

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Royal Avenue, Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire EN8 7EN

Inspection dates

26–27 April 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead the school effectively. They have a clear vision for how they want the school to be. They have ensured that the school is good and improving.
- Current pupils are making good progress from their individual starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. They are also making good progress in a wide range of other subjects.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is particularly strong. Pupils develop excellent attitudes to equality as a result of the all-pervading ethos in the school.
- Governance is strong. The governing body recognised that it was not holding the school's leaders to account well enough. They have addressed this issue and now provide appropriate challenge as well as support.
- Safeguarding is effective. Statutory requirements are met and there are robust arrangements in place to keep children safe.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. The provision is led well. The environment, indoors and outdoors, provides children with a good range of appropriate activities across all areas of learning.
- The quality of teaching is good. The relationships between staff and pupils are particularly strong. Pupils feel well supported and this helps them to make good progress.
- Pupils feel very safe at St Joseph's. Bullying is rare and, when it does occur, it is dealt with quickly and well.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school. They express high levels of satisfaction and almost all of the parents who responded to Parent View said that they would recommend the school to others.
- Pupils behave extremely well, both in lessons and during less structured parts of the day. Learning time is very rarely wasted as a result of disruptive behaviour.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning is not fully effective in continuing to improve the quality of teaching in the school. The approach is not systematic enough to have a direct and very strong impact on teaching.
- The work that pupils are given to do is not always challenging enough. In mathematics, pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their reasoning skills. As a result, not enough pupils make very rapid progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop a systematic approach to monitoring, so that activities have more impact on improving the quality of teaching, by ensuring that:
 - areas for development identified during one lesson observation are followed up during subsequent observations
 - different types of monitoring activity (such as scrutiny of pupils' work and lesson observations) are linked so that the most important areas for development are identified.
- Increase the proportion of pupils that make very rapid progress by ensuring that pupils are provided with:
 - sufficient challenge in lessons
 - frequent opportunities to develop their reasoning skills in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher lead the school effectively. Their different skills, strengths and expertise complement each other well. The school's leaders have a very clear shared vision for the school and are working steadily towards achieving it. As a result, the school is a happy and improving one, where pupils achieve well and behave impeccably.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is led very well. The special educational needs coordinator has a clear process for identifying pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Additional funding is used well to provide a range of appropriate support for pupils and the progress that they make is monitored closely.
- The pupil premium grant is spent effectively. The funding is used to provide a wide range of support for disadvantaged pupils, including academic, emotional and practical support. For example, the school works with a local charity to give pupils the opportunity to take part in activities such as making willow sculptures and to receive support such as regular counselling sessions.
- Parents express great satisfaction with the school and are highly supportive of it. They feel that their children are safe and well looked after at St Joseph's. Many parents told inspectors that the school is 'like a family', where every pupil is known well as an individual. Almost all the parents who responded to Parent View said that they would recommend the school to others.
- The primary physical education and sports premium is spent effectively. As well as expanding the range of opportunities available to pupils, the funding is used to develop teachers' skills and expertise in teaching physical education. Some of the funding has been used for the school's subscription to a local school sports partnership. This has increased pupils' access to competitive sports.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development particularly well. For example, the school has joined a programme offered by an international charity. This has given pupils a better understanding of issues faced by people around the world than might typically be found in primary-aged children. The school's Catholic ethos is promoted by pupils who are members of the chaplaincy team, who describe themselves as 'sharing the gospel in a kid-friendly way'.
- Pupils are prepared very well for life in modern British society. They are taught to view all people as equals and not to judge others on their physical or other characteristics. Pupils know that the school's motto is to 'live, love and learn by the example of Jesus'. They use this message to help them to remember how to treat other people fairly and equally. Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to develop responsibility, such as by being an arts ambassador or by being a news group leader.
- The school takes a topic-based approach to its curriculum and has found that this has improved pupils' attitudes to learning. Teachers plan exciting starts to each topic to capture pupils' interest. Parents are invited into school to share pupils' work at the end

of each topic. Teachers bring visitors in, and arrange educational visits, to enhance and extend pupils' understanding of the topics that they learn about.

Governance of the school

- Governors bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to their roles. They know the school very well and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Governors are realistic in their assessment of how good the school is.
- Governors recognised that, in the past, they were not holding the school's leaders to account well enough. They have changed their approach to ensure that they place a strong enough emphasis on providing professional challenge as well as supporting the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's single central record of pre-employment checks meets statutory requirements. The school's approach to the safer recruitment of staff is robust and there are appropriate measures in place to ensure that only suitable people are employed to work with children.
- There is a very strong safeguarding culture throughout the school. Staff are alert to the possibility of neglect and abuse, and know the right action to take if they have concerns. The designated safeguarding lead has a good understanding of local procedures and the importance of taking the right action in a timely fashion.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Relationships between staff and pupils are very strong. Teachers know pupils very well and this helps pupils to feel extremely well supported. Pupils said that teachers 'try to help you on your level' and that 'they don't judge you'. The strength of these relationships is a key reason for pupils' consistently good attitudes to learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants manage pupils' behaviour extremely well. They have high expectations of how pupils should behave and how hard they should try. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent throughout the school.
- Teaching is structured well. Teachers plan lessons, and series of lessons, effectively to build on pupils' developing knowledge progressively and systematically. They give pupils interesting tasks to do to practise the new skills that they learn.
- Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach. This enables them to explain new concepts accurately and demonstrate clearly. Teachers work closely together and use their individual expertise to benefit classes other than their own.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teaching assistants are knowledgeable and well-informed. They work closely with teachers to ensure that they understand fully the work that they are to do.

- Assessment is effective. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils' prior learning to help them with their new learning. Teachers continually review what pupils know and are able to do. This enables them to identify misconceptions when they happen and to address them quickly. This helps pupils to make better progress.
- Staff and leaders share a strong commitment to continually improving the quality of teaching in the school. They identify the right areas to focus on and then work together to improve them. For example, the school is currently working on improving the way that pupils are taught reasoning skills in mathematics.
- Leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms. They identify areas for development and work with teachers, where necessary, to help them with specific areas of their practice.
- Monitoring of the quality of teaching is not fully effective in raising standards because the approach is not systematic enough. Areas for development identified when leaders observe teaching are not followed up in subsequent observations. This means that monitoring is less strategic and focused than it could be, and its impact is less as a result.
- The progress that pupils make is sometimes slowed by the tasks that they are given to do. In some instances, pupils are not given work that is sufficiently challenging. For example, in mathematics pupils are required to complete too many of the same type and level of calculation before they can move on to more challenging work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils feel safe at school. They know what bullying is because they have been taught about it effectively. Pupils say that bullying is rare at St Joseph's and, when it does happen, it is sorted out very quickly by staff.
- Pupils love their school and are extremely proud of it. They rightly see their school as a friendly and welcoming place. They are respectful, considerate and supportive of everyone in the school.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to equality and diversity. They are taught consistently that, 'God made us all equal' and this shines through in the way that pupils talk about other people. Pupils have excellent knowledge about key figures in the civil rights movement, such as Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, as a result of the school's celebration of Black History Month.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They are keen to do well and they work hard. Pupils take pride in their work and they do their best. The work in pupils' exercise books is frequently neat, tidy and well presented.
- Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. They are developing a good understanding of e-safety and how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.

- Pupils are very kind and caring towards each other. They are self-disciplined and self-regulating. That is, they choose to do the right thing rather than being made to do so by the threat of consequences for not following them. Pupils are, without exception, polite, well-mannered and a credit to their school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils behave extremely well during lessons. Teachers' expectations of how pupils should behave are high and pupils respond accordingly. As a result, classrooms are calm, orderly and productive places where little learning time is lost.
- Incidents of bad behaviour are rare. During less-structured parts of the day, such as playtimes, pupils rarely need reminding to do the right thing. When incidents of poor behaviour do occur, suitable action is taken and appropriate records are kept.
- Leaders have high expectations about attendance and, as a result, pupils attend school regularly and on time. Attendance for this academic year is well above the national average overall.
- Pupils' attendance is monitored closely. Prompt action is taken when pupils fail to arrive at school without explanation. Leaders take effective action when pupils' attendance falls below acceptable levels. The school's approach to improving attendance is highly effective. As a result, no groups of pupils are disadvantaged by low attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Current pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and a wide range of other subjects, as a result of the good teaching that they receive. The results in the 2016 key stage 2 national tests did not accurately reflect the good progress that pupils make.
- Outcomes in phonics have improved every year for the last three years. Results in the Year 1 phonics screening check were above the national average in 2016.
- Pupil premium funding is having a positive impact on improving outcomes. Published data in 2016 showed that outcomes for disadvantaged pupils at St Joseph's are sometimes better than those for other pupils. The school's own assessment information and the work in pupils' exercise books confirm that disadvantaged pupils are making good progress throughout the school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their individual starting points. Pupils' progress is tracked closely and additional actions are taken, where necessary.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make good progress. Leaders check regularly that they are making the progress that they should. Similarly, previously low attainers are monitored carefully to ensure that they make the progress that they need to in order to catch up.

- Pupils read fluently and confidently. They use their knowledge of phonics well to help them to break down and read unfamiliar words. Pupils enjoy reading and read at home with their parents regularly.
- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average in 2016. Leaders acknowledge that they were not quick enough to respond to the slow progress this cohort made as they moved from key stage 1 to key stage 2. Tracking of pupils' progress has since been strengthened and leaders now take prompt action to address slow progress if and when it occurs.
- Too few pupils make very rapid progress from their individual starting points.

Early years provision

Good

- In general, children enter the nursery class with skills and abilities that are well below those that are typical of their age, particularly in terms of language development. They make good progress in Nursery and enter the Reception Year below, but much closer to, an average level.
- The proportion of children who reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year is now rising. The proportion of children who are on track to reach a good level of development this year is similar to the national average.
- Children are making good progress because the quality of teaching in the early years is good. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together. They ensure that children are offered a wide range of interesting and appropriately challenging opportunities in all areas of the early years curriculum.
- Assessment systems are sound and improving. Teachers work with early years colleagues from other local schools to ensure that the judgements they make about children are similar to those made in other schools.
- The large and attractive outdoor area is used well. Children are given appropriate opportunities to learn to manage risks safely. For example, children need to scale a small hill in order to reach a fort. They learn to take care when climbing the steep slope and when coming back down again.
- The early years is led and managed well. Leaders have a clear vision for how the early years should be developed and know the provision's strengths and weaknesses well. As a result, the early years provision is good and improving.
- Children behave extremely well in the early years. Staff help children to learn the rules and expectations very quickly. The foundations for the outstanding behaviour throughout the school are clearly established in the early years classes.
- Children work very well together. They learn to cooperate and help each other. They persevere with activities and become resilient, trying again when they find something difficult at the first attempt.

School details

Unique reference number	117429
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10031408

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael McKay
Headteacher	Tony Gorton
Telephone number	01992 629503
Website	www.stjosephsherts.co.uk
Email address	head@stjosephs351.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 November 2006

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school meets current floor standards. These are the minimum standards, set by the government, for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of information to judge the quality of teaching and learning over time. Inspectors observed in parts of 14 lessons, some jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other leaders, a representative of the local authority, a group of pupils and eight members of the school's governing body.
- Inspectors looked closely at the work in pupils' exercise books, listened to them read and talked to them about their work.
- Inspectors spoke to parents on the playground as they brought their children to school. They took into account 43 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's assessment information, records of leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in the school, and a range of other documents.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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