

St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Armadale Drive, Leicester, Leicestershire LE5 1HF

Inspection dates

25–26 September 2018

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	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders do not systematically monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They do not have a precise overview of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good.
- A sizeable proportion of parents expressed concerns about the quality of the information they receive from the school.
- Teachers' expectations for the presentation of pupils' work are not consistently high.
- Teachers do not consistently provide feedback for pupils in line with the school's policy.
- The teaching of mathematics is not as strong as in English. Teachers do not address pupils' misconceptions consistently well or offer sufficient challenge for pupils.
- Pupils' progress and attainment in reading at the end of key stage 2 have been consistently below the national average for at least three years.
- Standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 declined in 2018 to below the national average.
- The early years outdoor area does not effectively support children's learning and development across all areas of learning.

The school has the following strengths

- The curriculum effectively promotes the school's core values to 'love, learn, respect and forgive'.
- Pupils are keen learners. They are proud of their school.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils' conduct is calm and orderly in lessons and around the school.
- The effective teaching of phonics enables pupils to make a good start in reading.
- Leadership and teaching in the early years are good. Children are well prepared for Year 1.
- The 2018 key stage 2 provisional results show improvements in writing and mathematics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management and secure sustained improvement by ensuring that leaders:
 - improve the rigour of their monitoring checks and use the outcomes to ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good throughout the school
 - improve home–school communications, including the school’s website, so that parents and carers feel well informed about their children’s progress and about the school in general.
- Eliminate the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils attain more highly and make faster progress by ensuring that:
 - teachers’ expectations for the presentation of pupils’ work and the quality of their handwriting are consistently high throughout the school
 - there are increased opportunities for teachers to share more widely the effective practice which exists within the school
 - teachers give feedback to pupils which is consistently in line with the school’s policy so that pupils know how to improve their work
 - teachers accurately address pupils’ misconceptions in mathematics and provide more challenge in order to deepen pupils’ mathematical knowledge and understanding.
- Improve pupils’ rates of progress and standards of attainment in reading at the end of key stages 1 and 2 to be at least in line with national averages.
- Improve provision in the early years by ensuring that the outdoor area promotes children’s learning and development in all of the areas of learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors were not effective in preventing a decline in pupils' attainment and rates of progress in reading and mathematics over time, in key stage 2. Rates of progress in reading at the end of key stage 2 have been below the national average for at least three years. Standards of attainment at the end of key stage 1 declined in 2018, in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders do not carry out systematic checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They have not used the outcomes of their monitoring to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good across the school.
- Leaders have not ensured that teachers consistently apply the school's policies. For example, teachers have variable expectations for pupils' handwriting.
- Leaders have not provided enough opportunities for teachers to learn from each other in order to eliminate the inconsistencies in the quality of their practice.
- Leaders have not ensured that home-school communications are as effective as they might be. In discussions with inspectors and in their responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, a significant proportion of parents and carers expressed concerns about the quality of information they receive. For example, this included issues such as their children's progress, homework, the quality of leadership and the school's response to concerns.
- Leaders and governors have taken effective steps to address some of the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. For example, there is evidence that the current focus on reading is having a positive impact on pupils' progress, which is improving. Leaders have also improved the clarity of the record-keeping systems regarding pupils' welfare so that they have a precise overview of concerns.
- The coordinator for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is effective. She has worked with colleagues from other schools to familiarise herself with the demands of her new role and to successfully develop her knowledge and skills. She has a clear process for making sure that pupils' additional needs are quickly and accurately identified. As a result, support for pupils is precisely targeted to their needs and they are beginning to make increasingly strong progress from their starting points.
- Middle leaders are developing appropriate skills. For example, the leader for reading is working effectively with leaders from other schools on a funded project to improve pupils' reading. There are early indications that this whole-school approach is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress in reading.
- Leaders describe the school's curriculum as 'broad, challenging and innovative' and they ensure that it effectively promotes the school's core values to 'love, learn, respect and forgive'. The work in pupils' books reflects learning across a wide range of topics

and subjects. During a discussion with the lead inspector, pupils accurately recalled memorable learning in science such as the water cycle and light sources, as well as a history topic about the First World War. Pupils were particularly enthusiastic about the school's provision for sports, including a range of after-school activities.

- Leaders and staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education well. For example, during an act of collective worship on the theme of friendship, pupils responded sensitively to an invitation to reflect on how they might show friendliness to others. Pupils receive teaching about a range of faiths and equalities and could describe how they respect and enjoy one another's differences. Pupils who spoke with inspectors showed understanding of the fundamental British values and there is an obvious culture of respect and tolerance throughout the school.
- Leaders ensure that they use the additional sports funding effectively to promote pupils' physical fitness, health and well-being.

Governance of the school

- Members of the local governing body have responded positively to the area for improvement from the last inspection relating to governance. This has resulted in an improvement in their effectiveness. There is evidence, from minutes of their meetings and through discussions with the lead inspector, that governors ask challenging questions of leaders. They have a clear focus on pupils' learning and progress, including that of disadvantaged pupils.
- The local governing body is clear about its roles and responsibilities in relation to the newly-formed St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust, which are clearly set out in the scheme of delegation. Governors expressed confidence in the trust's ability to ensure sustained school improvement.
- In discussion with the lead inspector, representatives of the multi-academy trust could demonstrate how they had quickly and accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have established an appropriate plan of enhanced support for leaders.
- All those responsible for governance are mindful of their statutory duties in regard to safeguarding. The chair of the local governing body carries out regular checks on the school's procedures.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have made sure that all employment checks are in place, in line with statutory requirements.
- Leaders have made sure that all teaching and support staff receive regular training and updates regarding safeguarding. This means that they can respond appropriately to any pupil welfare concerns which may occur. Safeguarding records are thorough and

well-maintained.

- The school employs a part-time family support worker who works effectively alongside leaders to provide support for vulnerable pupils and their families. This has had a positive impact on pupils' well-being and also on their attendance.
- The well-coordinated and thorough approach to safeguarding has resulted in a strong culture of care and vigilance which permeates the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good across the school. This means that some pupils do not learn and progress as well as they should. This was confirmed during the inspection by talking with pupils, checking their learning in lessons and the work in their books, and by considering the school's assessment information.
- Evidence from pupils' workbooks shows that teachers do not have consistently high expectations for what pupils should achieve in their handwriting and in the presentation of their work. Sometimes, in their own handwriting, teachers do not model high standards for pupils.
- Teachers do not give feedback to pupils that is consistently in line with the school's policy. This means that pupils do not receive a consistent message about how to improve their work.
- The teaching of mathematics is not as strong as in English, in both key stages 1 and 2. At times, teachers do not address pupils' misconceptions or offer sufficient challenge to deepen pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers have high expectations for pupils' conduct in lessons. As a result, relationships are strong and pupils make good use of their time and support each other well in their learning.
- Teachers use questioning effectively to establish what pupils know and challenge their thinking, especially in reading and writing.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly resilient and confident readers because of good teaching and the school's focus on this aspect of the curriculum. Pupils who read with inspectors showed a good range of skills and understanding of texts.
- The effective teaching of phonics in key stage 1 enables pupils to make a good start in their reading and writing.
- Parents expressed mixed views about the homework that is set for their children. Just under half of those who responded to Ofsted's online survey were dissatisfied with the school's approach to homework.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school. Those who spoke with inspectors stressed how friendly the pupils and staff are. Those who had recently joined the school described the warm and caring welcome they had received.
- Pupils display positive attitudes to learning. They typically cooperate well with each other in lessons, following routines and instructions readily and without fuss.
- Pupils, staff and parents agree that the school is safe. Pupils could talk about a range of ways in which they are kept safe at school and about the teaching they have received.
- The extensive and attractive school grounds are laid out to promote pupils' physical, social and emotional well-being. For example, there are spaces set aside for pupils to be quiet or chat with friends as well as areas such as the 'tyre park' for vigorous play activities.
- Pupils' pride in their work is variable, as seen in their books. This is because teachers in some year groups do not set high enough expectations for the standards they wish to see.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons and around school is orderly. This was seen throughout the inspection in all parts of the school and at all times of the day. Pupils show natural courtesy towards each other and to adults.
- The large majority of parents who completed the online survey expressed positive views about pupils' behaviour. Pupils who spoke with inspectors confirmed that lessons and playtimes are rarely disrupted by incidents of poor behaviour. The headteacher's records confirm that instances of bullying or behaviour-related incidents are rare and are handled appropriately, in line with the school's policy.

Rates of absence and persistent absence have improved, following an increase in 2017, to below the national average. This reflects the positive work of leaders in conjunction with the family support worker. The headteacher continues to apply a rigorous approach to requests for term-time holiday absences.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Rates of progress and standards of attainment in reading at the end of key stage 2 have been consistently below the national average for at least three years. This includes the latest, provisional, figures for 2018.
- The school's assessment information shows that current progress in reading, writing and mathematics is not consistently good across all year groups. Progress is weaker in Years 3 and 4. In all year groups, progress in reading lags behind that in other subjects.
- The 2018 provisional results for key stage 1 show a decline in attainment at the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. The figures for attainment at greater depth are slightly improved from 2017 but likely to remain below the national average.
- The 2018 provisional results for key stage 2 are encouraging in some respects. Progress in writing improved to above the national average and progress in mathematics remained in line with the national average.
- The 2018 combined results for key stage 2 attainment in reading, writing and mathematics improved to above the national average at the expected and at the higher standard.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check increased to well above the national average.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership and teaching in the early years are good. Staff know the children, and their needs, very well. This close knowledge is enhanced by the fact that the children in the Nursery Year are fully integrated with those who are in the Reception Year.
- The early years leader has an accurate overview of the provision and of children's progress. As a result, she leads the team with a view to tailoring the curriculum to the specific needs of the children.
- Children enter the early years with knowledge and skills that are often below those which are typical for their age. Because of good teaching, children make good progress towards the early learning goals and are well prepared for Year 1. This applies equally to the small proportion of disadvantaged pupils.
- Children who are limited in their communication and language skills receive additional support from staff to help them catch up quickly. This continues into Year 1 if required.
- Although the children have been in school for just a few weeks, they have settled well and are responding appropriately to routines and expectations. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere across the provision.
- Staff have ensured that a suitable range of activities are available, especially in the

indoor areas. Children can move freely between the three areas and initiate their own learning as they wish. Alongside this, adults ensure that the children's participation in the range of activities is carefully monitored, to support any gaps in their learning and development.

- Adults employ effective use of questioning to gently encourage children to think and talk about their learning.
- During the inspection, examples were seen of children communicating and interacting well. For example, a small group of girls and boys were excited to tell the inspector that they were playing 'families', having negotiated their roles in the home corner. This led to good conversation, turn-taking and cooperation.
- Examples of children's work in the learning journey folders from the previous year show evidence of their progress, especially with regard to their early writing skills. Some who were in the very early stages of mark-making at the beginning of the year were writing with clarity by the end of the year.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective. Staff training is up to date and children are safe and well cared for.
- The staff liaise effectively and regularly with parents and carers. This is achieved by means of conversations, 'stay and play' sessions, parent workshops and through parent contributions to the learning journeys. Parents who spoke with inspectors were highly satisfied with the care and teaching their children receive.

School details

Unique reference number	138115
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10053289

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Catholic voluntary academy
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	283
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Sarah Jayne Noon
Headteacher	Andrea Leslie
Telephone number	01162 416197
Website	www.st-josephs.leicester.sch.uk
Email address	office@st-josephs.leicester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2018

Information about this school

- St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy is an average-sized primary school.
- The school joined the newly-formed St Thomas Aquinas Multi-Academy Trust in September 2018. Responsibility for governance rests with the trustees. Responsibility for governance rests with the trustees. However, some powers are delegated to the

local governing body.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language are above the national average.
- Children in the Nursery Year are taught alongside children in the Reception Year. There is no separate Nursery provision. The early years provision comprises two open-plan classes which are interconnected, and one shared outdoor area.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 16 lessons or part lessons, some jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at work across an extensive range of pupils' books and considered the school's assessment information on the progress and standards achieved by current pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked with them about their reading.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and leaders with responsibility for English, mathematics, early years, and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Inspectors met with those responsible for attendance, behaviour, bullying and exclusions, disadvantaged pupils and the sport premium. They also met with other teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body, including the chair of the governing body.
- The lead inspector met with the chief operating officer and the director of performance and standards of the St Thomas Aquinas Multi-Academy Trust.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day, on both days of the inspection. The lead inspector considered the 38 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the five responses to the online staff survey.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation, including the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation summary, minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's current information on pupils' attainment and progress, attendance records, behaviour and exclusion logs, external reports on the work of the school, monitoring and evaluation records and a range of documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Christine Watkins, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Gayle Bacon	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Fielding	Ofsted Inspector

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