

St Joseph's Catholic Junior School

Gardenia Avenue, Luton, LU3 2NS

Inspection dates 5–6 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Most pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Some pupils make outstanding progress in reading.
- The difference between the achievement of different groups of pupils is narrowing rapidly, and all groups of pupils benefit from good-quality teaching.
- Teachers have a very good understanding of most pupils' learning needs. Consequently, work is usually well matched to most pupils' abilities.
- Excellent relationships between pupils and teachers underpin the good teaching and achievement.
- Pupils have outstanding attitudes to learning. Their behaviour is exemplary and pupils are extremely proud of their school. Mutual respect pervades all aspects of school life.
- Although there was a 'dip' in achievement in 2012, all leaders have successfully identified why this happened. They are making sure that any underachievement is identified quickly through rigorously monitoring the achievement of all pupils and groups of pupils.
- All leaders and managers make a very good contribution to improving achievement and teaching.
- The governing body understands the school's strengths and further areas for development accurately. It provides a good level of support and challenge to the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching consistently uses marking and feedback as well as it should and teachers do not always change activities during lessons if pupils find the work too hard or too easy.
- Achievement in writing is not as good as it is in reading and mathematics.
- Some of the most-able pupils, and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action, do not always make as much progress as they are capable of making.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 30 lessons, of which 12 were jointly observed with a senior leader. Members of the inspection team also made 11 short visits to lessons to check on the progress that different groups of pupils were making.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils. Other meetings were held with governors, senior leaders and staff, including those responsible for leading subjects and year groups.
- Inspectors analysed 39 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) during the inspection, as well as responses to questionnaires from 21 staff. They also analysed responses to the school's own questionnaire for parents.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including those relating to the monitoring of teaching and the targets set for teachers to improve their work. They also looked at records relating to attendance, behaviour, bullying and safeguarding, the school improvement plan, data on pupils' progress and samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority.

Inspection team

Richard Sutton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lesley Mackay	Additional Inspector
Rosemarie McCarthy	Additional Inspector
David Westall	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized junior school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- Just over half of the pupils are from minority ethnic heritages which is much higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- A fifth of pupils are supported through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals. This is lower than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards for primary schools, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
 - targets which are set to help pupils improve their work are consistently acted on by pupils and checked by teachers
 - teachers modify the activities in lessons if some pupils are finding the work too easy or too hard
 - work is matched more closely to the needs of the most-able pupils, and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action
 - all pupils have more opportunities to develop their writing skills for 'real-life' contexts and are able to write in different ways in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most groups of pupils, including those from ethnic minority heritages, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action plus, make good progress. In some year groups, some pupils make outstanding progress, particularly in reading.
- In recent years, pupils leaving the school at the end of Year 6 have achieved broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics from starting points which have been just below average when they enter the school. In 2011, most pupils made better-than-average progress, particularly in mathematics, but in 2012 progress was not as good. However, the school has acted quickly to ensure that this dip in progress is not repeated this year, and most pupils are making good progress as a result.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because they receive good support through teaching which is usually well matched to their needs. Other pupils who join the school at an early stage of learning English receive good small-group and individual support which quickly enables them to benefit from whole-class teaching.
- The school spends its pupil premium funding in a wide variety of ways including, for example, financial support for eligible pupils to take part in educational trips and visits as well as additional staff who provide a good level of personalised academic support. As a result of the additional academic support, as well as good or better teaching, eligible pupils are making good progress and the difference between their achievement and that of other pupils is narrowing rapidly. This is a significant improvement compared to 2012, when the attainment of eligible pupils in both English and mathematics was a year behind that of other pupils.
- Achievement in writing is not as good as it is in reading and mathematics. However, when work enables pupils to write for 'real-life' situations, pupils are highly motivated and keen to produce high-quality writing.

The quality of teaching is good

- The teaching is good, and sometimes it is outstanding. Consequently, pupils are highly motivated to achieve well and they have good skills and abilities which are developed skilfully by teachers. Therefore, pupils are well prepared for secondary education.
- The very best teaching in the school is underpinned by teachers' good understanding of each pupil's ability. As a result, teaching is predominantly well matched to each pupil's needs most of the time.
- All teachers have good subject knowledge which they use effectively to plan learning activities which inspire and motivate pupils. For example, pupils in Year 4 were developing their mathematical skills to a good level through a structured drama activity involving calculations with money. In a class in Year 3, the teacher provided pupils with different levels of work which appropriately challenged all pupils to use different mathematical processes to solve practical problems.
- Pupils are helped very effectively to develop their thinking and understanding by responding to teachers' questions which are frequently pitched at the right level for different pupils. Teachers also enable pupils to learn well through structured discussions with other pupils.

- Pupils who receive additional support from teaching assistants, both in the class and in small groups, make good progress because teaching assistants have good questioning skills which help pupils to think for themselves.
- The quality of marking is usually good and makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. However, some pupils do not always act on the advice given by their teachers and some teachers do not always check that this has happened.
- Teachers use assessment in lessons well and monitor how much progress pupils are making. However, sometimes teachers do not always change the activities if they find that some pupils are finding the work too easy or too difficult and this means that pupils are not always able to make more rapid progress. This is particularly the case for some of the most-able pupils as well as disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour throughout the school during lessons and at break times is exemplary. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning, and the vast majority are keen and determined to achieve well.
- Pupils respond very well to the good teaching which they receive. They work hard and try their best in the vast majority of lessons.
- Pupils told inspectors that they are proud of their school. They feel safe and value very much the outstanding levels of personalised care, guidance and support which teachers provide.
- A particularly impressive feature of the school is the excellent relationships between pupils and staff. This is often seen in the high levels of mature and mutually supportive collaboration that takes place in many lessons.
- Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare, and school records confirm this. Pupils are well informed and knowledgeable about the various types of bullying and they are appropriately equipped with strategies to manage such situations, should they arise in or out of school.
- The vast majority of pupils are polite, courteous and well mannered, and this contributes significantly to their good learning and achievement.
- Pupils attend school regularly and on time. Attendance has been consistently above average for several years.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, very well supported by her skilful team of senior leaders and governors, has ensured that the vast majority of staff, pupils and parents are all committed to playing their respective roles in ensuring that achievement and teaching continue to improve.
- All leaders and managers provide good levels of support and challenge which ensure that teaching is regularly monitored and actions are put in place to strengthen and improve teaching and achievement. Staff told inspectors that they appreciate this approach to their professional development.
- All leaders and managers have the capacity to enable the school to continue to improve. For

example, accurate and robust self-evaluation effectively identifies the key areas for further improvement as a result of the effective monitoring work in which leaders engage.

- All teachers are set targets to improve their teaching and these targets guide decisions about pay increases. Staff receive high-quality training which enables them to work towards achieving their targets and so further improve their teaching and the achievement of pupils.
- The subjects that pupils study are made more exciting through educational trips and a wide and varied range of clubs and activities which are well attended. Pupils develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well through these additional activities as well as in lessons. For example, inspectors observed a group of pupils exploring moral issues about fair-trade products prior to their visit to a local supermarket.
- The school's 'creative curriculum' provides pupils with a wide and diverse range of subjects which enable them to apply their reading and mathematical skills in an appropriate variety of ways as well as learn about other subjects. However, the 'creative curriculum' does not consistently enable pupils to develop their writing skills in different ways as much as it should do.
- The reason why leadership and management are not yet outstanding is because achievement is not yet outstanding, particularly in writing.
- The local authority has provided an appropriate level of challenge and support. It also provides a range of training and development opportunities, when requested by the school, which are well received.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has an astute understanding of the school's strengths and further areas for development. It has a clear understanding of the school's performance and compares this with other schools both nationally and locally. It has a strong understanding of how information about pupils' progress is used and provides a good level of both challenge and support to the headteacher.
 - Governors manage school finances well and they have a good understanding of how additional funding such as the pupil premium is used and the positive impact that this funding is having on the achievement of eligible pupils. They are aware of how targets are set for teachers and monitor how these targets are linked to pay increases. They make sure that the school fulfils its responsibilities regarding safeguarding; all staff have been checked as required and are trained appropriately to keep pupils safe and free from harm.

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	109635
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	412453

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	476
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debbie Main
Headteacher	Jacqueline Lee
Date of previous school inspection	5 May 2010
Telephone number	01582 572964
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