

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Chapel Street, Devonport, Plymouth, Devon PL1 4DJ

## Inspection dates

12–13 October 2016

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher and restructured senior leadership team have had a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of the school's strengths and what needs to be improved further.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points. The standards they reach in reading, writing and mathematics are rising rapidly across the school.
- All groups of pupils make good progress. There is no difference in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities also achieve well.
- The well-planned curriculum is the backbone to pupils' good attitudes to learning. It is underpinning the strong teaching that pupils across the school benefit from each day. Pupils work exceptionally well together and are keen to share their achievements.
- While progress is good for pupils currently in the school, it is not as strong in writing for the most able pupils in key stage 1.
- Leader's plans to improve the school are having a positive effect on pupils' progress. This planning is monitored effectively by the academy trust.
- The early years classroom is a lively hive of activity; activities are fun but have a clear focus on learning. As a result, children in the early years enjoy a good start to their school experience and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and its work. They typically report that leaders listen to concerns raised and that they respond rapidly.
- Pupils feel very safe at school. There are no incidences of bullying and pupils have great faith in the ability of staff to deal swiftly with any issues that arise.
- Although very committed to the school, governors need to ensure that they sustain their drive and momentum, so that they are able to fully hold leaders to account for the school's performance.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen governance further by ensuring that governors always check that the actions taken by the school have made a purposeful difference to the learning and development of pupils.
- Ensure that teaching improves so that the most able pupils in key stage 1 make stronger progress in writing by:
  - further developing teachers' planning skills
  - ensuring that teaching is adjusted to meet the academic needs of the most able pupils more precisely
  - ensuring that all teachers use prior assessment information consistently well to support and challenge the most able pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher has worked very successfully to raise achievement and improve teaching across the school, as the school has gone through a significant number of staffing changes. He has been ably supported in his work by the restructured senior leadership team.
- Leaders are clear and precise in the use and evaluation of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, including the most-able. All pupils who benefit from this funding are supported very well through programmes of support or additional challenge that are effectively led by the school's leader for intervention. The progress made by disadvantaged pupils is a real strength of the school and is similar to or better than other pupils nationally across a wide range of subjects.
- The curriculum is well matched to the needs of pupils and has contributed significantly to the rapid progress the school has made in the last 18 months. Carefully planned opportunities to develop and practise writing and mathematical skills across the curriculum has helped to improve pupils' progress in these subjects.
- Pupils' understanding of British values and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are enhanced effectively across the curriculum. For example, the school council was involved in a democratic debate across the local City Youth Council to develop healthy lifestyles further in their schools. As a result, the school council is now leading on promoting a 'healthy teeth' campaign across the participating schools.
- Parents report that leaders are very approachable. Many parents reported to inspectors that 'the school leaders respond exceptionally well to any concerns raised'. Parents are pleased with the school's work to secure their children's welfare, personal development, behaviour and academic progress.
- Staff are robustly held to account for pupils' progress. Support and training are carefully matched and reviewed regularly to ensure that whole-school priorities and individual development needs are being met. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes have improved significantly. Staff speak positively about the impact of the professional development that they have received, particularly teachers who are early on in their careers.
- Additional funding for sport and physical education is used very well and has improved pupils' engagement and participation. More disadvantaged pupils now take part in physical activity. The school has recently been awarded an 'all-time achievement' award for inter-city school competitions to recognise the high level of engagement in sport. A highly skilled, qualified sports coach works with the pupils across the school in lessons to promote teamwork, collaboration and fitness, and to develop teachers' skills in a wide range of sports.
- Since the previous inspection the local governing body and Plymouth CAST (the trust) have worked together to improve the quality of teaching and secure better academic outcomes, for example through the use of the trust's area advisor and with support from stronger schools within the trust to provide advice and guidance to staff. As a result, teaching is much improved and standards are rising.

## **Governance of the school**

- The local governing body has gone through many changes over the last 18 months and has been ably supported and mentored by the more experienced members of the trust board. As a result, the governing body no longer needs direct support, and governors take their responsibilities very seriously and act diligently.
- Governors have ensured that, through rigorous recruitment, the school now has effective leadership and teaching. As a direct result of their actions, standards are rising rapidly across the school. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths of the school, as well as the areas that still need to improve.
- The minutes of governing body meetings are sharp and evaluative. Reports are regularly produced and demonstrate clearly how governors hold school leaders to account for the performance of the school.
- Training is planned for new governors in the near future and this is timely, as not all governors are sufficiently well informed to ask the right challenging questions of teachers and leaders.
- The school takes good care of its pupils. Concerns about pupils' safety and well-being are followed up rigorously by the safeguarding governor, who has a sharp understanding of all safeguarding matters.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Robust procedures for checking on the suitability of staff and visitors are in place, which build upon statutory requirements. Leaders and governors ensure that staff are fully up to date and trained regularly about keeping pupils safe. Staff understand they have a duty to be vigilant and know well the different forms of abuse that can make pupils vulnerable.
- All pupils, staff and parents who either spoke with inspectors or responded to the inspection questionnaires agreed that pupils are safe in school. Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe in school because they can use the 'worry box' if they have a concern and teachers always respond. Furthermore, they also explained that if they are away from school, there is a system in place that allows them to send a text message directly to their class teacher if they have any concerns.
- Pupils report that the curriculum teaches them well about keeping safe and what to do if they feel vulnerable. They have a very good understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism and recognise the signs to prevent this from happening. Keeping pupils safe is a strength of the school, as a result of a culture that is embedded across the school by all staff and pupils.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- School leaders have placed a high priority on raising the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and have managed teachers' performance effectively to develop teachers' skills. As a result, teaching is now typically strong.
- Classrooms provide purposeful learning areas that are organised well to support pupils' development, knowledge and understanding. Vibrant displays of pupils' work across the whole school reflect the high expectations that are set by all staff and the positive impact these have on pupils' progress.

- The teaching of mathematics is particularly effective across all phases. Consequently, the progress of current pupils is strong. Teachers regularly assess pupils and use this information to plan effectively to meet their needs. Teaching assistants help to develop pupils' skills where they are less confident or need more fluency. As a result of the school's approach, pupils engage fully with learning and develop knowledge together. The most able pupils are also challenged well and are set tasks that typically deepen their understanding of specific concepts.
- Teaching of writing is increasingly effective. Pupils develop their ideas through a wide range of approaches. Discussion and drama are used imaginatively, for example to create a sense of action, so that pupils can plan and organise their writing before they write a final piece. Nonetheless, the teaching of writing is not always adjusted quickly enough to meet the needs of the most able pupils in key stage 1.
- Reading is taught effectively as a result of recent training for teachers and support staff. In key stage 1, pupils develop a good understanding of phonics. Pupils use this knowledge regularly to develop their reading and writing skills.
- Teachers and pupils adhere closely to the school's marking and assessment policy. Pupils reported to inspectors that they value the comments and suggestions that teachers provide and that they help them develop their understanding.
- Leaders recognise that teachers do not always challenge the most able, including disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1, to achieve their very best, particularly in writing, and that teachers would benefit from further training. A recent review by governors supported leaders' findings and led to a revision of the school's action plan so that provision is better adjusted to meet the needs of these pupils.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils speak knowledgeably about keeping themselves safe. For example, they have a very good understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism and were able to articulate clearly any signs of risk.
- Pupils confidently report that they know how to discuss any concerns that they may have, both in and outside school, and feel that their concerns are taken very seriously and responded to swiftly. They feel cared for and that the school is a 'safe place'.
- The curriculum promotes not only pupils' understanding of their roles as future citizens but also knowledge of other cultures and different religions. There is a strong emphasis on tolerance and understanding of different religious groups. For example, when meeting with inspectors, pupils talked enthusiastically about other faiths, citing Hinduism, Sikhism and wider Christian groups. Pupils spoke clearly about treating one another with respect.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and participate fully in the many extra-curricular activities, including the healthy breakfast club, which provides pupils with a safe, healthy and warming start to the day. Pupils are provided at lunchtime with a wide range of healthy food options. They know how to stay healthy and value the quality of the food provided by the school.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils show an enthusiasm for their learning and engage well in the tasks they are given. Occasionally, and typically when the usual teacher is not teaching the class, behaviour is not as positive. Where this happens, a very small number of boys can disrupt learning by losing concentration.
- Pupils say that incidents of bullying or ‘fallings out’ are very rare. One pupil reported, ‘If there was bullying, staff would deal with it very quickly.’ This is also the view of parents who spoke with inspectors and responded to Parent View. One parent’s typical response was that he ‘feels the school really cares for his daughter and cannot fault the school’.
- Through the actions of the school leaders, attendance has risen and is continuing to rise. Attendance is now at least in line with the national average. Disadvantaged pupils have contributed disproportionately to absence levels in the past, but this situation has improved significantly, and their attendance is now well above the national average.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Leaders have worked extremely hard to overcome the past underachievement that is reflected in some areas of the published data for the school. Nearly all groups across the school, particularly disadvantaged pupils, are currently making at least good progress across a range of subjects.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been above the national average for the last two years. School information indicates that this positive trend is likely to continue for all pupil groups.
- Pupils report that they enjoy reading and that the school council were given full autonomy to redesign the school library. Pupils told inspectors that the environment is much better and that books are now much more enjoyable to read, so they read freely and often. This was confirmed when inspectors listened to pupils from a range of ability groups read from across key stage 1 and 2.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to apply their mathematical and English learning in other subjects, for example in religious education (RE), science, geography and art. Teachers expect pupils to write or use mathematics to the same high standard as they do in English and mathematics lessons. Inspectors looked in depth at the quality of writing and mathematics across the curriculum and found no significant differences in attitudes to learning or pupils’ outcomes.
- In 2016, pupils in Year 6 did well in the national curriculum tests. Provisional results indicate that pupils attained above the combined national standard for reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2. These pupils left St Joseph’s typically well prepared and ready for life in secondary education.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress when compared with other pupils nationally. Their needs are well understood and timely intervention ensures that they make strong progress from their starting points.
- Currently, in nearly all year groups across the school, the progress disadvantaged pupils make is as good as, or better than, other pupils nationally. In 2015, the most

able disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 attained above other pupils nationally in writing and mathematics. This has been a typical picture across the school for two years. It reflects the improvements in the quality of teaching, timely intervention and effective use of additional funding.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Children join the school's Reception class from a wide range of pre-school provisions. On beginning Reception, their attainment on entry can vary considerably from year to year. More often than not, a large proportion of children do not demonstrate the knowledge and skills typical for their age. However, by the end of their Reception Year, the vast majority of children are ready and well prepared for their journey into key stage 1.
- Early years is a nurturing environment, and staff have very strong relationships with children. This means that children form positive relationships with adults and other children in Reception; they feel safe and enjoy school.
- The leadership of the early years is good. The most able children are well supported with activities that are challenging and above their age-related expectation. For example, children can correctly identify different shapes and accurately record the name of the shape as a result of strong teaching over time.
- The early years leader has ensured that all staff are clear about the different needs and abilities of children, including the most able and disadvantaged children. She ensures that their needs are usually met through well-chosen activities. On occasion, assessment activities are not sufficiently attuned to the different development needs of the children, which slows the progress for some.
- Suitable and challenging activities are provided for all groups of children and a wide range of learning activities are organised. For example, a small group of children had chosen to use a 'hollowed-out pumpkin' and water to create 'pumpkin juice' for the inspector to drink, while learning about volume and healthy living.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are very skilled in helping children understand how to behave. Staff constantly emphasise and model good manners and behaviour and help the children learn how to share and consider feelings of others.
- Leaders ensure that there are robust procedures in place to keep children safe. All statutory welfare and safeguarding requirements are met in the early years.

## School details

Unique reference number	140764
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10019972

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	172
Appropriate authority	academy trust
Chair	Teresa Cussen
Headteacher	Brendan Gill
Telephone number	01752 563185
Website	<a href="http://www.st-josephs.plymouth.sch.uk">www.st-josephs.plymouth.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:gillb@st-josephs.plymouth.sch.uk">gillb@st-josephs.plymouth.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school and is part of the Plymouth CAST. The Trust was formed in April 2014. The work of the Trust is overseen by a board of directors. The Trust is responsible for: one nursery; one first school; 32 primary schools and two secondary schools across seven local authorities in the south west region.
- The school joined the Trust and became an academy on 1 April 2014.
- At the time the school was notified of the inspection the school did not meet requirements on the publication of specified information on its website. It did not comply with Department for Education guidance to provide details of the academy trust's scheme of delegation for governance functions.
- The school does not comply with the Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish on its website. The school does not publish an accessibility plan or equality objectives as required by the public sector equality duty.



- The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language and the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are both above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- Pupils attend the Reception Year full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in lessons. They reviewed pupils' work, talked to pupils in lessons and analysed samples of work across a range of subjects.
- Meetings were held with different groups of pupils to discuss their views about the school and to listen to pupils with a range of abilities read.
- Inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, middle leaders and three governors, including the chair of the local governing body.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with a representative from the trust.
- Inspectors viewed a range of documents, including information on pupils' achievement, the school's current assessment information, its self-evaluation report and its pupil premium report. They also looked at the school's improvement plan, documents relating to safeguarding, and records of behaviour and attendance.
- The inspectors took account of the 26 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, 18 responses to the staff questionnaire and 14 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Matt Middlemore, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Green	Ofsted Inspector

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