

St Joseph's Catholic School

Church Road, Laverstock, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 1QY

Inspection dates

16–17 January 2018

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has made significant strategic differences to the school. The work of her senior leaders and governors ensures that her consistently high expectations continue to raise the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils.
- Leaders promote the positive ethos where everyone is included. The school is successful in ensuring that all current pupils progress well.
- The standard of teaching in English and mathematics is high. Pupils make good progress in both these subjects and they achieve above national standards.
- Governors know the school well and are very committed to its success. They hold the headteacher and senior leaders to account for the quality of provision.
- Teachers continue to raise their expectations of what pupils can achieve. Most teachers use skilful questioning to deepen pupils' thinking. Pupils are rising to the challenge and, as a result, current pupils are making good progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is in line with others in the school. Following the Progress 8 progress measures of 2017, leaders began a comprehensive programme which supports these pupils academically and pastorally.
- Pupils behave well. They are courteous, polite and respectful. In lessons, most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Some pupils do not take pride in the presentation of their work, which is hampering their spelling and grammar.
- While teaching, learning and assessment are good overall, some pockets of weaker teaching remain. This is particularly so in science.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a particular strength of the school.
- Pupils speak positively about their school experience because they feel supported and valued.
- Pupils typically receive relevant feedback on how to improve their work. Many pupils benefit significantly from this.
- Leaders recognise the need to analyse attendance information precisely to better inform their planned actions to support improvement. Although the attendance of a small minority of pupils who are persistently absent has improved, it is still not good enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - pupils take pride in the presentation of their work and there is a consistent approach to literacy across all subjects
 - teachers consistently set high expectations, with high levels of challenge, for pupils' achievement, building on what pupils already know, understand and can do, especially in science.
- Further improve attendance and reduce persistent absence by analysing available information with greater precision so that support for pupils is targeted more effectively.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders' consistent and unrelenting determination ensures that everyone in the school community is included. Pupils are well supported to overcome barriers to their learning and to make good progress.
- The headteacher's determined approach to improve the standard of education is succeeding. Together with the governors and senior leaders, she maintains a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching. Consequently, pupils' achievement and progress are rising.
- Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, which they use to target precise points for improvement. They are proud of what they are achieving but know that there is more to do. Plans for future improvement are both challenging and achievable. They focus on the right areas and show the potential to maintain the strong trajectory of improvement.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have introduced rigorous systems to hold teachers more accountable for pupils' learning and outcomes. Leaders have also been effective at targeting training to help teachers improve their teaching.
- Leaders and managers track pupils' progress and attendance carefully and, in the main, use this information to target support for individual pupils and to raise the expectations of teachers. These strategies are having a positive impact on improving pupils' attendance and progress. However, the information is not used precisely enough to enable leaders to target resources to improve the attendance of a small group who are persistently absent.
- Relentless work to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils is effective. Current pupils are making similar progress to all other pupils in the school. Governors ensure that funding is used well to make a difference to targeted pupils. The additional funding is used to provide support for teaching and pupils' emotional well-being, as well as providing opportunities and resources that help pupils participate more fully in curriculum activities.
- The headteacher manages the performance of teachers well. Targets focus clearly on improving the quality of teaching and learning and improving pupils' outcomes. Robust, fair actions are taken when staff have not achieved the standards required.
- Recent improvements to the curriculum mean that pupils of all abilities now have a good range of opportunities and meet the requirements of Progress 8 measures. The range of courses on offer enable pupils to acquire the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to progress to the next stage of their education or training at the end of Year 11. Consequently, they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Middle leaders are effective in securing improvements. All know the raised expectations of leaders and understand the part they play in securing improvement. The leadership of science has lagged behind other subjects and, consequently, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in this subject varies considerably. Senior leaders are working alongside science leaders to strengthen the impact of their work.

- Teachers provide effective feedback to help pupils improve their work, particularly in English and humanities. However, the use and impact of feedback are inconsistent across other subjects.
- Middle leaders support pupils' pastoral needs well. They know the pupils well and intervene quickly to provide appropriate support and address pupils' barriers to success. Pupils are then able to catch up and make the progress of which they are capable.
- The school successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills through both curricular and extra-curricular activities. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the impact of their pupil parliament and the range of extra-curricular activities that make a difference to their experience in school. Examples include the school bringing in an eco-system to reduce energy use.
- Parents and carers, pupils, staff and governors are extremely positive about the changes that have been made to the school. Typical of many comments stated on Parent View was, 'My girls have thrived, are supported and love coming to school.'

Governance of the school

- School leaders are supported by a strong governing body. The chairperson of the governing body is very experienced and, with other governors, has ensured that the school continues to improve. This includes the construction of a new teaching building to be completed by Easter 2018. Governors are driven by a passionate commitment to the school. They have integrity and care about the things that matter most.
- Governors know the school very well and talk confidently about its strengths and areas for development. They ensure that they receive appropriate information and reports from senior staff to inform them of the school's performance and, thus, they are able to ask challenging questions and hold leaders to account. They visit regularly during the working day to broaden and deepen their understanding of the school's work.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Parents, pupils and staff agree that pupils are kept safe. They appreciate the strong safeguarding culture in place to protect pupils. Staff take their responsibilities very seriously. They are vigilant and well trained and know what to do if they become aware of a concern. All the proper checks are made on new appointments and volunteers. Governors oversee the safeguarding arrangements diligently.
- Leaders promote an open culture in the school so that pupils know they can talk openly to adults if they are worried about anything. Pupils report that they are not embarrassed to share concerns and they would happily speak to members of staff. They reported that, on the rare occasions bullying occurred, it was dealt with effectively. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations and the school reinforced advice about dangers on numerous occasions.
- School leaders provide very good support for vulnerable pupils. They work well with local authority officers to ensure that pupils who face substantial personal challenges

receive the support they need to make progress at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils benefit from very positive relationships with staff because they are based on mutual respect. Teachers are keen to engage pupils with their learning and encourage participation. Pupils' contributions to discussions are valued and they enjoy their learning as a result.
- Pupils now make better progress and achieve well, particularly in English and mathematics, as a result of teachers planning well and using time effectively in lessons. Expectations of pupils' progress and behaviour continue to be raised. Older pupils say that the quality of teaching has improved and that they are provided with stretch and challenge.
- The school's system of assessment is robust and effective. It enables teachers to track pupils' progress carefully across key stages so that staff are keenly aware of pupils' ongoing performance. Regular moderation ensures that data fed into the system continues to be accurate.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of the needs of individual disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Staff give pupils effective support if they are stuck or finding work difficult. This is helping pupils to progress and raising their self-esteem. Pupils spoke positively about teachers' support in lessons, at lunchtimes and after school.
- Leaders, over the past 12 months, have focused unrelentingly on the improvement of teaching, learning and assessment. The performance of teachers is checked rigorously and, where required, teachers have additional support to enable them to improve. This has led to improved teaching across most subjects and across all year groups. There is more to do in science.
- Teachers use their subject knowledge to good effect, planning activities that meet the needs of most pupils and enabling them to make strong progress. However, a small number of pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable because teachers do not check their understanding before trying to move them on.
- The majority of pupils take pride in their work and correct errors in literacy. However, this is not consistent across the school and leads to some pupils' progress faltering.
- Pupils read and debate confidently. However, the development of their writing skills across the curriculum is less well established.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils take pride in themselves, their uniform and school. They come to school smartly dressed and enjoy their lessons. Pupils spoke positively about their school and are confident that the school supports them.

- Pupils are confident, courteous, respectful and articulate. They care about one another and their teachers. Relationships between staff and pupils are extremely good, providing a harmonious constructive atmosphere.
- Pupils are known as individuals and are cared for well. A well-developed and comprehensive network provides effective support for pupils when they need it.
- Throughout the school, staff are good role models for pupils. Consequently, pupils reflect these attitudes and behaviours, looking out for each other and being mutually supportive. Pupils develop important qualities and attributes, such as respect, open-mindedness and tolerance, which will help them flourish in modern Britain. Pupils are encouraged to take up leadership roles, for example in the pupil parliament.
- The curriculum ensures that pupils receive a range of opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Religious education, assemblies, visiting speakers and lessons of personal, social and health education are all means that successfully develop this area of work. Pupils learn about rights and responsibilities in society, the principles of democracy and how to live healthily. Learning about various career opportunities, such as joining the armed forces, includes the advantages and disadvantages of each job.
- The independent careers advice and guidance provided by the school are a strength. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education and training. Pupils spoke highly about the advice they received from tutors, teachers and the independent careers adviser in preparing them for the future.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision in different institutions better suited to their needs. Pupils are looked after well and make the progress expected of them, given their specific circumstances. Clear communications with the alternative provider ensure that school staff can track academic progress and personal development.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They are punctual, listen attentively engage well in their learning.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Most take pride in their work and enjoy being challenged at the appropriate level. Low-level disruption of lessons due to poor behaviour is very rare and dealt with effectively by teachers.
- Pupils take pride in their school. They treat the school building with respect. Pupils also take pride in their own presentation. Pupils behave well out of lessons, around the school site at breaks and at lunchtimes. They socialise well with their friends. They move around the campus in a calm, respectful and orderly fashion.
- Attendance is continuing to improve. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils, which had been poor in the past, has improved markedly as a result of the emphasis placed on it by school leaders. Improving the attendance of pupils who are persistently absent is a priority for the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils across the school are making good progress overall. There has been a marked improvement in the last year. Pupils of all abilities are doing equally well. No group is lagging behind. Pupils also make good progress because teaching is good in a number of subjects, including English, mathematics, history, geography and languages.
- The standards achieved by pupils have improved to being more in line with national averages.
- Pupils are achieving particularly well in English and mathematics. Over half of all pupils achieved at least a grade 5 both in GCSE English and mathematics in 2017. This is above the national average. The most able do especially well in English, where, in 2017, the proportion achieving the highest grades was significantly above the national average. Progress in science is weaker. However, recent interventions are beginning to have a positive impact.
- A small number of Year 7 pupils join the school needing to catch up in English. These pupils make accelerated progress, especially with their reading, and so are soon able to get the most from their lessons.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress throughout the school and significantly narrowing the difference with other pupils. This has been a success story for the school over the last year. They are now also achieving results comparable with other pupils in the school. This contrasts with 2017, when they made poor progress in all areas except English against the national average for other pupils. Their success is the result of a carefully crafted tracking and intervention programme which has placed the progress of disadvantaged pupils at the heart of every classroom, meeting and action plan.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making improved progress from their starting points. This is the result of well-targeted support and intervention so that teachers know exactly what pupils' needs are and how best to help them.

School details

Unique reference number	126473
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10043558

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	513
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Paul Hooper
Headteacher	Rachel Ridley
Telephone number	01722 335380
Website	www.sjcs.org.uk
Email address	admin@sjcs.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	26–27 November 2013

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average and the proportion supported by an education, health and care plan is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is below average.
- More than nine out of 10 pupils are of White British heritage. There are a few from minority ethnic groups who speak English as an additional language.
- A small number of pupils in Years 10 and 11 are educated on an alternative site, The WASP Centre.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in a range of subject areas and across year groups. Many observations were jointly conducted with senior and middle school leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and observed their conduct entering and leaving the school premises and at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including information on pupils' outcomes, the school's self-evaluation, governing body minutes and records relating to the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment, behaviour, attendance, exclusion and the safeguarding of pupils.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders, middle leaders, groups of pupils and representatives of the governing body. The lead inspector also spoke with the challenge and support partner.
- Inspectors took account of 118 responses to the Parent View survey.

Inspection team

Gill Hickling, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Terry Fish	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Hummerstone	Ofsted Inspector

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