

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Hill Top, Hednesford, Cannock, WS12 1DE

Inspection dates 26–27 November 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and direction and is very well supported by staff and governors. Leaders' thorough checks on teaching and learning have been instrumental in improving standards.
- Pupils achieve well. They start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with abilities broadly expected of children their age. By the time they leave in year 6, pupils are reaching standards well above that expected in reading, writing and maths.
- Pupils have good attitudes towards their learning. They are keen, polite and well mannered. They work collaboratively and help each other to learn.
- Teaching is consistently good across the school. Teachers have high expectations and create a positive climate for learning.
- The school promotes spiritual, social and moral development very successfully. As a result, pupils are reflective, are supportive of one another and build positive relationships with other pupils and staff.
- Pupils feel safe in school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding and consequently is not leading to outstanding progress for all groups, especially the most able.
- The school does not place the same emphasis on promoting cultural development as successfully as it does, social, moral and spiritual.
- Not enough opportunity is given for younger pupils to develop and extend their answers in class.
- Subject leaders are not having sufficient impact on raising standards further.
- Senior leaders have not implemented highly successful links that ensures all parents are fully engaged with the work of the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 18 lessons and observed all teachers teaching. 5 lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke with parents, held discussions with pupils, governors, senior leaders, staff, a representative from the local authority and a representative from an external school improvement agency that currently works with the school.
- Inspectors listened to some pupils read and looked at a selection of pupils' work.
- Inspectors took account of Parent View (Ofsted's on-line survey) and the most recent surveys that parents had completed in school. They also looked at questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents covering safeguarding and child protection, attendance, behaviour, pupils' progress and attainment, the work of the governing body, the school improvement plan and the monitoring of teaching quality.

Inspection team

Mark Mallender, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mary Maybank

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average. (This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and pupils with a parent in the armed forces).
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and are supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of these pupils supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is average.
- All pupils are educated on site. The school does not use alternative provision to support any of its pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum standards for pupil's attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching by:
 - setting even more challenging tasks for the most-able pupils
 - developing the spoken language of pupils in Key Stage 1 with an expectation that they will develop and expand their answers in class.
- Improving pupils' cultural development by providing them with first hand experiences of the diverse range of cultures and faiths in the UK and globally.
- Strengthen leadership and management further by:
 - strengthening links with parents so that their concerns can readily be voiced and heard
 - developing the skills of subject leaders so that they can make a stronger contribution to raising pupils' achievement to outstanding.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Although a few children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with the knowledge and skills below that expected for their age, the majority join with the knowledge and skills expected for their age. All groups make good progress and by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage most pupils achieve at a standard that is above that expected for their age.
- All groups of pupils are tracked carefully through the school and are given the necessary support required to accelerate their learning and close any gaps. As a result of good teaching and timely interventions all groups make good progress and achieve standards at the end of year 6 that are well above average.
- Pupils are extremely enthusiastic readers. They show a genuine love for books and really enjoy reading. Their scores in the 2013 national Year 1 phonics check were well above average. By the end of year 2 standards of reading are above average, and by the end of year 6 they are well above. The most-able pupils read fluently and with good expression and those pupils who find difficulty reading have clearly been taught the skills needed to read new words.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding make progress in line with their peers. Appropriate interventions and additional support ensure that any gaps in the achievement of these pupils, and other pupils in their year group, are closed. In 2013 there were too few pupil premium pupils in Year 6 to report on their attainment without identifying them.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make very good progress throughout the school. The good quality of the teaching, care and guidance that these pupils receive leads to their good achievement. In 2013 year 6 pupils with special educational needs made good progress across all subjects and outstanding progress in maths and reading.
- In 2013 the most able pupils did not make as much progress as other groups. Current information shows that the most able pupils in the school are making good progress, but sometimes they could be challenged even more in order to make even better progress.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers plan well thought out lessons with activities that engage pupils. Pupils report that learning is fun and their teachers help them improve through the setting of relevant targets and marking that not only celebrates pupils' successes but gives them advice and points them towards their next steps in learning.
- Teachers have high expectations. They model skills well and most teachers ensure that their lessons move at a brisk pace. In Key Stage 2 teachers skilfully balance the amount of time they spend talking to pupils with the amount of time they give pupils to talk to each other about their learning. This very good use of 'talk partners' enables pupils to help further each other's learning and greatly impacts on progress. This effective technique is not as prevalent in Key Stage 1 and it is here that pupils do not get enough opportunity to develop their speaking skills. Some teachers don't request that pupils expand on or develop their answers and ideas.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide excellent support to pupils who find some work difficult. They work with these pupils one to one or in small groups ensuring that the learning is pitched at the appropriate level and that they make good progress. However, teachers don't make full use of

other adults to stretch the most able pupils.

- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning, enjoy their work and set about activities with great enthusiasm. In a Year 2 lesson the teacher thoroughly engaged the pupils in a phonics activity. Pupils were learning the 'ow' sound and that this can sometimes be spelt 'ou'. Pupils took great pride in independently creating and writing sentences such as 'The clown bowed as he shouted "Chow!".'
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults aim high from the outset and children are encouraged to be independent. Planning is detailed, and adults provide good opportunities for collaborative learning where the children can develop their social skills. Adults interact well with children, taking opportunities to develop their social, observational and language skills. Detailed notes and assessments enable staff to know where the children are in their development and what the next steps need to be, although this detailed, ongoing assessment is more embedded in Reception than Nursery. Activities are purposeful and varied and carefully planned to promote different aspects of children's learning.
- Teachers go to great lengths to capture the pupils' imagination. In one Key Stage 2 lesson a teacher skilfully used a television advertisement to encourage pupils to use rich descriptive language about feelings, sights and sounds. In a Key stage 1 lesson, a teacher skilfully used the story of 'The Three Little Pigs' to relate how the pigs felt after their house had been blown down to how someone being bullied might feel. In another lesson pupils orbited a light projector with models of the earth and moon to understand the different phases of the lunar calendar.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Whilst a few parents expressed concerns about bullying and how the school dealt with their concerns, the inspection found that inappropriate behaviour was dealt with effectively and as one Year 6 pupil reported, 'There would be serious consequences if someone was being unkind or bullying.' Pupils are aware of the different forms of bullying and clearly know the difference between it and falling out. They look after each other well and Year 6 pupils are particularly proud to be the buddy of a Reception child for the whole year.
- Pupils show a high degree of kindness and tolerance towards each other and when asked why this was the case, a child responded with 'We learn from the teachings of Jesus how to treat each other'. This ethos is embedded throughout the school and can be seen in lessons where pupils work well together and support each other.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. They appreciate the hard work of their teachers, but also work hard themselves in serving their school community. They relish responsibilities bestowed on them such as 'House Captains' who have the responsibility of collating all the house points at the end of each week to celebrate in assembly. Simple responsibilities, such as looking after the fish, further develop the pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
- The attendance of the pupils is well above average. Pupils enjoy coming to school and participation levels in out of school activities are good.
- Pupils feel safe in school. Leaders carefully record incidents of inappropriate behaviour and deal with it effectively. Governors monitor such logs and ask for updates at a regular interval. All statutory safeguarding requirements are in place.
- Pupils are very morally, socially and spiritually aware. The school puts much time and resources

into promoting pupils' early development in these areas. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils reflected on how singing made them feel. They consider their own feelings and the feelings of others and this is often a strategy that staff use when mediating between pupils who have fallen out. Pupils have, however, limited knowledge of the diverse range of cultures and faiths within the country and area that they live.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders now monitor the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make with much more rigour than they did at the time of the last inspection. As a result they are able to evaluate the quality of teaching accurately and put in place the necessary professional development, training and coaching that different teachers need.
- Leaders tackle underperformance effectively, challenging any performance that falls short of the high expectations set.
- School leaders have used the government's pupil premium effectively to close the gap between, the very few pupils this funding supports, and their classmates.
- The local authority and an external school improvement provider have provided good support which has helped the school evaluate its effectiveness, validate its judgements and act upon areas identified as requiring improvement.
- The school has planned to use the additional funding for PE and sport to improve the quality of PE provision the pupils receive. External coaches lead PE sessions which are of quality whilst coaching and training teachers so that they become more skilled and confident in the delivery of quality sport. Procedures are in place to measure the impact of this initiative.
- Subject leadership is still developing in school. Some staff are new to particular roles and some have interim roles. Middle leaders are not yet fully accountable and are not monitoring to the extent, or with as much effectiveness, as senior leaders.
- The extent to which leaders promote spiritual development is outstanding and moral and social development is also strong, but leaders do not place the same emphasis on pupils' cultural development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors fulfil their roles and hold senior leaders to account. They know how well groups of pupils in the school are achieving compared to other groups both in school and nationally. Governors request and analyse information about the quality of teaching, know where the strengths are and know what improvements need to be made. Governors will not accept underperformance and support the senior leaders in tackling this. They ask challenging questions of leaders and have the pupils' education, safety and well-being at the heart of every decision they make. They have a good overview of the management of teachers' performance including decisions about additional financial payments to teachers.

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	124354
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	428889

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	L Finazzi
Headteacher	Karen Bennett
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2012
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