

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Green Lane, Rawmarsh, South Yorkshire, S62 6JY

Inspection dates

26–27 March 2014

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		Requires improvement	3
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

- Attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 has improved little since the last inspection and remains broadly average.
- The progress pupils make varies from class to class and too few do better than expected in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching has not been consistently good enough and, as a result, there are gaps in what pupils know and understand.
- On occasions, pupils do not always display good attitudes to their learning and some can become restless or silly if work is not interesting enough.
- Leaders have not ensured that data are used well. As a result, staff do not always respond quickly enough to support pupils who are not making fast enough progress.
- Subject and middle leaders are relatively new to their role and are only at an early stage of promoting improvements in their areas of responsibility.
- Governors have not had high enough expectations of leaders, and the governing body's procedures for checking the effectiveness of the school's work, have not been sufficiently robust.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils enjoy coming to this safe and caring school. Attendance has improved and is once again average.
- Since the appointment of the new headteacher, the school is improving and there are now examples of good teaching and better achievement in lessons.
- Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 has improved every year and is now broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The recently appointed Chair of the Governing Body has significant skills to help improve the school. She has asked a National Leader for Governance to review the effectiveness of the governing body and to recommend improvements.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons or small-group activities, of which three were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, senior leaders, school staff, two representatives from the local authority and also a representative from the diocese. The lead inspector also spoke with a Local Leader of Education who is supporting the school.
- Inspectors talked with pupils about their work in lessons, looked at books, listened to pupils read and met with a group of pupils from Year 5 and Year 6.
- Inspectors considered the 19 responses to the online survey (Parent View) and also spoke with a number of parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors also took account of the six inspection questionnaires returned by members of the school staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at progress data, performance management information, records relating to behaviour and safety, as well as documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Jim Alexander, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Don Parker

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding provided for children who are looked after by the local authority, those from service families, and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- In 2013, the school did not meet the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is currently receiving support from the headteacher and staff at Harlaxton Church of England Primary School.
- A new headteacher has recently been appointed and a new Chair of the Governing Body elected. A number of new middle leaders have also been appointed, including an Early Years Foundation Stage leader, English and mathematics subject leaders and a special educational needs coordinator.
- The school runs a daily breakfast club for pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of the quality of teaching, so that all is good or better, by:
 - making sure teachers plan lessons that suitably involve all pupils, so they develop better attitudes to their learning
 - using information on what pupils know and understand to plan activities which help to them catch up with work which has been missed
 - making better use of the support offered by teaching assistants, both in class and during small-group activities.
- Increase the proportion of pupils who make better than expected progress, by:
 - improving the quality of small group or one-to-one reading activities
 - raising expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve in their writing
 - making sure pupils move on more quickly in mathematics lessons and use the skills they are developing in a wider range of activities.
- Improve the quality of leadership, by:
 - using data more effectively to check on pupils' progress and staff performance and stepping in more quickly to address any underperformance
 - keeping a careful watch on the work of the recently appointed middle leaders to ensure pupils' achievement rises in their subject areas
 - implementing quickly the recommendations of the National Leader of Governance to improve the effectiveness of the governing body and how well the pupil premium funding is used.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils generally make better progress in Key Stage 1 than in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Progress is slower in Year 3 and Year 4 than it is in Year 5 and Year 6.
- Pupils generally make the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2, but too few do any better.
- Most children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills below those typically expected for their age, particularly in communication and language. By the end of the Reception Year, a minority of children have reached a good level of development, but most are not so well prepared to start Year 1.
- By the end of Year 1, the proportion of pupils reading at the expected standard is broadly average. Those who were not reading so well have been given additional support to help them catch up.
- By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been steadily rising and is now broadly average. This represents good progress from their starting points.
- Attainment in these subjects by the end of Key Stage 2 is also typically broadly average but this does not represent good enough progress from pupils' starting points in Year 3.
- In 2013, pupils' attainment in Year 6 was below average. However, many pupils in this particular class also had a lower starting point.
- School data, lessons observed and work in pupils' books all demonstrate that pupils' achievement is improving this year. A growing number of pupils are now making better than expected progress. However, this improvement is not yet consistently strong in every class.
- The most able pupils are making increasingly good progress, particularly where the teaching is strongest, for example, in Year 6. However, in other classes, they are frequently given the same work as others, which does not effectively challenge them.
- Pupils who are supported by the pupil premium funding, including those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, make progress similar to others in the school. However, this does not help them to catch up quickly enough and in 2013, they remained 10 months behind others in their class in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Progress this current year, for pupils supported by the pupil premium, is improving and any gaps between how well this group of pupils are doing and others in the school are closing. Progress is particularly strong in Year 2, Year 5 and Year 6. This is one example of the school's commitment to tackle discrimination and provide equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs make progress similar to others in the school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Since the time of the last inspection, teaching has not been good enough to ensure that pupils make good progress. While the quality of teaching is improving, there remains some teaching that is still not good enough.
- Teachers do not always use what they know of pupils' knowledge and understanding in order to plan work to help them catch up with any work they may have missed.
- Improvements in the way mathematics is taught are already making a positive difference to how well pupils are able to apply what they know to a range of problem-solving tasks. However, in some lessons, pupils, especially the most able, spend too long repeating work, even though they have clearly understood what they were meant to have learnt and are ready to move on.
- The progress pupils make in writing is improving and there are now an increasing number of opportunities for them to write at length across a range of subjects. However, some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve.

- The progress pupils are making in their reading is improving and older pupils are developing an appreciation of how literature can enrich other subjects, for example, history. However, some of the small group or one-to-one reading activities vary in quality and simple errors are not always corrected, so pupils do not learn from their mistakes.
- Teaching assistants' time is not always used to the best effect in lessons. This can limit the amount of time they spend supporting those that need more help, or challenging the most able pupils.
- Children's achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement, because there are inconsistencies between areas of learning. For example, children generally make good progress developing their social skills, but their progress in writing and number work is not as strong. This is because children are not always provided with a wide enough range of activities to develop these skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. This is because pupils' attitudes to learning are not always as good as they could be in every lesson.
- Pupils' attendance has improved this year and is once again average. Initiatives such as the 'Attendance Shop' are proving effective. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is also falling quickly, but remains above average.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are helped to settle quickly, develop positive relationships with adults and enjoy playing and learning with their friends.
- Most pupils show respect for one another and this allows an increasing number of lessons to move on without interruption. However, when activities are not interesting enough to capture pupils' attention, some can become restless or silly and then waste their time.
- Behaviour at playtime and lunchtime is usually good and older pupils enjoy the responsibility of looking after younger pupils.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about different forms of bullying and keen to tell inspectors that there are fewer incidents now than there were last year.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. This is because records detailing incidents of bullying are not well enough kept. This does not allow leaders to spot, for example, any patterns of repeated name-calling, or to see if the number of incidents is falling quickly enough.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because over time leaders have not ensured the quality of teaching is good or better. Data are not used effectively enough to ensure swift action is taken when pupils are not making good progress.
- The newly appointed headteacher has an accurate view of the school's strengths and what needs to improve. Through the effective links with the headteacher at Harlaxton Church of England Primary School, robust plans have been developed for the school's future improvement.
- The headteacher has set clear expectations for all staff related to good quality teaching. All teachers have been set targets for improvement and individual improvement plans agreed.
- There is a strong determination, shared by all leaders, that this improving school becomes a good school. There is clear evidence that the headteacher has a secure grasp of how to do this.
- Middle leaders, all of whom are new to their role, have already developed improvement plans and are starting to implement agreed actions. Senior leaders recognise they will need to keep a careful watch on the effectiveness of these actions to ensure achievement improves in these areas. Staff appreciate the recent training and also speak very highly of the support provided by staff at Harlaxton Primary School.

- Leaders are making necessary improvements to the system for tracking pupils' progress and measuring their attainment. Even so, this information is not used well enough by all staff to keep a careful watch on pupils' progress in lessons.
- The primary school sports funding is used to provide more clubs for pupils, and to improve the quality of teaching in physical education lessons. While this is still at a relatively early stage of development, more pupils are enjoying after-school clubs provided.
- The breakfast club is well attended and provides an opportunity for friends to socialise and eat together at the start of a busy day.
- The recently appointed headteacher has the full confidence of the local authority, staff and pupils in her ability to drive forward improvements in the school.
- The local authority has been swift to offer appropriate support for the newly appointed headteacher and helped to organise links between St Joseph's and Harlaxton Primary School. Leaders and staff speak very warmly about the advice and guidance provided by the diocese.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The newly elected Chair of the Governing Body has brought considerable experience and relevant professional skills to her role. She has strengthened the governing body by recruiting new members and by taking advantage of training provided by the local authority. Governors recognise that while they have been very supportive of the school, they have not always asked searching enough questions of leaders, holding them to account for the school's performance in relation to other schools nationally. The Chair of the Governing Body has now set challenging targets to be met and agreed a timescale for any remaining underperformance to be addressed. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Governors are keen that good teaching is rewarded and take every opportunity to encourage the staff when appropriate. They are knowledgeable about how additional funds are used, including the pupil premium, but less clear about the difference these make to pupils' achievement.
 - The Chair of the Governing Body has commissioned a National Leader of Governance to conduct an external review of governance and the school's use of the pupil premium funding, in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and governance may be improved. Leaders are keen to implement any recommendations from this review.

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	106944
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	430925

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	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cath Ratcliffe
Headteacher	Louise Pink
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2012
Telephone number	01709 710270
Fax number	01709 719272
Email address	sjpr@rotherham.gov.uk

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