

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School, Rochdale

Pot Hall, Wilton Grove, Heywood, OL10 2AA

Inspection dates 5–6 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, there is still some teaching that requires improvement and a very small minority that is inadequate.
- Although achievement is improving, it is not doing so quickly enough and the proportion of pupils making or exceeding expected progress is not yet sustained over time.
- The work that teachers set does not always challenge pupils. Pupils sometimes spend too much time on work that is too easy for them.
- Teachers do not always check that pupils understand their work or ensure that they learn well.
- Although pupils' work is regularly marked, teachers' comments do not tell them clearly enough what they need to do to improve. Teachers do not always ensure that their comments are followed up and pupils' responses are checked.
- Senior leaders and the governing body do not always rigorously monitor the impact of the strategies for improvement and do not ensure that the school improvement plan ensures that improvements take place quickly enough.
- The role of subject leaders is not yet fully developed and they do not play a full part in driving school improvement forward, especially to improve the quality of teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- Children's learning gets off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils say they feel safe and are well cared for. This view is supported by the vast majority of parents.
- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are good.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and they arrive to school on time.
- An interesting range of subjects and topics is covered in lessons, that ensure that pupils enjoy school. This contributes well to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Senior leaders and the governing body know the school's strengths and what needs to be done to improve it further.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons taught by 12 teachers. Two lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors looked at the school's analysis of how well it is doing and its development plan, documents relating to behaviour and safety, minutes of meetings of the governing body, data on pupils' progress, and pupils' work.
- The inspectors held meetings with staff, three groups of pupils, four members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 19 responses from parents recorded in the online questionnaire (Parent View), together with the 141 responses to the parents' questionnaire recently carried out by the school and the 24 responses to the staff questionnaire. Inspectors also held informal conversations with some parents.

Inspection team

Alan Parkinson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Pamela Hemphill

Additional Inspector

Patricia Cope

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Joseph's is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is in line with the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding based on the number of pupils in local authority care, those from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are in line with the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of those supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The school meets the current government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school operates a before- and after-school care facility for pupils from the school.
- The school has achieved the Investor in People Award and in 2011 achieved the Leading Parent Partnership Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and always setting work that is hard enough for pupils of all abilities
 - making sure that teachers always check that pupils understand what they are expected to learn
 - ensuring that teachers' marking always provides pupils with clear information about what they have to do to improve, and checking that pupils follow up teachers' comments.
- Improve leadership and management and the contribution of the governing body, so that the school improves at a good rate, by:
 - making sure that senior leaders and the governing body check more carefully on the impact on pupils' achievement, of changes made
 - ensuring that the school improvement plan sets out clear actions for improvement, shows that these will be completed quickly and shows how success is to be measured
 - developing the role of subject leaders so that they make a more effective contribution to raising attainment and, especially, ensuring the quality of teaching is consistently good or better.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are below those expected for their age. Some children's skills in speaking and listening, and personal and social development are well below those expected. However, good teaching in the Reception Year enables children to make good progress. By the end of the Reception Year children's skills, in the majority of areas, are in line with national expectations. Good communication with parents helps them to support their children's learning.
- Although progress between Years 1 and 6 is improving, overall it requires improvement. In recent years, by the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been below average. In 2012, however, standards improved; these pupils made the progress expected nationally from their below-average starting points. Standards in reading and mathematics are stronger than in writing. These improvements reflect the school's recent focus on developing pupils' reading and mathematical skills. The school has recently introduced strategies aimed at speeding up pupils' progress in writing to a good rate, and there are now signs that this is starting to work.
- Between Years 3 and 6 pupils make progress at the expected rate in English and mathematics. By the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment is broadly average. Although some pupils make good progress, such as in Year 6, the quality of teaching is not always good enough to ensure that all pupils make consistently good progress.
- There are no significant variations between the achievements of different groups of pupils over time. Pupils, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those eligible for the pupil premium funding, progress as well as their peers. Pupils at risk of falling behind in their learning are quickly identified and additional support is provided, such as the one-to-one or small-group work provided for pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding. This has enabled them to develop their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make and improve their reading and numeracy skills.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage the teaching of literacy, phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) and numeracy is good. As a result, children make good progress. Teachers provide children with exciting activities that stimulate them so they are attentive and enjoy learning.
- Although some good teaching was seen, teaching is not consistently good overall and requires improvement. Teachers do not always check carefully enough whether pupils understand the work they are given and this hampers their ability to work at a good rate.
- In a small minority of lessons teachers do not always pick up quickly enough where learning is too slow and, as a result, pupils do not always get the support they need to achieve well. Teachers do not always set work that is hard enough for pupils of varying abilities and their expectations of what the pupils can do are not always high enough.
- In the best lessons, such as in a Year 6 history lesson observed, teachers have good subject knowledge, plan lessons well and provide activities that stimulate pupils so that they learn quickly. In these lessons pupils respond well to teachers' skilful questioning that challenges their understanding and encourages them to think for themselves.
- In a Year 4 and 5 English lesson, in order to develop pupils' writing skills, the teacher made it clear to pupils what they were going to learn and what work they had to do. Pupils were given work that helped them to learn quickly and good opportunities for them to share their ideas with each other. Pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and the good relationships between pupils, and between pupils and the teacher and teaching assistants, enabled pupils to learn well.
- Pupils say they enjoy their lessons and know how well they are doing. Although teachers mark

pupils' work regularly and use praise effectively to encourage pupils, they do not always provide specific written comments that tell pupils what they need to do to improve. Teachers do not always ensure that the pupils follow up their comments. Consequently, pupils do not always make good progress.

- Teaching assistants are used well in lessons to support learning, particularly for lower-ability pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Their contribution to pupils' learning enables them to develop their skills and achieve as well as their classmates.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The vast majority of pupils are well behaved in lessons and around the school. They are polite, well-mannered and courteous towards each other and to adults and visitors.
- Pupils say they feel safe because they are well cared for by teachers and other adults. The relationships between pupils of all abilities and backgrounds, and between pupils and adults, are very good. Pupils are fully aware of the different forms of bullying; they report that it is rare and any instances are quickly resolved. Pupils feel confident to talk to an adult if they have any concerns.
- The responses to Parent View and to the parental survey carried out by the school are very positive. The vast majority of parents agree that their children behave well in school and that they are well cared for, are not bullied and feel safe at school.
- The start of the school day is well managed. Effective procedures are in place to ensure the safety of pupils and parents. Pupils move to their classrooms quickly and teachers ensure that time is well used. For example, pupils practise their handwriting skills and teachers make sure they are ready for a prompt start to the first lesson.
- The school's provision of before-school and after-school care in the 'Cool Cats' and 'Wild Things' club is good. These sessions offer a lively, caring and secure setting, and a range of activities are enjoyed by the pupils. For example, the before-school session, 'wake-up and shake-up' provides a good physical activity for stretching and movement to music. Pupils choose from a healthy selection of breakfast foods.
- Attendance has improved over the last three years and is now above average. Pupils arrive at school on time, which mirrors their positive attitudes towards learning and enjoyment of school.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body have accurately identified the school's strengths and areas for further development. Raising standards further by improving the quality of teaching is its main priority. Although the school improvement plan sets out what the school needs to do to improve, it does not set clear short-term timescales in which to implement the necessary actions or identify how success is to be measured. This means that, although some changes are showing an impact on teaching and pupils' progress, the pace of improvement is not fast enough.
- Regular observations of lessons and systems to monitor the quality of teaching provide teachers with accurate feedback on their performance. This information is used well by the headteacher in order to provide a relevant programme of staff training, and to advise the governing body about teachers' pay awards.
- The school's systems for checking pupils' progress are good. This information is shared regularly with teachers and aspirational targets are set to speed up pupils' progress. This is working well. Any variations in pupils' achievement are identified swiftly and action taken. Pupils at risk of falling behind in their learning are quickly identified and additional support is provided. This shows the school's commitment to offering equal opportunity for all its pupils.
- Subject leaders have recently started to develop their skills. However, they still do not play a full

part in driving school improvement, especially in efforts to check and to improve the quality of teaching.

- Lesson observations and reviews of pupils' work in their books by inspectors show that teaching has improved since the previous inspection. However, the rate of improvement is not fast enough: there is still some teaching that requires improvement and a very small minority that is inadequate.
 - The subjects and topics on offer are well planned so that they match pupils' interests well. The school provides pupils with a variety of activities to enrich their experiences, such as a trip to Cadbury World as part of pupils' topic work. This helps them to extend their range of academic and social skills.
 - Pupils raise money for charities, such as supporting families in Africa so that they can have access to clean water. Pupils are actively involved with the local community, such as by providing food parcels for those most in need. These activities, together with school assemblies, contribute well to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which is a strength of the school.
 - The school has effective procedures in place to protect pupils, especially those pupils whose circumstances make them most vulnerable. This is strengthened by the effective partnership with the local authority.
 - The local authority has provided effective and valuable support for the school in a number of areas. Since the previous inspection the school has received intensive support and advice including support to develop the roles of the literacy and numeracy coordinators.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body knows the school well because of the information it receives and from regular visits to the school. Governors have a good understanding of the school's finances. This includes allocating the pupil premium funding to provide one-to-one support and to improve the reading and mathematical skills of pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Although they challenge and support school leaders, they do not always rigorously monitor the impact of improvement work or ensure that the quality of teaching is always at least good. Governors are now developing their understanding of the ways in which they can become more involved in school improvement. For example, all members have joined the school's curriculum focus groups that discuss school developments. Safeguarding policies and procedures meet statutory requirements.
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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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	105833
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	400803

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	297
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev. Fr. Paul Daly
Headteacher	Mr. Anthony Gleeson
Date of previous school inspection	18 May 2010
Telephone number	01706 369340
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