

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



8 May 2019

Mrs Catherine Bryan  
Headteacher  
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School  
St Joseph's Close  
Ombersley Way  
Droitwich  
Worcestershire  
WR9 0RY

Dear Mrs Bryan

### **Short inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 3 April 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in June 2015.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

The school is rightly proud of its Catholic ethos which underpins everything you and your staff do. Consequently, St Joseph's School is a caring, happy place to be. Since taking up the position of acting headteacher in January 2016, and subsequently the role of substantive headteacher in April 2016, you have established a stable staff team who all share your commitment to ensuring that pupils receive the best possible standards of education. Relationships between pupils, parents and staff are positive. The overwhelming majority of parents who shared their views during this inspection are happy with the quality of education their children receive and the caring, nurturing environment that has been created. Staff feel well supported and respected by leaders and appreciate that their well-being is considered important.

Pupils behave well. They are polite, courteous and respectful towards adults and each other. They speak highly of the teachers and of the care they receive in school. They particularly enjoy the wide range of experiences the curriculum provides for them. Their attitudes to learning are mostly positive, although in lessons where pupils are not sufficiently challenged or supported they sometimes become distracted and lose interest. The work in pupils' books shows that they take pride in their work and want to do their best.

You and your deputy headteacher work well together and share a clear vision for the school. You have thought carefully about the curriculum provided, ensuring it is broad, rich, engaging and meets the learning needs of pupils. Regular checks of teaching and learning are carried out and the information gathered is used to identify appropriate improvement priorities. Improvement plans plainly set out the actions that need to be completed. Information about pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is gathered regularly. However, this information is not used well enough to measure how much progress pupils are making over time. This means leaders are unable to demonstrate how successfully the actions they are taking are improving outcomes for pupils.

Governors are very supportive of the school. They are diligent and understand their roles well. Records of meetings show that governors challenge leaders, holding them to account for some aspects of the school's work. However, because they are not provided with sufficient information about how well pupils are progressing in reading, writing and mathematics, governors are not able to challenge leaders well enough on this aspect of the school's performance.

Many of the recommendations from the school's previous inspection report have been met. The previous inspection found that senior leaders were not being supported as well as they could have been. This has been rectified by providing additional training and ensuring that senior leaders play an active role in all aspects of the school's work. Pupils have been helped to improve their use of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Evidence of this can be seen in their written work.

Published data for the last three years shows that progress in key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics is average. In 2018, there was some improvement in progress in reading and writing and a more marked improvement in mathematics. Overall, however, progress across key stage 2 remains average in all three of these subject areas. Information provided by the school during the inspection shows this also to be the case for current pupils. The vast majority of pupils make average progress to achieve or exceed the standards expected of them by the end of key stage 2. However, not enough pupils make progress that is better than this. Consequently, despite the actions taken by leaders, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have not risen sufficiently since the last inspection.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The school's safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and the website contains the required information. You and your governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and have established an effective safeguarding culture. All staff undertake appropriate, up-to-date training and, as a result, they are knowledgeable about the procedures for keeping children safe and know what to do if they have any concerns. Written records are sufficiently detailed, well maintained and stored appropriately. You ensure that all the necessary procedures are followed during the recruitment of staff.

Pupils demonstrate a clear knowledge and understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. For example, the pupils I spoke to had good knowledge about how to stay safe when using the internet. They also have an age-appropriate understanding of a range of different types of bullying and what to do if it happens to them. Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for in school and that bullying is rare and staff deal with it quickly and effectively when it happens. The school's behaviour logs support this, as do the parents and carers who responded to the Parent View survey. However, a small number of pupils who responded to the pupil survey felt bullying wasn't always dealt with quickly enough by adults.

You and the staff work well with parents, ensuring that those who are experiencing challenges are supported appropriately. Several parents commented on this in their responses to the Parent View survey, saying they value the support offered to them. Support and advice from other professionals are sought where necessary. Referrals are made in a timely way and followed up appropriately.

### **Inspection findings**

- Pupils join the school in Nursery and Reception with skills that are broadly typical for their age. The proportion of children attaining a good level of development by the end of their Reception Year matches that found nationally. In 2018, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard by the end of key stage 1, in reading, writing and mathematics, was in line with the national figure. In writing and mathematics, more pupils achieved the higher standard than found nationally.
- For the last three years the attainment of pupils at the end of key stage 2 has compared well with the national average. Published information for 2018, for example, shows that the proportion of pupils achieving both the expected and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics combined was just above the national figure. During this time, however, progress in reading, writing and mathematics has been broadly average. Not enough pupils make better-than-average progress by the end of Year 6 and therefore they do not achieve the standards they are capable of achieving.
- In 2016 reading progress was below average. In response to this, a range of initiatives were implemented, aimed at strengthening teaching in reading, including overhauling the guided reading curriculum. Training for teachers was also provided to enable them to develop pupils' skills of inference and deduction. Although these actions resulted in some improvement, progress remains average.
- Actions have also been taken over the last few years to try and improve outcomes in writing. Monitoring identified that pupils needed to develop their stamina for writing and their use of vocabulary. While the work in pupils' books shows that these actions are beginning to have an impact on improving writing, progress remains average.
- Progress in mathematics, while still average, is stronger. This is due to recent improvements made to the teaching of mathematics, including ensuring that teachers provide appropriate challenge and support during lessons. Evidence from observations of learning show that pupils are developing their mathematical understanding and skills well.

- Information is regularly collected from teachers about the standards achieved by pupils and detailed information is held about individual pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. However, this information has not been analysed well enough to enable leaders to demonstrate how much progress pupils are making in each year group. During the inspection we were able to use some of this information to identify that the vast majority of pupils currently in school are making average progress. A small number of pupils are making progress that is better than average. This means that the actions taken by leaders that were intended to bring about improved outcomes for pupils have not had the desired effects.
- Improvement plans set out clearly the actions that need to be taken in order to meet the objective set. However, because the progress made by pupils is not linked to these actions, leaders are not able to sufficiently demonstrate the impact of their actions on improved outcomes for pupils. This also makes it difficult for governors to hold leaders to account for this aspect of the school's performance.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the abundance of information available to leaders is used accurately to measure the progress made by pupils across the school in reading, writing and mathematics
- this information is used effectively to identify and implement strategies to bring about improved outcomes for pupils, particularly in English
- actions in improvement plans are linked more clearly to their impact on the progress made by pupils
- the governing body is provided with accurate information about the progress made by pupils so that it is able to provide robust challenge to school leaders.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Archdiocese of Birmingham, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Worcestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Janet Satchwell  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

With you and the acting deputy headteacher, I visited classrooms and looked at examples of pupils' work. I examined a wide range of documentation, including the school development plan, the school's self-evaluation document and records of safeguarding. Throughout the inspection, I held discussions with you and the deputy headteacher, including analysing the school's assessment information. I discussed safeguarding policies and procedures with you. I met with four members of the

governing body, including the chair. I considered the 36 responses provided during this inspection to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including the 16 comments sent via free text. I also reviewed the 108 responses to the pupil survey and the 20 responses to the staff survey. I spoke to pupils, observed their behaviour and I reviewed the school's website.