

St Joseph's RC Primary School

Armstrong Road, Benwell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE15 6JB

Inspection dates

5–6 November 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Teaching is not consistently good across the school. Consequently pupils do not make good progress, particularly in mathematics and reading, and their achievement requires improvement.
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to undertake a variety of interesting tasks in mathematics and to read widely in English.
- Work is not always sufficiently demanding and teachers' marking does not give pupils clear enough pointers on how to improve their work.
- The monitoring, feedback and support given by leaders and managers to help teachers improve their skills are not yet effective enough to ensure that teaching is consistently good and pupils achieve well.
- Governors are insufficiently involved in evaluating the school's work and in determining areas for improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- In some classes, and particularly in writing, pupils make good progress as a result of the good teaching they receive.
- Children, particularly those who speak English as an additional language, achieve well in the early years.
- The school provides a safe, calm, welcoming and supportive environment for pupils from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. Pupils behave well and work and play together in an atmosphere of tolerance and respect.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons being taught to full classes and smaller groups of pupils of all ages and in a range of subjects, including mathematics and English. The headteacher and lead inspector jointly made several shorter visits to classrooms. Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with parents, pupils, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, progress data, safeguarding information and other documentation.
- Twenty-two responses to the online questionnaire, 'Parent View', were considered, as well as those from school staff.

Inspection team

Ann Ashdown, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sharon Stelling

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is about 8%. This is similar to that found in most schools. The proportion supported at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs is about 5%, which is above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for those in care and those known to be eligible for free school meals is about 48%. This is well above that found nationally.
- A well above average proportion of pupils (52%) are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a similar proportion speaks English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- In the early years there is full time provision for children in the Reception Class. In the Nursery class provision is in the mornings only.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by:
 - providing suitably challenging work for all pupils
 - giving pupils clear feedback through marking to show them exactly how to improve their work and making sure they act on their teachers' advice.
- Raise attainment and accelerate progress, particularly in mathematics and reading, by:
 - giving pupils a wider variety of interesting tasks in mathematics
 - ensuring that all teachers make the best use of new resources for teaching mathematics
 - extending opportunities for pupils to read frequently from a range of texts.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - carefully checking the quality of teaching and marking, and ensuring feedback and support given to staff help them to improve their skills
 - increasing the understanding and involvement of governors in school self-evaluation and improvement planning.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management **requires improvement**

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders and managers have been unable to improve the skills of all teachers to ensure that teaching is consistently good across the school. However, they have created a climate in which pupils' good behaviour and respect for one another can flourish.
- Teaching is monitored and teachers are given training to improve their skills. However, the feedback and support they are given by senior and middle managers are not yet sharply focused enough to bring about the necessary improvements in teaching which will promote consistently good progress for pupils.
- School self-evaluation is broadly accurate. However, the analysis of pupils' progress on the basis of test results in 2014 and that of the quality of teaching is slightly over generous. Appropriate priorities have been identified for further improvement and on the evidence of its successful focus on improving writing, the school has the capacity to achieve its goals.
- The school monitors pupils' progress carefully in order to identify those who may be struggling. Resources are being increasingly well deployed to make sure that pupils get skilled extra help if they need it. The school is successfully developing new ways to report on pupils' progress, following the removal of National Curriculum levels.
- Extra funding such as the pupil premium has been used to help disadvantaged pupils make the same progress as that of their classmates, although this rate of progress still requires improvement. Sports funding is used well to provide expert coaching and pay for transport so that pupils can, for example, try new sports and have regular swimming lessons. This both promotes pupils' healthy lifestyles and allows them to perform to a level of which they are capable.
- The school is not entirely successful in how it promotes equal opportunities for all pupils. The talents of all individuals are valued, good relations are fostered and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. However, the school is less successful in helping pupils reach their full potential in reading and mathematics.
- The curriculum does not yet allow all pupils to develop good basic skills in reading and mathematics. However, a whole-school focus on improving writing has resulted in pupils making much better progress in this area of learning. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding particularly well. Enrichment activities, such as the forest school, the garden project and extensive opportunities for all pupils to play a musical instrument, contribute greatly to pupils' learning and enjoyment of school.
- Safeguarding meets requirements. Staff are well trained and well aware of child protection and risk assessment policies and procedures.
- The local authority has provided light-touch support for the school through the school achievement partner, who has visited termly to help the school evaluate its own work. However, this has not enabled the school to improve the quality of teaching to become consistently good.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has many strengths but is not fully effective, because governors are not sufficiently involved in evaluating the school's work and determining its future priorities for improvement. They are fully supportive of the school and appreciate its strengths. They are less sure about its weaknesses. They are kept informed about the school's performance compared to schools nationally, the quality of teaching and what is done to reward good teaching and tackle underperformance. Governors are well informed about how pupil premium funding is spent.

The behaviour and safety of pupils **are good**

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In the school yard pupils play happily together and show respect and kindness towards one another, staff and visitors. Records show that rare incidents of challenging behaviour, including bullying, are dealt with quickly and effectively.
- In lessons most pupils have good attitudes to learning, are keen to succeed, work hard and answer questions readily. A few pupils lose concentration, particularly when work is not challenging enough and does not interest them or teachers do not have the skills to ensure that they remain on task.
- The school has worked hard to ensure that pupils attend regularly, so attendance has improved and is now average. Few pupils are persistently absent. Pupils arrive at school on time and ready to learn. Pupils are proud of their school and want to look smart in their uniform.

- Older pupils are keen to look after younger children and are proud to be buddies and school councillors. They have a keen awareness and understanding of each other's different cultures and beliefs and work and play together in an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel very safe in school and their parents agree that the school keeps their children safe.
- Pupils are aware of different types of bullying, but agree that any bullying which occurs in school is quickly sorted out. Pupils also have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, especially when using the internet. They were particularly keen, as they spoke to the inspector on November 5th, to show that they were very clear about the dangers of fire and fireworks.
- School staff provide very good personal support for children. Several parents commented warmly about the help their children had received. Staff work very closely with agencies outside of school to ensure that children get expert help when this is needed.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although there are examples of good practice, the quality of teaching is not yet consistently good across the school and consequently pupils of all abilities do not always make good progress.
- Teaching requires improvement because work set does not fully challenge all pupils to achieve their best. Pupils are often not moved on quickly enough to the next activity as soon as they are ready. This means their progress slows, because they are repeating work they already understand when they are keen to undertake the next challenge.
- Work in pupils' books is marked regularly, but does not always lead to pupils improving their work. Marking does not always give sufficiently precise pointers for improvement and pupils do not follow up the teachers' advice. For example, in mathematics, more challenging extra work had been set, but pupils had not had the opportunity to complete this in their books.
- In mathematics pupils' progress slows when activities are not varied enough to maintain their interest, for example, when they are not given enough opportunities to solve interesting mathematical problems relevant to real-life situations.
- In literacy pupils have increasingly good opportunities to write at length and this has been successful in improving their skills. However, in reading they still have too few opportunities to read widely from a range of texts.
- Pupils were seen to make good progress over time when knowledgeable teaching and exciting activities captured their interest. For example, in work in science pupils gained a really good grasp of the properties of magnets as they used them to solve an interesting challenge of opening a door without touching it.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide timely extra help for pupils who speak English as an additional language to improve their language skills, when this is needed. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are given constructive support, both individually and in groups.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Test and assessment results, work in pupils' books and that seen in lessons all confirm that pupils' achievement requires improvement.
- From starting points which, particularly in speech and language, are below those typical for their age, pupils' progress requires improvement as they move through the school. Pupils' attainment varies from year to year, but in the most recent national tests at the end of Year 6 it was significantly below the national average in reading and mathematics, although closer to average in writing.
- Pupils, many of whom speak English as an additional language, attain below average standards in phonics (the sounds that letters make) tests at the end of Year 1. However, by the end of Year 2 their progress in phonics has accelerated, although they remain significantly below national averages in tests in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupil premium funding has been spent on extra staffing to provide specialist small group tuition for disadvantaged pupils and is successfully closing gaps between disadvantaged and other pupils. Disadvantaged pupils, although their progress requires improvement, make at least the same progress as that of their classmates. The standards they achieve remain a year behind other pupils nationally (although a little less in writing) and over a term behind their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Pupils' progress in writing is faster than that in reading and mathematics. The school has successfully tackled weaknesses in this area and pupils have benefited from more opportunities to write at length. The school recognises the need to accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics and reading. New resources for teaching mathematics and a much greater range of books for class libraries have been purchased, but the impact of these has not yet been felt in raising pupils' attainment and accelerating their progress.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as their peers do. They receive timely specialist help which ensures that they do not fall further behind their classmates. There are examples of these pupils making good progress as a result of skilled specialist teaching in mathematics and of good development of their language skills in the early years.
- The progress of the most able pupils requires improvement. When they are given challenging work they respond well and their progress is good. However, too often work set for them is not challenging enough, so they do not make the progress of which they are capable.

The early years provision

is good

- Children enter the Nursery Class with skills, particularly in speech and language, which are below those typical for their age. All groups of children, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs and the most able, make good progress in both the Nursery and Reception classes and become much better equipped with the skills needed to succeed in Year 1. A large proportion of children speak English as an additional language and these children make particularly good progress in developing the language skills needed for the next stage of their education.
- Children settle quickly into school routines and behave well. They learn to share and take turns and most soon become enthusiastic and confident learners. They respond well to the good teaching they receive and are kept very safe by well-trained staff.
- Children achieve well because they are given exciting opportunities to learn both indoors and out. Children made particularly good progress in learning about dinosaurs as they enthusiastically made clay models, dug up fossils, prepared their own books and pretended to be archaeologists.
- Leadership and management of the early years are good. Resources are deployed well. Staff work closely together to plan lessons and provide vibrant learning classrooms. Children's progress and the quality of teaching are both continually checked. Good links with parents ensure that they are able to support their children's learning.

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	108508
Local authority	Newcastle Upon Tyne
Inspection number	448385

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	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Dick
Headteacher	Elaine Mathews
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2009
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