing.
- Even so, pupils' widened range of spoken vocabulary is now enabling them to write more expressively. Teachers do not, however, emphasise sufficiently the importance of legible handwriting, and accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar, and this is constraining pupils' confidence and skill in writing independently.
- During discussions and group work in reading, writing and particularly in mathematics, teachers and teaching assistants do not consistently ensure that the degree of challenge is strong enough to deepen and extend pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils, including the most able, lose interest because they already understand the points being made and their progress slows.
- Continued changes in teaching staff have also led to inconsistency in the degree to which teachers implement the school's marking policy. As a result, many pupils are unclear about how to improve their work. Some initiatives are improving their learning, but several, such as pupils' self-assessment, are very new and have not been in place long enough to raise pupils' achievement.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together in their support of disadvantaged pupils and those with additional learning needs or complex difficulties. They are now identifying and tackling pupils' needs effectively and at an earlier stage than in previous years.

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 considerate to each other and to adults and work well together in lessons. Pupils questioned said to inspectors, 'The teachers here are nice', and added, 'If I had a problem with a friend then I'd fix it and make friends again'.
- Pupils are resilient and show good attitudes to learning, but when the work provided in lessons lacks challenge a few pupils lose concentration and do not make enough progress.
- Pupils know about the different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying and verbal bullying. They rightly say that it rarely happens, but that if it did then they would know how to deal with it by swiftly seeking help from their friends and an adult.
- Pupils demonstrate understanding in relation to the different needs and backgrounds of pupils in the school. They are quick to offer friendship to new pupils – helping them to settle happily at the school.
- Staff and governors strive diligently and very effectively to keep pupils safe. They check welfare and safeguarding procedures carefully and keep them up to date. Senior leaders also keep a close watch on pupils considered at risk and sustain good working relationships with parents and outside agencies to keep them safe. One parent commented, typically reflecting the views of most, that 'All of the staff care for my child'.
- Pupils know how to stay safe and keep each other safe. They appreciatively refer to 'the friendship train', which is a bench where pupils go to find friends or assistance.
- Pupils readily say that the school is a safe place in which to learn and play. The large majority of parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire expressed agreement with this view.
- Pupils undertake a variety of responsibilities well. For example, prefects help to lead pupils into lunch and play leaders said that they 'watch that everyone is happy at breaktimes'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in classes, at play and when they move about the school. Their behaviour and interest in learning are often at their best when learning outdoors in the school's woodland area.
- Pupils take care in setting their work out neatly, but the quality of their handwriting varies.
- A few pupils talked about past concerns about the behaviour of a few older pupils. School records reflect some incidents of poor behaviour earlier this academic year, but show that strong action by the headteacher

and staff swiftly re-established harmony and good behaviour throughout the school.

- Over time, attendance broadly matches the national average. Pupils' rates of attendance vary from year to year, sometimes reflecting the influence of families moving into and out of the area at short notice and at different times.
- The headteacher checks and promotes attendance effectively. This year, the introduction of a breakfast club, partly funded by additional government grants, is helping to improve the attendance of some disadvantaged pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- The standards that pupils achieve through key stages 1 and 2 are too variable and require improvement. The school has not yet ensured that all pupils make enough progress over time to reach the levels of knowledge, skills and understanding of which they are capable.
- In 2015, national test results showed that the proportion of Year 1 pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check was below the national average. Better teaching of phonics has raised attainment in the early years and is helping to close gaps for pupils currently in Years 1 and 2. This year's phonics screening results show improvement and are closer to the national average than the previous year.
- Current school assessments and inspection evidence show improved progress in reading, writing and mathematics over the past year. Much of this has stemmed from the drive and vision of the new headteacher in appointing and supporting new teachers and in rectifying weak teaching.
- Remaining gaps in pupils' skills linked to the legacy of weaker teaching continue to hamper the progress of some pupils and keep standards at the end of key stages 1 and 2 below those expected for the pupils' ages. Nevertheless, there are credible signs of more accelerated progress.
- In English, pupils demonstrate good speaking and listening skills and are improving their ability to write descriptively and expressively. However, pupils' handwriting and use of grammar, punctuation and spelling, although improving, remain weak.
- Pupils' reading skills also show improvement. This reflects their heightened enjoyment in reading, promoted by the teachers' increased use of texts and favourite stories to stimulate interest in books. Pupils are now more readily choosing to read at home and at school.
- Pupils are improving their basic number and calculation skills in mathematics more quickly now. However, inconsistent teaching as well as the legacy of slow progress in the past still means that many pupils have not gained sufficient skills and confidence to reason and solve problems independently.
- The most able pupils show much maturity in challenging themselves and in their discussions with others. This is especially the case when pupils are engaged in outdoor learning activities and investigations. Nonetheless, teachers do not consistently ensure that work is challenging enough for the most able pupils and assessment information shows that they should be reaching higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- An above-average number of pupils enter or leave the school other than at the usual times. A significant proportion of these pupils also have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They are quickly included and welcomed into all aspects of school life and have their individual needs supported effectively. Their additional learning needs are identified at an early stage and appropriate support and intervention programmes are planned to help them catch up with other pupils.
- Well-planned and effective support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, especially those with particularly complex needs, enables them to make good progress in relation to their personal needs. As with other pupils, they are improving their academic progress now from their differing starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils, aided by additional government funding through the pupil premium, benefit from extra adult help and inclusion in school activities such as the breakfast club. These improvements are successfully raising pupils' self-confidence and quickening their progress so that it at least matches and increasingly exceeds the progress of their classmates.
- All pupils are enthused by the improved opportunities they have to learn outdoors. They show a raised interest in learning and improved investigative and team-building skills when outdoors in the school's extensive pond and woodland areas. Pupils also enjoy music and sing well together.

Early years provision

is good

- Strong leadership has improved the provision and children's learning in the Reception class over the course of this academic year.
- Children join Reception with very different pre-school learning experiences. Consequently, their readiness for full-time schooling varies. Most children start in the Reception class with skills and abilities that are below those typical for their age.
- In response to good teaching, children now make good progress and achieve well in all areas of learning. This is evident in the significant increase in the number of children reaching a good level of development. Current assessments show that this is above last year's national average. Assessments show that for the first time in several years, particularly since the previous inspection, the majority of children are well prepared for future learning in Year 1.
- Improved outcomes also stem from the diligence and skill of staff in checking how well children are doing. Information is carefully gathered and used effectively to adapt and further develop the learning activities and adult support provided for children. This ensures that children engage in work at the level that helps them to achieve well.
- Teaching enthuses the children and stretches their thinking through a variety of challenges matched to their abilities. The needs of disadvantaged children, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able children are addressed from an early stage. Pupil premium funding is used well to provide extra adult help for disadvantaged children and enables them to make similarly good progress as their classmates.
- Senior leaders and governors have fully supported the early years leadership in improving outdoor and indoor facilities. There are now stimulating learning opportunities for the children. There is an effective balance between activities that are led by adults and those that encourage children to choose for themselves or work independently. These developments have successfully captured the children's interest and enjoyment in learning and raised their achievement.
- The rich variety of work in the outdoor areas has a very positive influence in improving behaviour and advancing children's personal and social skills. However, children do not practise their writing and number skills frequently enough during self-chosen activities outside.
- Staff work well together to provide a high level of care and ensure full adherence to statutory welfare requirements. Staff also make sure that children understand and follow the class rules and routines that keep them safe and help them learn.
- Relationships between children and staff are very strong. As a result, children behave well and show consideration of each other's views.
- Leaders have worked diligently over the past year to refresh links with parents and with staff in the on-site pre-school. Parents describe the happy start that their children have when entering the school and appreciate the supportive communication between home and school. Parents also welcome the way that staff encourage and enable them to support their children with their learning; for example, by recording 'wow' moments in their children's learning journals.

School details

Unique reference number	116901
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10002455

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	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Pamela Taylor
Headteacher	Therese Langford
Telephone number	01684 573 016
Website	www.stjoesmalvern.co.uk
Email address	office@stjoesmalvern.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 November 2013

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority) is similar to that of most schools.
- An above-average proportion of pupils enters or leaves the school other than at the usual times.
- Children experience the early years provision in a Reception class. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are also taught in single-age classes. Older pupils in key stage 2 are taught in three mixed-age classes.
- In 2015, the school met the government's floor standards, which showed the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school holds a breakfast club each morning.
- There has been a change of headteacher since the previous inspection. The current headteacher took up her position in June 2016, following two terms as acting headteacher.
- There have been continuing changes in teaching staff since the previous inspection, with some staff that are very new to the school.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 lessons and saw the work of seven teachers.
- They were accompanied by the headteacher during several of these visits to lessons.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures and the school's self-evaluation.
- The inspectors examined the school's systems for checking progress and records of checks on the quality of teaching.
- The inspectors talked to individual pupils and a representative group of pupils about the school and their work. They listened to individual pupils read and attended two assemblies and the breakfast club. The inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects and classes.
- The inspectors held a meeting with members of the governing body and held meetings with school staff, mainly senior and middle leaders. The lead inspector also met with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the views expressed in the 32 online responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, as well as staff responses to another questionnaire. Inspectors gathered the views of several parents during informal meetings at the school.
- The school's use of the primary physical education and sport funding and the pupil premium were also considered.

Inspection team

Alex Baxter, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Marie Thomas

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

