

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

115 St Mary's Lane, Upminster, Essex, RM14 2QB

Inspection dates

10–11 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2	2
Early years provision	Good	2	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides strong leadership. He knows the school well and has a clear vision for its future development.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, are effective in making sure that teaching and pupils' achievement are improving.
- By the time they leave school, pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2014, Year 6 pupils achieved particularly well in mathematics.
- Teaching is good and improving. Teachers provide quality written feedback which supports pupils' learning and enables them to make good progress over time.
- Children achieve well in Reception because adults use the setting well to stimulate children's curiosity and develop their personal skills.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and their attendance is above average. They are polite and keen to help others. They enjoy being able to contribute to all aspects of the school's life.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations.
- Governors have a good understanding of pupils' performance and the quality of teaching. They are skilful in holding leaders to account for pupils' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always give pupils, especially the most-able, suitably challenging work.
- Pupils sometimes lack confidence in asking and answering questions in detail, and sometimes do not give reasons for their answers.
- Pupils have few opportunities to apply their numeracy skills across different topics and subjects.
- Leaders in the early years are not routinely analysing children's progress information by group and using this to improve teaching further.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 teaching sessions, three of which were observed jointly with school leaders. In addition, inspectors scrutinised pupils' books and looked at how pupils were learning across a range of subjects.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, the local authority's school improvement adviser, and school staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents. These included the school's attainment and progress information, planning and monitoring documentation, the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation summary, the safeguarding policies, and behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors took account of the 85 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 44 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about the school's work and listened to some pupils read.

Inspection team

Nasim Butt, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Janice Thomas	Additional inspector
Noureddin Khassal	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Pupils from Black African backgrounds comprise the next highest ethnic group.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, such as those who are eligible for free school meals or who are looked after, for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- The school's early years provision comprises two Reception classes which children attend on a full-time basis.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the impact of teaching and further raise achievement by:
 - making sure that pupils, especially the most able, are always given challenging work to help them learn quickly
 - encouraging pupils, where appropriate, to reflect and give detailed reasons for their answers to teachers' questions
 - giving pupils more opportunities to apply their mathematical problem-solving skills in a wide range of situations and subjects.
- Ensure that leaders in the early years setting analyse children's progress information by group on a regular basis and use this to target teaching more effectively.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides a clear direction for the development of the school. He is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and governing body and is making the changes needed to make the school even better. The school's own view of the quality of its work is accurate; leaders know the school's strengths and the next steps they need to take.
- The school has effective ways of checking the quality of teaching and learning. Consequently, teaching has improved since the previous inspection. All staff are involved in identifying what they need to do next to improve their work, and the school provides them with relevant training to help them to reach their targets.
- The role of subject leaders has developed well since the previous inspection. They have a good understanding of the strengths and areas to improve in their subject. This information is used well to identify clear priorities and provide helpful challenge and support.
- The school's leaders, including governors, analyse carefully how pupil premium funding is spent to best serve those pupils who receive this additional support. This includes providing additional teaching assistants, additional materials, and emotional support where it is necessary. As a result, disadvantaged pupils achieve at least as well as their peers, and in some instances outperform them.
- Pupils enjoy learning a wide range of subjects through the vehicle of the international primary curriculum including French and music taught by specialist teachers. The topics and subjects pupils learn enable them to write at length, for example when explaining the reasons for why things happen in science. However, they do not always have such good opportunities to apply their mathematical skills across a wide range of subjects.
- The school promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very successfully. There are excellent opportunities in assemblies and lessons to learn about various cultures and religions and to explore the deeper meaning of life. As a result, pupils have a stronger sense of identity and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Members of staff promote equality well. There are good relationships between staff and their pupils so that the school is calm and welcoming. The school does not tolerate any form of discrimination.
- The school uses primary sport and physical education funding well to offer additional clubs and activities after school and at lunchtimes. It has also been used to provide gymnastics equipment and additional specialist training for all staff to develop the teaching of physical education. As a result, more pupils now take part in competitive sports and pupils enjoy the sports coaching which impacts positively on their health and well-being.
- The local authority is providing the right level of 'light-touch' support for this good and improving school. Leaders' skills in checking the quality of teaching and learning have sharpened as a result of the joint work undertaken with advisers from Havering.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are kept well informed of all aspects of the school's work and, as a result, they understand the school's strengths and areas for improvement well. They know how well the school is performing compared with others and are well placed to provide a good level of challenge and support for senior leaders. For example, governors ask searching questions after the termly pupil progress meetings to find out about achievement in every year group. This includes evaluating the effectiveness of how the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is being used. Governors are fully involved in checking how well teachers are doing and in setting them targets to improve further. They know how good teaching is at the school, how good teaching is rewarded and what is done to tackle any weaknesses. The governing body makes sure statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding. As a consequence, a strong culture of safety prevails throughout the school, ensuring that pupils are free from harm.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and respectful of each other, both in and out of lessons. They behave sensibly at lunchtimes and in their movements around the school. They are proud of their school, their uniform and their work.

- Parents and pupils agree that behaviour at the school is good. Rare instances of poor behaviour are tackled swiftly and successfully. Pupils have risen to the high expectations set and, as a consequence, there have been no exclusions since the previous inspection.
- Leaders are checking pupils' attendance rigorously and attendance figures are above average. The school has been successful in encouraging some families who were poor at coming to school to attend regularly.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to contribute to school life. They demonstrate a suitable understanding of British values. For example, they learn about democracy through the election process for the school council. All pupils, from whatever background, are part of a strong and cohesive school community.
- Pupils are keen to learn, but sometimes lack the confidence to ask or answer questions about their learning in detail. Sometimes they rely on the teacher to tell them what to do next, rather than have the confidence to continue with their work. This is why behaviour is not yet outstanding.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents are very positive about how the school helps to keep their children safe.
- Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including, for example, using the internet. The well-organised Internet Safety Day during the inspection enabled pupils to consolidate their understanding of internet safety. Pupils were very engaged in thinking about how they would perform a 'good digital deed' when faced with different scenarios.
- Pupils are aware of what constitutes negative or discriminatory language and are adamant that this does not occur in their school. They are similarly aware of the different types of bullying, and emphasise that on the rare occasions when this happens, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers explain the purpose of learning well and share with pupils what success will look like by the end of the lesson. They keep pupils on track, pick up and clarify misconceptions, and ensure that good progress is maintained.
- Good teaching in reading, writing and mathematics has led to clear improvements in pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, and this is reflected in higher levels of attainment in both key stages. The focus on problem-solving in mathematics and carrying out fair testing in science is equipping pupils with the skills they need to be successful in the future.
- Teachers mark pupils' books regularly, and teachers and teaching assistants regularly praise their work. Teachers' comments give clear guidance to pupils to help them improve their work and ask for additional tasks to be done so the pupils can show they understand what they have learned. In addition, teachers are skilful in making sure that pupils respond to or complete the tasks to a suitably high standard.
- Teachers make sure that good resources are available to support the pupils' learning. Free access to various types of equipment to help pupils perform mathematical operations enables less able pupils and those with special educational needs to deepen their learning.
- Well-trained teaching assistants work well with individuals and small groups of pupils, providing specific help as needed. For example, in a literacy lesson, teaching assistants guided the pupils well, while giving them the opportunity to put forward their own ideas for their stories.
- Through targeted questioning, teachers probe the understanding of the most able pupils and help them to clarify their thinking. However, at times, pupils, especially the most able, are not set challenging enough tasks that help them to make rapid progress.
- Pupils say that they enjoy homework because teachers link the tasks well to the learning covered in lessons. Some parents who responded to the online questionnaire, however, were of the view that their child is not set enough homework. School leaders are in the process of reviewing this as part of their strategy to further improve engagement with parents.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils achieve well from their starting points and attainment has been rising over the last two years. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is now above average by the end of Year 6 and pupils make good progress across the school.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 was broadly average in 2014. The school's information, supported by evidence in pupils' books, indicates that the current Year 2 pupils

are making faster progress and reaching higher standards.

- Pupils do especially well in mathematics. Staff training and a focus on mathematics are ensuring that pupils are making faster progress in this subject. However, progress in writing is also improving fast as a result of opportunities for pupils to write at length, supported by valuable teacher feedback.
- After a decline in the results of the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2014, the school has improved the way that sounds and letters (phonics) are being taught. The school's assessment information shows that standards are much higher this year. Pupils enjoy reading, are confident and make good use of their phonics to help read unfamiliar words.
- Disadvantaged pupils eligible for additional funding make good progress from their starting points. In 2014, the few pupils at the end of Year 6 closed the gap completely, reaching standards in line with their peers. In addition, these pupils reached standards broadly in line with other pupils nationally in reading and writing, and were a term ahead of other pupils nationally in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. This is because their specific needs are identified and teachers and teaching assistants provide the right level of support in lessons without stifling their ability to do things for themselves.
- The very small minority of pupils from ethnic groups, including Black African pupils and those who speak English as an additional language, learn well and make similarly good progress to other pupils throughout the school, achieving results that are above average for similar pupils nationally.
- The most able pupils do well in most classes and the school is increasing the number who are working above the levels expected for their age. There are still a few occasions when teachers do not provide them with challenging enough work, however, and this can limit their progress.

The early years provision

is good

- Most children enter Reception working at the levels typical for their age. They achieve well and make good progress, especially in developing their social skills and ability to listen. Children's attainment is above average by the time they join Year 1.
- Good teaching ensures that children learn in an environment that is rich in resources, both indoors and outdoors, including attractive displays of children's work. Children's behaviour is good; they listen well to adults and actively enjoy answering questions to show their understanding. The staff have a strong focus on ensuring children are safe.
- Disabled children and those with special educational needs make good progress because they are supported effectively. Members of staff make sure that tasks are adapted so that they are able to take part in all activities.
- Children develop their personal and social skills well. Most are confident in choosing their own learning activity when appropriate, and they move calmly and sensibly around the room without interrupting others in their learning or discussions with adults. They use equipment safely in the classroom and outside, sometimes with the support and guidance of adults.
- Leadership and management ensure that the good quality of provision has been successfully maintained from the previous inspection. Leaders are very knowledgeable about individual children and engage parents well with their child's learning. However, leaders are not routinely analysing children's progress information by group and using this to target teaching more effectively.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.
			A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.

School details

Unique reference number	102334
Local authority	Harvering
Inspection number	449719

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	429
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fiona Maude
Headteacher	James Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 June 2010
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