

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Darlaston

Rough Hay Road, Darlaston, Wednesbury, West Midlands WS10 8HN

**Inspection dates**

4–5 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Staffing difficulties led to delays in dealing with concerns raised at the last inspection. A new headteacher and other staff are now in post.
- Although the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving, it is not yet good. New approaches to teaching mathematics are not yet fully embedded. Writing is not taught well enough, particularly in subjects other than English.
- In some classrooms, including in Nursery and Reception, basic routines for learning are not firmly established. This slows pupils' learning. Occasionally, expectations of pupils are too low.
- Additional adults do not contribute as much as they could to pupils' learning.
- Outcomes are improving but are still not strong enough. Key stage 2 results in reading and mathematics were broadly average in 2018. Writing results were poor. At key stage 1, pupils achieved in line with expectations. The results of the Year 1 phonics screening check were broadly average.
- Education and outcomes in the early years require improvement. Planning lacks coherence and classroom routines are not sufficiently established. Some resources for learning need upgrading. Children are not prepared well enough for the start of Year 1.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher is providing very good leadership. She has an ambitious vision for the school and has developed its Catholic ethos. She is well supported by other leaders and staff. Reading is taught well.
- Pupils are safeguarded and cared for well. They are given good opportunities to grow as individuals and develop positive attitudes to themselves and others. They attend school regularly and conduct themselves well.
- The content of the curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant. Pupils are taught a suitable range of subjects and benefit from a wide choice of extra-curricular opportunities.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to other pupils.
- The governing body has secured strong and effective leadership for the school.

## Full report

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

- Further improve the quality of teaching in key stage 1 and key stage 2, by:
  - embedding the new approaches to teaching mathematics
  - ensuring that work set for pupils is suitably challenging
  - developing the quality, accuracy and length of pupils' writing, including in subjects other than English
  - making sure that interventions provided by additional adults are effective.
- Improve the quality of education and outcomes in the early years, by:
  - adopting more consistent approaches to routine and everyday tasks
  - ensuring that all new activities consolidate or extend children's previous learning
  - enhancing the resources used by children when learning indoors and outdoors.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The new headteacher is providing strong leadership. Since her appointment, she has developed the school's Catholic ethos and introduced much higher expectations for staff and pupils. She has a clear vision for the school, underpinned by senior leaders' determination to provide an excellent education for pupils.
- The school is a welcoming, friendly and orderly learning community, reflecting its motto of: 'guided by Jesus, learning together, striving for excellence'.
- Leaders know the school well. They have dealt with weaknesses in leadership, staff training and the curriculum. Their fortitude and resilience have resolved nearly all of the school's previously long-standing staffing difficulties.
- Although further improvement is required, pupils are now achieving higher standards than in recent years. In particular, the introduction of new whole-school approaches has strengthened the teaching of reading and mathematics.
- Leaders are well supported by the staff. Many are very new to the school and their roles. These new staff are highly supportive of the way the school is led. Training for staff is regular and effective. Some key roles are still filled temporarily, although permanent staff have been appointed from September 2019.
- A broad, balanced and relevant curriculum meets the needs of pupils. All national curriculum subjects, including music, are taught. Pupils learn French from Year 3 onwards.
- Pupils benefit from a wide variety of sporting, artistic and other clubs and trips, including archery, dance, martial arts, road safety, storytelling and visits to local attractions. Pupils enjoy the contribution made by visitors to the school.
- Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is embedded well in the Catholic values that underpin school life. Leaders make regular checks on the pupils' personal development through observation and the collation and analysis of pupils' views. The school welcomes children from a diverse range of faiths and celebrates these through assemblies, a multi-faith week in the summer term and frequent visits to places of worship.
- Additional funding is used to support disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND well. Sport premium funding is used effectively to support all pupils' general health and fitness.
- The school engages well with parents. Parents are mostly very positive about the improvements being made to the school. A minority believe that communication should be better, especially in relation to staffing changes. A very small number raised concerns about the ethos of the school.
- The local authority and diocese have commissioned effective support for the school, which is due to continue next year.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governance of the school is effective.
- New appointments to the governing body have extended its experience and expertise. It is ambitious and is setting a clear strategic direction for the school.
- The governing body provides effective challenge for school leaders. It interrogates the information it receives carefully. Regular visits to school, and meetings with senior leaders, help to further governors' understanding of the school's performance.
- Governors monitor spending and its impact on standards, including the pupil premium, sport premium and funding for pupils with SEND. The governing body has a good understanding of its statutory responsibilities, including those for safeguarding.
- The governing body recognised that serious weaknesses in staffing led to delays in dealing with concerns identified at the last inspection. With support from the local authority and the diocese, the governing body acted swiftly to appoint an executive headteacher in April 2018. This brought stability to the school. Following this, a substantive headteacher was appointed in December 2018.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding of pupils is a high priority and a strong culture of safeguarding permeates the school. All staff are suitably vigilant. Pupils are supervised inside and outside the school well. Leaders assess risks to pupils thoroughly, including when going on trips and visits. All necessary checks are made on staff and visitors to the school.
- Training for staff is regular and effective. The designated safeguarding leads are well trained. Staff are able to identify pupils who may be vulnerable and know what to do and who to contact if they have concerns. Staff work well with external agencies. Effective systems are in place to follow up any concerns, including in relation to the 'Prevent' duty, which aims to protect pupils from extremism.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They say that bullying is rare. They know who to speak to if they are upset or worried. They are taught to keep safe and healthy in age-appropriate ways, including when using the internet.

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

## **Requires improvement**

- Not all teaching is sufficiently effective.
- Where teaching requires improvement, teachers and other adults have not established basic or effective routines. They employ different strategies for doing the same thing, which can become confusing for pupils. Some teachers spend too much time focusing on classroom organisation rather than on helping pupils learn. In a few instances, teachers' expectations of the amount and quality of work that pupils should do are too low.
- The more effective teaching takes account of what pupils already know, understand and can do. This is underpinned by well-understood and established routines, which

ensure that all classroom activities run smoothly. In such instances, pupils know where to sit on the carpet and how they should answer questions. They move quickly and without fuss between different activities. They know when they should talk about their learning and when they are expected to write quietly.

- Relationships between staff and pupils are generally very good. A positive atmosphere fosters positive attitudes to learning in nearly all classrooms.
- New, whole-school approaches to the teaching of reading and mathematics are helping pupils learn more effectively. Although teachers are well supported a few lack specialist subject knowledge.
- In writing, pupils have been slower to make progress. Inconsistencies in previous teaching mean that many younger pupils require significant help and when forming simple letters. Others struggle to draft sentences, build paragraphs or write accurately. Many pupils struggle to spell simple words. In a few cases, pupils' experience of writing is disjointed or lacks context, which limits the development of understanding.
- A new writing programme, which is thoughtful and creative, is starting to address these issues. However, not all teachers are fully comfortable with the new approach or its materials and its implementation, therefore, is uneven. More widely, not enough is done to foster the quality of writing in subjects other than English. It is often cursory or lacks purpose and ambition.
- In English, pupils study good-quality texts. Lesson planning is usually effective because it is done jointly. Regular monitoring of the quality of English teaching is helping to achieve greater consistency in provision and outcomes.
- Reading is taught well across the school. Pupils develop sound phonics knowledge by the end of key stage 1. Most pupils are taught to read accurately and confidently.
- In mathematics, lessons give pupils regular opportunities to develop mathematical fluency by learning or recalling number facts, using reasoning and applying their understanding to solve problems. However, some work is too easy and not enough is done to fill gaps in previous learning. The approach to teaching mathematics is new and inconsistencies in teaching reflect this.
- Pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils are taught similarly to others. Recent changes to the support given to pupils with SEND means they spend more time in classrooms rather than being withdrawn for intervention. This has improved their learning.
- Additional adults who support pupils in the classroom or who run specific interventions, have only a limited effect on helping pupils to learn. The support they provide is often disconnected, ill-planned or lacks ambition.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say they are happy at school. They are cared for well in a nurturing environment. The breakfast club is well supervised and provides a good start to the

school day.

- Pupils develop strong moral and other values, including those of the Catholic faith. They are tolerant of each other and respect difference. Pupils learn eagerly about the world in which they live and their place in it. They have a good understanding of British values, which prepares them well for their future lives.
- Pupils learn to take care of themselves. Most understand the importance of eating healthily and take physical exercise during break and lunchtime. New initiatives in the school are encouraging healthy eating and regular exercise.
- Pupils raise money for others by helping with coffee mornings. They collect clothing and food for local and overseas charities, which reflects their concerns for others.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They move around the school sensibly and are usually very kind to each other. Pupils play together cooperatively during break and lunchtimes.
- Pupils are friendly and polite. They treat adults they meet with respect, for example opening doors to visitors. They are proud of their school and are looking forward to wearing their new school uniform next term.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning overall. When they are organised well, they respond eagerly and quickly to instructions in lessons. Instances of minor disruption are rare. Pupils are very rarely excluded from school.
- Pupils' attendance and punctuality are good, including for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. Attendance and punctuality have improved and incidents of persistent absence and lateness fell last year. Levels of attendance are in line with the national average for similar schools.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Pupils' test results at the end of key stage 2 in reading and mathematics were broadly average in 2018. These results were better than in previous years. However, results for writing were poor.
- Key stage 2 pupils in the school are not yet doing as well as they should across all subjects. Although Year 6 pupils are working at a good standard, given their starting points, pupils' progress in other year groups is limited by gaps in their knowledge.
- Reading outcomes in key stage 2 are satisfactory. A new and well-planned programme to support reading, with high-quality and age-appropriate texts, is having a discernible impact on pupils' progress. Pupils read with fluency and expression. Pupils usually tackle difficult reading matter, adjusted for their age, with confidence. In Year 6, pupils read Shakespeare and 19th-century fiction.
- Outcomes in mathematics are improving. A new approach to teaching mathematics helps pupils move from concrete activity to more abstract understanding. However, some pupils struggle with mathematical fluency, particularly middle- and lower-attaining pupils. Their recall of basic number facts is uncertain, including times tables.

Overall, the new approach is not yet fully embedded and standards are not yet high enough.

- Key stage 1 pupils' reading and mathematics test results in 2018 were in line with national averages. Most Year 2 pupils achieved the standards expected for their age. Pupils achieved adequately in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1. New guided reading schemes are helping pupils to extend their reading skills and understanding throughout key stage 1.
- Standards in writing are not yet good enough. In key stage 1, many pupils struggle to form letters correctly or compose simple sentences accurately. Younger pupils do not write at length often enough. Basic spelling and punctuation mistakes are very frequent.
- Few pupils are working at or above the level expected for their age. Although many pupils write at length at key stage 2, across a variety of genres, too many do not write with enough accuracy. Handwriting is often untidy.
- Across the school, pupils do not write at length enough in subjects other than English. As a result, standards of writing in these subjects are often low.
- Pupils achieve good outcomes in French and music.
- Taking their starting points into account, pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils achieve similarly to other pupils.

### **Early years provision**

### **Requires improvement**

- Children are helped to settle into the Nursery or Reception classes when they join the school. Effective liaison between home and school ensures that all relevant information is shared. Transition into the early years from other settings is carefully managed.
- The early years is being supported by senior leaders but the lack of permanent leadership has led to delays in improving the quality of education. This has been rectified ready for next term.
- Teaching, learning and assessment in the early years require improvement because planning is not precise enough. It does not draw on accurate assessments of children's prior learning. Consequently, some children spend time on activities that do not extend their learning. Activities are often disjointed and children's experiences can lack coherence. Some teachers' instructions are not clear.
- The basic routines for learning do not support pupils well enough. Teachers and other adults spend unnecessary time managing the children's movements rather than supporting their learning. Routine question and answer sessions do not have clear rules and this can lead to distraction. Despite these difficulties, children in the early years usually behave well. They are enthusiastic about their learning and enjoy coming to school.
- The majority of children enter Nursery or Reception with levels of skills and knowledge below those typical for their age. Although they are cared for effectively, they are not taught well enough. Too few achieve or exceed the standards expected by the time they leave Reception. Many still struggle with communication and language, literacy and mathematics. Children are not prepared well enough for Year 1.

- Additional funding is used effectively to improve learning for disadvantaged children through additional staffing. Children with SEND are given extra help as needed. Supervision and care for children is effective. Children are safeguarded effectively and early years regulations are met. Some indoor and outdoor resources used by children are outdated or need upgrading.



## School details

Unique reference number	104235
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10088479

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr R Dalton
Headteacher	Mrs K Hinton
Telephone number	0121 5686496
Website	<a href="http://www.st-josephs.walsall.sch.uk">www.st-josephs.walsall.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:postbox@st-josephs.walsall.sch.uk">postbox@st-josephs.walsall.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	3–4 May 2017

## Information about this school

- St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly average.
- The school offers early years provision for Nursery- and Reception-age children. No pupils attend alternative provision. The school runs a breakfast club.
- This is a Catholic voluntary aided school. The most recent Section 48 inspection of the religious aspects of the school was conducted in November 2017.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classrooms and observed pupils' behaviour and their learning. They talked with pupils about their work and experiences at school. They observed pupils at break and lunchtime. They visited the breakfast club and attended an assembly.
- Inspectors spoke with school leaders, other staff, governors, and representatives of the diocese and local authority. They scrutinised a large sample of pupils' books as well as other information about pupils' learning. They considered a wide range of additional evidence, including key documents about safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents and spoke with them on both days of the inspection. They took account of parental questionnaires administered by the school. They also took account of the 18 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, including 13 written comments. Inspectors considered the 15 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Mike Cladingbowl, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Graeme Rudland	Ofsted Inspector

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