

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Selly Oak Road, Kings Norton, Birmingham, West Midlands B30 1HN

## Inspection dates

7–8 February 2018

<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

- Leaders place pupils' academic development and personal growth at the heart of everything they do. They have high aspirations for all pupils.
- Consistently good teaching enables almost all pupils to achieve well and make good progress from their starting points.
- Teachers plan engaging, well-structured lessons that motivate pupils to learn. Pupils work exceptionally hard in lessons and remain focused on the task in hand.
- By the end of key stage 2, the large majority of pupils attain at least the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Rates of progress in reading and mathematics are notably strong.
- The school is highly inclusive. Staff do everything possible to ensure that all pupils can participate fully in activities and achieve well. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is a strength of the school.
- Pupils' conduct in classrooms is usually excellent. Outside on the playground, they play well together and treat each other with respect.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class and quickly settle into the school's routines. They make good progress as a result of effective teaching.
- The vast majority of parents and carers speak highly of the school and the learning opportunities it provides for their children.
- Governors play an important role in challenging and supporting leaders. They contribute effectively to the school's longer-term vision.
- Some pupils do not make the same strong progress in writing as they do in reading and mathematics. Too many pupils do not develop a neat, joined style of handwriting quickly enough.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation vary from class to class. As a result, some pupils do not consistently present their work with due care and attention.
- Pupils have a few gaps in their understanding of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education.
- Planned opportunities to extend pupils' cultural development and understanding are quite limited.

## Full report

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - developing greater consistency in the planning and delivery of the PSHE curriculum, in order to meet the needs of all pupils
  - ensuring that teachers include more planned opportunities to strengthen pupils' cultural development.
- Improve progress in writing by ensuring that:
  - teachers explain clearly to pupils how they can develop and extend their writing, in line with the best practice in school
  - pupils, especially younger pupils, are given more opportunities and guidance on how to edit and improve their writing
  - handwriting is taught during the school day and enables all pupils to develop a neat, joined, consistent style.
- Ensure that all teachers share the same consistently high expectations about pupils presenting their work neatly.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The recently appointed principal has been effective in quickly establishing a new leadership team. He has set out his vision for the school, and implemented plans to bring about further positive changes. This seamless transference of leadership has meant that the school's improvement agenda has been kept firmly on track.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of what the school does well and where it needs to improve. This is because they use pupils' assessment information particularly well to identify where achievement could be even better. Development plans are focused on the right priorities and identify appropriate actions needed to bring about success.
- The principal, through his passion and determination, has further developed the school's ambitious learning culture. He has high expectations and has set out a clear pathway towards becoming an outstanding school. Staff are fully committed to making this aim a reality.
- Staff morale is high. They enjoy working at the school because they feel valued by leaders and are given opportunities to develop professionally. The strong sense of teamwork and respect for leaders is evident throughout the school. It was captured in a comment by one member of staff who said: 'They [the leaders] are on a journey and they're taking us with them.'
- Leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning. They use their observations to provide teachers with precise, developmental feedback to help them improve. Teachers are eager to develop their practice and take heed of the guidance given. This strengthens teaching and leads to better outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders hold half-termly meetings with teachers to discuss the progress of individual pupils. This includes all disadvantaged pupils. Careful tracking and external moderation of teachers' assessments help to ensure that pupils' progress remains a constant focus.
- Leaders use additional funding well to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. They evaluate, regularly, the effectiveness of any bespoke support for vulnerable pupils, to satisfy themselves that it is having the desired impact. As a result, almost all of these pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- The leadership of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is strong. Leaders ensure that staff have the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to cater for a broad range of pupils' needs. The positive attitude to inclusion permeates the school's culture. Staff work hard to ensure that pupils are included in all learning activities, despite some of the distinct obstacles pupils face.
- The cross-curricular aspects of learning contribute strongly to pupils' engagement. For example, Year 1 pupils eagerly set to work during their 'woodland adventure' session, working together purposefully to make 'leaf crowns'. They develop their language and cooperation skills well during these sessions.
- Leaders have developed a broad and balanced curriculum which enables pupils to build

their skills and knowledge progressively over a wide range of subjects. However, leaders recognise that there needs to be a more consistent approach to the teaching of the PSHE programme to ensure appropriate coverage of relevant topics for all pupils.

- Pupils' experiences are further enhanced by a growing range of extra-curricular activities including rugby, netball and running club. These are well attended and support pupils' wider personal development.
- Leaders use the school sport funding effectively to raise the profile of physical education (PE) and sport. As one pupil stated: 'We're a very sporty school.' The majority of funding is used to provide expert training for teachers. This has improved their delivery of PE and enabled pupils to make better progress in their learning.
- There is a strong partnership between home and school. Leaders ensure that they keep parents informed of their children's achievements. Additionally, the school runs events such as coffee mornings for parents of pupils who have SEN, for example, to offer advice about speech and language. The overwhelming majority of parents are delighted with the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is especially well promoted through a variety of thought-provoking activities. For example, pupils participated in an in-school 'pilgrimage trail' where they explored the journey of a Syrian refugee. This helped to develop pupils' compassion for, and awareness of the plight of those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils' understanding of cultural diversity is less well developed, although leaders have already begun to take action to address this.

## **Governance of the school**

- The local academy committee carries out the main functions of a typical governing body. This committee reports to the board of directors of the Lumen Christi Catholic Multi-Academy Company (MAC), who have a good strategic overview of the school's work.
- While the role of the MAC is largely concerned with the financial performance of the school, it is instrumental in building leadership capacity and subject expertise across the MAC. For example, staff from St Joseph's have benefited from their involvement in MAC 'curriculum working groups'. This has enabled middle leaders to enhance their specific skills and knowledge.
- There is a productive and trusting relationship between governors and school leaders. Governors engage in professional dialogue and respectful challenge which supports the school to accurately evaluate its work, and move forward in the best interests of the pupils. Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas of relative weakness.
- Governors visit the school regularly to gain an independent view of its work. Their planned visits are closely aligned with the school's development plan. The MAC commissions an independent educational adviser to provide an additional external perspective. Leaders act promptly on any advice or recommendations following these visits.
- Governors understand, and take seriously, their responsibility for the oversight of safeguarding procedures.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff understand the importance of their role in keeping pupils safe from harm. They receive a wide range of training, with regular updates, to equip them effectively for this role. Staff are constantly alert to any signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. When they are worried about a pupil, they take prompt action and report it immediately. Leaders have a well-organised, efficient system for logging and monitoring concerns.
- Staff keep an open mind about safeguarding, rightly adopting the view 'it could happen here'. Leaders and governors ensure that new members of staff and volunteers are recruited appropriately, carrying out all necessary checks to make sure that adults are suitable to work with children.
- Pupils report feeling very safe in school and say they have a trusted adult to speak to if they have any worries. Almost all parents are in agreement that their children feel safe in school. Pupils are generally quite knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe, because they are taught effectively about different aspects of safety.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teaching is consistently good because it is carefully planned and almost always well matched to the needs of pupils. Teachers ensure that time is used very productively during lessons, which maximises learning.
- The warm, supportive relationships that are common between staff and pupils contribute well to good learning. Pupils are willing to have a go and are not afraid of getting something wrong. This is because the expectation is that everyone can learn from their mistakes. In upper key stage 2, pupils are often given time to edit and improve their work.
- During lessons, teachers are usually quick to spot pupils' misconceptions. They address these as the lesson progresses so learning can move on swiftly. Teachers, ably supported by teaching assistants, support the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities well.
- The teaching of reading is a strength. Pupils quickly develop their early reading and phonics skills so they can read age-appropriate books confidently. As pupils get older, they develop their understanding well because of direct and specific teaching of comprehension skills.
- Teachers help pupils to make meaningful links between different subjects. For example, pupils' literacy and information technology skills were enhanced well through geography work in a Year 5 lesson. Pupils explored, then explained coherently how global warming affects polar ice habitats.
- Teachers typically use well-crafted questions to engage pupils and draw out their knowledge and understanding. Where teaching is most effective, teachers pose questions or set tasks that tease out pupils' deeper understanding. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils worked independently to solve some challenging

questions requiring mathematical reasoning.

- The deployment of teaching assistants is mostly highly effective. This is especially the case with the small intervention groups that target pupils' basic skills. In these sessions, pupils, especially those who have SEN and/or disabilities, usually make rapid progress. Very occasionally, teaching assistants lack the specific subject knowledge to teach a discrete skill.
- Teachers usually provide suitably challenging work for the most able pupils. This enables them to apply their skills and demonstrate their potential, especially in reading and mathematics. Occasionally, some of the middle-attaining pupils are ready to move on sooner, but instead spend too long consolidating concepts that they have already mastered.
- Most pupils make steady progress with their writing. Teachers develop pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation skills very effectively. However, with the exception of upper key stage 2, teachers are less successful in supporting pupils to edit and improve the content and organisation of their writing. This means that some pupils do not make the same strong progress in writing as they do in reading and mathematics.
- The teaching of handwriting is inconsistent and not always effective. Some teachers teach handwriting as part of early morning work, before the official start of the school day. This means that pupils who arrive later in the morning miss out on being taught handwriting regularly.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders have created an atmosphere in school that is nurturing, friendly and purposeful. Pupils enjoy their experiences in school and value the importance of learning. Pupils and parents alike appreciate that staff are approachable and helpful.
- Pupils have high aspirations of themselves. This is because teachers help pupils to recognise their strengths and talents, and encourage them to aim high. The school newsletter regularly celebrates pupils' personal achievements, helping pupils to develop positive images of themselves.
- Leaders are proactive in helping pupils to develop healthy minds. The inspection took place during national mental health week. As part of this, the school celebrated the theme of 'being ourselves'. An assembly focused on the importance of pupils developing good mental health. Following this, older pupils were able to explain clearly about having a 'growth mindset' and the importance of believing in oneself.
- Leaders seek, and act on, the views of pupils when making decisions about the day-to-day organisation of the school. For example, pupils were consulted about the types of class books used in English lessons. Leaders purchased more appealing books as result, which increased pupils' levels of enjoyment and engagement with reading.
- Older pupils hold positions of responsibility within the school, which they take very seriously. For example, the Year 6 pupils take ownership for leading the school's

annual open morning. Other pupils act as prefects and provide help to teachers.

- Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare, although when it does happen, their teachers sort it out quickly. Pupils understand the different forms of bullying and say they would report it to a teacher if they discovered it was happening.
- Teachers are beginning to identify more opportunities to develop pupils' wider cultural development, although leaders recognise that there is further work to be done. For example, the Year 4 class are doing work based around a novel set in Zimbabwe.
- The delivery of the school's programme for PSHE education is patchy. It does not consistently provide all pupils with the essential knowledge, skills and understanding that they require. While pupils have an excellent understanding of internet safety, their knowledge of the risks associated with alcohol and illegal drugs is less well developed.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' conduct in classrooms is usually exemplary. They settle down to tasks quickly, then remain focused on their work and try hard. Pupils listen well to their peers during discussions, taking turns to speak and valuing the contributions made by others.
- Pupils are respectful to others and well mannered. During the inspection, a pupil politely offered her seat to an inspector when there were no spare chairs available. This type of courteous behaviour among pupils is commonplace.
- Both the views of staff and parents indicate that pupils' behaviour is typically good or better. This is because teachers have clear expectations about pupils' conduct. Subsequently, there is a calm, friendly atmosphere throughout the school.
- Pupils play well together outside and enjoy each other's company. Apart from the high-energy chasing games with clear rules, the playground is a relatively relaxed place for pupils to socialise.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in their good rates of attendance which are above the national average. Despite the school's best efforts, a small minority of pupils arrive late to school. Leaders continue to work hard to address this issue.
- Some pupils present their work very neatly; others do not. Despite leaders having clear expectations about pupils' presentation, these are not consistently reinforced by all teachers.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- The large majority of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress in a variety of subjects, including English and mathematics. As a result of effective teaching, most pupils attain well, and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Due to leaders' continual focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning, pupils attain high standards by the end of key stage 2. In 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standard in reading was impressive, and double the national average figure. Similarly in mathematics, all Year 6 pupils achieved at least the

expected standard. The proportion of pupils exceeding it was also above the national average.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities generally achieve very well from their starting points because of bespoke support and carefully planned interventions. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked to ensure that they do as well as they can.
- The proportion of pupils passing the Year 1 phonics screening check has been above the national average for the last two years. This is the result of effective, systematic teaching of phonics on a daily basis. Teachers promptly respond to the needs of those that do not pass the screening check to ensure that they quickly catch up.
- Both boys and girls read widely and often. Generally, by the end of key stage 2, girls attain higher standards in reading and make better progress than boys. However, leaders' efforts to promote boys' reading are proving successful. Consequently, boys' current progress in reading is good and gaining pace.
- At key stage 1, most pupils make good progress and achieve well over time. The proportions of Year 2 pupils who attained at least the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics were above national averages. Similarly, those achieving at greater depth was broadly in line or above national figures.
- The most able pupils typically make good progress across the curriculum. Occasionally, teachers set tasks which do not enable all pupils to stretch themselves and demonstrate their full potential, particularly in writing.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is not as strong when compared with reading and mathematics. However, the proportion of pupils achieving at greater depth in writing, at the end of key stage 2, increased from below the national average in 2016 to in line with national in 2017. Pupils' progress across key stage 2 in writing is average, compared with reading and mathematics, which is well above average.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Leadership of the early years is good. Leaders use observations and assessment well to plan the next steps for groups of children. Children who may have SEN and/or disabilities have their needs identified early on, and appropriate support is put in place. This enables all children to make good progress.
- Teachers plan sessions that engage and motivate children to learn. For example, in the Reception class, children were excited to receive a letter from 'Pirate Blackbeard' who had lost his treasure. The theme stimulated children's rich use of language and encouraged them to write. Children took great pleasure and pride in successfully devising their own treasure maps and could explain the route to finding the treasure.
- The teaching of phonics is a strength. Children apply their phonic knowledge well to writing, enabling them to construct and write simple sentences or phrases with recognisable words.
- Teachers are responsive to children's needs and recognise when they would benefit from a change in activity. For example, when the attention of a few children began to wane during a focused task, the teacher switched the session to a movement activity with music which successfully re-energised the children.

- Children's behaviour is exemplary. Children cooperate and help each other out very naturally. They show positive attitudes to learning and are very willing to have a go at the range of interesting activities on offer.
- Children, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve well in the Reception class. For the last two years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been broadly in line or above the national average. The school's internal assessment information demonstrates that children make good progress from their starting points as a result of effective teaching.
- Leaders work proactively with parents so they can better support their children with learning at home. For example, staff organised a phonics workshop for parents so they could understand the school's approach to the teaching of early reading skills.
- Leaders apply the same stringent procedures for safeguarding as those in the rest of the school. There are several staff trained in paediatric first aid and leaders ensure the safe storage of images.

## School details

Unique reference number	141670
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10042847

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	210
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Matthew Hill
Principal	Paul Greavy
Telephone number	0121 458 2458
Website	<a href="http://www.stjosb30.bham.sch.uk">www.stjosb30.bham.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiry@stjosb30.bham.sch.uk">enquiry@stjosb30.bham.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- This school converted to an academy in April 2015. It joined the Lumen Christi Catholic MAC.
- The school is part of the Lumen Christi Catholic MAC, which comprises six local Catholic schools. The MAC is governed by a board of directors who have responsibility for all of the schools. They delegate certain responsibilities to each school through their local academy committees. The academy committee focuses on the day-to-day operations of the school.
- This school is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A low, although increasing proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported with a statement of SEN or an education, health and care plan is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who receive SEN support is broadly in line with the national average.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is just below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of key stage 2.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed a variety of lessons across all classes, of which almost all were jointly undertaken with senior leaders. Inspectors reviewed an extensive range of pupils' work across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors interviewed pupils and spoke to them during lessons and at other times to gather their opinions about school and learning.
- Inspectors observed pupils at playtime and during lunch.
- Inspectors met with the principal, the vice-principal and a range of other middle leaders, including the SEN coordinator. The lead inspector met with 15 school staff, including teachers, support and administrative staff to gather their views on leadership, professional development and pupils' learning.
- An inspector met with three local academy committee members, and additionally with the principal director of the MAC.
- Responses from 102 parents and carers to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) and 72 free-text responses from parents were analysed. An inspector also gathered parents' views at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to pupils about their interest in reading.
- Inspectors considered 21 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- The inspection team took into account a wide range of information including the school's website, development plans, attendance data, pupils' assessment information and leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning. Inspectors reviewed documentation relating to safeguarding, as well as local academy committee minutes and notes of visits from the MAC's improvement adviser.

## Inspection team

Tim Hill, lead inspector

Lindsay Nash

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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