

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School, Rochdale

Pot Hall, Wilton Grove, Heywood, OL10 2AA

Inspection dates 8–9 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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

- Most pupils make expected progress in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6, but few make more than this.
- Progress in writing is not as fast as in other subjects and pupils are insecure in their grammar and punctuation skills.
- Teaching is not consistently good. Work is not adjusted as pupils learn. Activities, at times, are too easy, particularly for the most able who do not always make enough progress.
- Expectations that pupils present their work neatly are not high enough.
- Marking does not consistently have an impact on improving pupils' work.
- Leaders and managers have not always kept a sharp eye on the impact actions have on teaching and achievement to ensure that they improve at a fast enough rate.
- The role of middle and subject leaders is not fully embedded. They do not focus sufficiently on pupils' progress and learning when checking on the quality of teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- The governors have set the school firmly on a course of improvement. They work well with school leaders and have raised expectations. Actions are now more decisive and the school is starting to move forward at a faster rate.
- Teaching is good for pupils with special educational needs, who make good progress.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a good start because teaching is good.
- Pupils enjoy school, behave well and attendance is high.
- Most parents are positive about the work of the school and say that their children are safe.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, including three joint observations with members of the senior leadership team.
- A sample of pupils in Years 2 and 6 was heard reading.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a range of documentation on pupils' progress and attendance, the school's self-evaluation and a range of policies and procedures relating to the safety of pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of pupils' workbooks.
- Inspectors took account of the 28 responses to the on-line questionnaire, (Parent View). There were no responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and managers of the school, six members of the governing body, a group of pupils, 2 representatives of the local authority and a representative from the diocese.

Inspection team

Andrew Morley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Pamela Davenport

Additional Inspector

David Halford

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 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 below 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 standards, which are the minimum expectation 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.
- The school has had an interim headteacher arrangement for the last 2 terms, but has now appointed a substantive headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching in order to raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress, especially in writing and mathematics, by:
 - checking that work is matched more precisely to the needs of pupils, particularly the most able, in writing and mathematics and raising the challenge if work is too easy
 - providing sharply focused feedback to pupils, including the marking of work, that makes it clear to pupils how to improve
 - making it clear to pupils what they are going to learn and that they are expected to work hard in all lessons
 - insisting that pupils consistently present their work neatly and improve their accuracy in spelling and grammar.
- Improve the impact of leaders and managers by:
 - focusing more closely on the priorities in the school development plan to check that actions are improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement
 - embedding the role of middle and subject leaders so that they play a more significant part in checking on teaching and progress in the subjects they lead.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The achievement of pupils, while improving, is not yet consistently good, especially for the most able pupils. In 2013, at the end of Year 2, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was below average. The proportion attaining at the higher level (Level 3) was below the national average in writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 6, test results were average in reading and mathematics, and below average in writing.
- Children start in the Reception class with skills and understanding that are typical for their age. Children in Reception make good progress and achieve in line with, or above, national expectations. They move into Year 1 ready for the next stage in their learning. Children make good progress, because the environment and activities are stimulating and maintain their interest.
- Progress requires improvement and is inconsistent as pupils move from Year 1 to Year 6, especially in writing and mathematics. In Key Stage 1, progress is improving and more pupils make the progress expected of them, although few make more than this. Data and evidence in books show current attainment in mathematics and especially reading, is now broadly average, although writing is not as high because pupils have gaps in their basic skills.
- Although progress requires improvement in Key Stage 2, there are signs of improvement and current attainment is average in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 6. However, pupils still have gaps in their learning, especially in writing. They are more confident at writing in different styles, but throughout the school handwriting is not always neat and pupils make errors in grammar and punctuation. In mathematics, the more able are not challenged and not enough pupils achieve the higher levels.
- Pupils enjoy reading and there is improved classroom practice to help pupils develop their skills in reading for understanding. Improved teaching of the sounds that letters make (phonics) is ensuring that pupils have the building blocks for reading. While the proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 in 2013 was below the national average, pupils are on track to achieve much better results in 2014.
- The progress of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding is similar to that of other pupils, but is inconsistent across the year groups. In 2013, eligible pupils were approximately 6 months behind their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. They did better than their peers nationally and provision for this group of pupils is improving their progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points and achievement is in line with similar groups nationally.
- The progress of the most able pupils requires improvement and not enough of these pupils achieve the higher levels at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Extra challenge for the most able is not readily available and explanations for those needing help are too slow to maintain pupils' engagement and interest. As a result, not enough pupils achieve the higher levels of which they are capable.
- Achievement in subjects other than English and mathematics is variable from class to class. For example, while some good examples showed pupils developing key historical skills and knowledge, these opportunities were not consistent from class to class.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not yet consistently good enough to ensure that pupils achieve well over time. Strong teaching seen in the Early Years Foundation Stage is less evident in other years and as a result pupils' progress is inconsistent as they move from year to year.
- Work does not always challenge pupils sufficiently and some pupils finish easily and quickly. This is especially the case for the most able pupils. Sometimes other pupils struggle to understand what to do. As a result, pupils lose interest and stop working. This is not picked up quickly

enough for tasks to be reshaped and misunderstandings remedied.

- At times the focus on how well pupils are learning is lost. Pupils are unclear what is expected of them and activities move on without consolidating learning. On occasion, pupils are not encouraged to extend their understanding and what they are asked to do offers a low level of challenge. Work that is untidy is accepted without insisting that pupils take more pride in their work.
- The teaching of writing is not sufficiently well developed to ensure that pupils make good progress. Activities frequently encourage pupils to write and they often do so with great imagination. However, the focus on accuracy in grammar and punctuation is not as sharp and these skills are weaker.
- There is some evidence of improved mathematics teaching, with training leading to good subject knowledge. More attention is now given to encouraging a variety of methods to carry out calculations. However, the most able pupils often expressed the view that their work was too easy and not challenging them enough.
- The teaching of reading has improved and pupils enjoy reading. In the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, phonics is taught systematically so that pupils quickly develop confidence to use these skills to help them with their reading. For example, in Years 1 and 2 practical activities enabled pupils to learn the 'oi' sound and make words such as 'coin'. Teachers build on these skills with some good teaching enhancing pupils' skills to read for understanding and research.
- When tasks are more demanding and allow pupils to explore their ideas with their friends, progress is better. For example, Year 5 pupils made accelerated progress as they challenged each other in learning about the properties and patterns of numbers.
- Marking, although regular, is not consistently good across all years. It does not always provide pupils with clear guidance on how to improve and too often teachers do not check that pupils have responded by improving the quality of their next piece of work.
- Teaching assistants are used successfully and provide good support for pupils, particularly those who are disabled or who have special educational needs. They work well with pupils in small groups and as a result, these pupils make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils, staff and parents agree that behaviour is good. Pupils are welcoming, friendly and courteous. They conduct themselves well around the school. They are independent and orderly. There is no litter and no clothing on the floor, showing their respect for the school environment.
- Pupils play well together at break times and during wet playtimes. This is because pupils follow the established routines. The atmosphere in the dining hall is calm, with pupils enjoying chatting with their friends.
- Documentation clearly shows that behaviour has significantly improved over time. The pastoral manager works effectively with parents and pupils to ensure that relationships are of a high quality.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. This is reflected in the prompt start to lessons. However, where teaching is weaker, low-level interruptions occasionally affect the flow of learning. Pupils do not always give enough attention to producing their neatest work.
- Pupils are learning to develop their leadership skills well. They all relish having some form of responsibility. For example, they take their roles as school chaplains very seriously and they spoke with pride about their role in leading the Easter assembly.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the different types of bullying. They feel safe and have confidence in the adults. They know how to keep themselves safe when using the Internet.
- Relentless effort and initiatives, such as employing a pastoral manager, have improved attendance. This is now above average, showing that the school's methods are working and

pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school.

- The vast majority of parents appreciate that staff look after and care for their children well.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The school has had an interim headteacher arrangement for the last 2 terms, but has now appointed a substantive headteacher. Governors, supported by the local authority, have worked hard to ensure that leadership has focused on the issues raised at the previous inspection. There has been some success and the school has run smoothly during this time.
- The school's development plan establishes the correct priorities, but leaders have not been systematic in following these up and checking that actions are having the desired effect on fully resolving concerns. As a result, teaching and achievement are not yet consistently good.
- Nevertheless, actions are becoming more precise and effective. Improved systems for analysing data and extracting information, for different groups of pupils, are helping leaders track progress more accurately. Success can be seen in the support given to pupils with special educational needs, who make good progress. However, this information is not used effectively to plan work at the right level of difficulty for pupils, especially the most able.
- Judgements on the quality of teaching are regular, but too reliant on lesson observation alone and do not take enough account of progress of different groups within each class or work in books. The role of middle leaders is not fully effective because they do not consistently use all the information available to judge the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Systems to check on teachers' performance have been established. Targets focus on improving performance and salary rewards are linked to achieving targets. Staff are now held more to account for the progress of pupils.
- Stability in staffing is leading to improvement in achievement. This, together with a greater awareness of how to succeed and what training is required to support teaching, show that the leadership has capacity for improvement.
- The curriculum broadly meets the needs and abilities of pupils, although opportunities for the most able pupils to excel are not always strong. Similarly, opportunities for pupils to develop their writing and mathematical skills in a range of subjects are inconsistent. Trips, visits and opportunities for pupils to sing, make music and take part in sport promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Leaders use the primary school sport funding well to employ a specialist sports coach and provide pupils with a broader range of sporting activities. After-school sports clubs are enjoyed by the pupils. As yet, teachers do not have enough opportunities to work alongside the sports coaches and benefit from their expertise.
- The local authority has provided effective support for the school and staff are very appreciative of the training and support they have received. The local authority has an accurate picture of current achievement and teaching.
- The Catholic ethos is the driving force with all that school does. The school's promotion of equality of opportunity in all its work is effective in ensuring that this is a harmonious community. However, not all pupils achieve equally well because of variability in the teaching they receive.
- Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are organised well. They have worked well to ensure stability in leadership over a period in which the school has had an interim headteacher arrangement. Governors review data and compare their results with the national picture. They know that more needs to be done to raise pupils' achievement. They have a good understanding of how pupil premium is spent and that it supports effectively small-group and one-to-one work. They monitor this support and know these pupils are catching up with the rest of the pupils in their classes. Governors have a good knowledge of performance management and have supported changes in restructuring staffing to ensure best use of skills. The governing body manages the

headteacher's performance well and targets reflect the school's needs. They know teaching is improving and appraisal of staff is closely linked to their performance and pay progression.

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	442344

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	305
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Daly
Interim Headteacher	Helen Arnold
Date of previous school inspection	5 December 2012
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