

St Joseph's School, a Catholic Voluntary Academy

Bevan Avenue, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN11 0NB

Inspection dates 3–4 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The inspiring and dedicated headteacher has led rapid improvement in the quality of teaching, attainment and systems for checking on the progress that pupils make.
- The senior leaders, governors and staff share a clear vision of how successful the school can be. They have supported the headteacher in bringing about positive changes effectively.
- Children in the early years make good progress and are ready to learn in Year 1.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good, with its impact on learning sometimes being outstanding. Motivating lessons interest pupils and help them to learn.
- The most able pupils are challenged to attain the highest Level 6 in reading, mathematics, writing and English grammar, punctuation and spelling. This is outstanding achievement.
- Pupils are delightfully polite and welcoming. They are well mannered and say they are safe. Pupils wear their uniform smartly and with pride.
- Behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning contribute to their good progress.
- The exciting curriculum and the highly positive culture of the school leads to outstanding elements in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The governors have reviewed their roles and are very proactive in finding out for themselves what is happening in the school and how well pupils are achieving. They are ambitious to improve the school further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Plans for school improvement do not always show precisely how leaders can measure success and so evaluate if further actions are required.
- Middle leaders do not yet use information showing how well groups of pupils are learning to provide timely support so that progress increases.
- Pupils do not have the opportunity to use and apply their knowledge and skills consistently to solve a wide range of mathematical problems.
- Advice provided to pupils in verbal and written feedback is not always precise enough to ensure that they know what to do to improve their work and make even better progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. Two observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also observed small-group sessions led by teaching assistants in and out of the classroom.
- Meetings were held with the governing body, senior and middle leaders, members of staff and a representative of the academy trust.
- Inspectors talked informally to many pupils in the playground, around school and while sitting with them eating lunch in the dining hall. They also conducted a formal discussion with pupils from Key Stage 2 and heard pupils in Key Stage 1 read.
- Inspectors looked carefully at pupils' work in lessons, that completed over time in their books and work displayed around the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 26 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the responses to a recent survey conducted by the school. They also considered the views of parents expressed at the school gate.
- The views of staff were gained from meetings and from a review of the 17 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors considered a number of school documents, including the school's review of its own performance, its development plan, arrangements for safeguarding and child protection, systems for checking on the quality of teaching and data tracking pupils' progress.

Inspection team

Fiona Dixon, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Susan Davis

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Joseph's School, a Catholic Voluntary Academy, converted to become an academy on 1 December 2013. When its predecessor school, St Joseph's School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall. The school is part of the Diocese of Hallam's Hallam Schools Partnership Trust.
- St Joseph's School is an average-sized primary school.
- Children in Reception attend full time and those in Nursery attend part time.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics and English by the end of Year 6.
- There have been significant changes in senior leaders and teaching staff since the school became an academy.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership and management, by:
 - making sure that plans for school improvement show precisely how leaders measure success, so that the school clearly knows how well it is doing and can identify if further action is required
 - ensuring that middle leaders develop their role to monitor the progress of all groups of pupils to make sure that targeted support is put into place promptly to avoid any slowing of progress.
- Continue to increase pupils' progress across the school by:
 - providing pupils with regular opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to solve problems
 - ensuring that the advice given to pupils in their books and through verbal feedback is more precise and tells them clearly what they have to do to improve.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The inspiring and dedicated headteacher has led rapid improvement in the quality of teaching, attainment and systems for checking on the progress that pupils make. The headteacher has been supported well by the governors, senior leaders and all staff; they share a clear vision of how to move the school forward.
- Senior leaders check on the quality of teaching and the impact on learning diligently. The improvements in quality can be seen in the rise in standards attained at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 since the academy opened and in pupils' positive attitudes to learning in lessons. Teachers are held accountable for pupils' progress and their performance is linked to salary progression.
- The headteacher and governing body ensure that a caring approach is at the heart of the school. The warmth of the welcome that pupils give visitors, their considerate attitudes towards each other and the good progress made by pupils of varying abilities reflect the school's commitment to ensuring that all pupils have equality of opportunity, foster good relations and tackle all discrimination successfully.
- Middle leaders, including subject leaders, have developed the quality of teaching within their areas of responsibility successfully. They know that their next steps are to check the information about pupils' progress to ensure that prompt, targeted support is put into place to avoid any slowing of progress.
- The plans for school improvement are precise and identify the priorities for improvement correctly. However, the proposals do not have measureable targets, especially for pupils' achievement, so that the school can check regularly on how well it is doing and identify if further action is required.
- The exciting curriculum is broad, balanced and provides many creative opportunities for pupils, which brings their learning to life. When planning work, teachers take account of pupils' interests. For example, in a Year 5 science lesson on the properties of everyday materials, the pupils had to evaluate the suitability of these materials for the construction of a log-flume carriage.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning is an outstanding feature of this school. Pupils enjoy taking part in the daily acts of reflection and exploring the faith of the Catholic Church, other world faiths and 'big questions' in religious education. They enjoy taking responsibility for fund-raising for national and local charities.
- Pupils throughout the school are helped to prepare for life in modern Britain. For example, while studying 'The Seaside,' children in Reception explored what it means to be a citizen and created their own passport. British values such as tolerance and respect pervade the school.
- School leaders ensure that the pupil premium funding is used effectively. Inspection evidence shows that this year disadvantaged pupils and other pupils are making similar progress in all subjects across the school.
- The Hallam Schools Partnership Trust has provided effective and welcomed support for the school since it became an academy. It has supported the school successfully in increasing the capacity of the leadership to bring about rapid improvements in teaching, planning and monitoring.
- Parents are very happy with the school's work and some enjoy being actively involved in school life.
- The primary school sport funding is used effectively to increase participation in sport, both for fun and competitively. The school is beginning to see success in competitive events, recently winning a local schools' cricket tournament. The skills of teachers have improved and all pupils enjoy a wider range of physical activities in well-taught lessons. Pupils are conscious of the link between exercise and a healthy lifestyle; they increasingly take part in after-school sports clubs.
- Governors and leaders fulfil their statutory duties and make sure that safeguarding and child protection requirements are fully met.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors, many of them appointed since the school became an academy, have reviewed their roles and are very proactive. They have used training effectively to enable them to develop the skills to evaluate how well pupils are achieving in comparison to pupils in other schools. Scheduled learning walks enable them to see for themselves the quality of teaching and the work that pupils are completing.
 - Governors carry out their duties with regard to the performance management of the headteacher and all staff rigorously. They have eradicated all underperformance. They share the vision of the headteacher to strive continually for improvement and have supported the use of teacher and teaching assistant time to develop the delivery of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) in early years and Key Stage 1.
 - The governing body ensures that all statutory duties are fulfilled, including those for safeguarding and

financial management.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils show good attitudes and behaviour in lessons, which is contributing to the good progress they are making. A small number sometimes find it hard to work on their own without supervision.
- All staff have high expectations and this is reflected in how quickly pupils settle to work and follow instructions. Any disruption to learning is rare and there have been no exclusions.
- Around the school, pupils are very polite to visitors and to each other; 'please' and 'thank you' are frequently heard. Small courtesies, such as holding the door open for each other, are completed as a matter of course.
- Pupils enjoy the range of responsibilities they hold. The democratically elected school council, play leaders, prefects, lunchtime helpers, register monitors and house team leaders all play an active part in promoting a calm, friendly, well-organised environment for learning and playing.
- Pupils are very smart in their uniform and many freely express pride in being a member of St Joseph's.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents and staff all say that pupils are safe and very well cared for. Pupils spoken with agree with this and say they enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in attendance that is in line with that found nationally and excellent punctuality.
- All staff complete relevant safeguarding training and work with outside agencies to promote pupils' safety, both inside and outside school.
- Pupils enjoy the range of activities taught to help keep themselves safe. Pupils are taught to be safe near water, on the road and when out alone. Older pupils are taught to be able to evaluate the risks they might come across as they begin to become more independent. The school always ensures that the possible risks in all activities in and out of school are carefully assessed and reflected in planning, in order to keep children safe.
- Bullying is very rare and pupils spoken to are very clear about the different forms bullying can take. They felt that incidents happened infrequently, as this is a very friendly school. They know how to keep safe and where to turn to if an incident should occur.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good, and sometimes outstanding. This is evident in the pupils' books, the progress pupils make and the observations made during the inspection.
- Teachers have high expectations. They use what they know about each pupil skilfully to set different work for different abilities within their classes. Every pupil is working at the correct level to challenge and stretch them. For example, the most-able pupils in Year 6 last year and this year have worked towards Level 6, a standard well above that expected for their age in mathematics, reading, writing and English grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- The teaching of reading is good. In the early years and Key Stage 1, the development of daily reading and the teaching of phonics has led to an increase in the progress pupils make. The school's focus on ensuring that teachers and teaching assistants deliver these sessions consistently well has speeded up pupils' progress. This is seen in the above average results in the Year 1 phonics check and in reading at the end of Year 2. Pupils throughout the school read widely and often.
- Pupils enjoy writing as they are given a wide range of interesting reasons to write. For example, in Year 1, pupils were writing at length about the Masai, as part of their topic 'Paws, Claws and Whiskers.' Pupils were using word and factual prompts available on their tables effectively to write independently. Many pupils also showed emerging skills of self-checking their work and this aided the progress they made.
- Mathematics teaching is good. Pupils are encouraged to develop their mental arithmetic skills and times tables are a regular learning homework. Resources are used well and imaginatively to help develop skills. For example, in a Year 2 lesson pupils used 'treasure', related to their topic 'Coastline', to solve which was the correct operation to use to answer multi-step word problems. However, opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to solve a wide range of mathematical problems is not

developed consistently well across all classes.

- Teachers use questioning effectively to check on pupils' knowledge, encourage participation and extend their application of skills. For example, in a Year 4 English lesson, pupils were improving a piece of writing on wigwams. Questioning by both the teacher and the teaching assistant challenged the pupils to reflect on their grammatical knowledge to insert more complex phrases and clauses.
- The feedback given to pupils about their work, both verbally and in writing, is regular and often reflects what the pupil has done well. The school is developing its marking and feedback across the school, as not all pupils know precisely what they have to do to improve their work and make even better progress.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good and has improved, particularly in reading and phonics, as a result of improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress. In the 2014 phonics screening check, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard was higher than that seen nationally. Pupils at the end of Year 2 attained typically expected standards in writing and mathematics and above this in reading.
- Good progress continues in Key Stage 2. Attainment in 2014 was in line with the national average in mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling and above this in reading and writing. Inspection evidence, including lesson observations, work in pupils' books and information on the good progress made by each pupil since the school became an academy, show that the present attainment of Year 6 is better than the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Currently all groups, including disadvantaged pupils, are making good progress. Currently more pupils than in previous years are producing work at the higher Level 5 and Level 6 in reading, writing, mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- The most able pupils are challenged and supported to work towards the highest levels of attainment throughout their time in the school. In 2014, in mathematics, writing and English grammar, punctuation and spelling the most-able pupils achieved the highest Level 6, a standard well above that expected for their age. That these pupils are now achieving at this level in reading is further evidence of leaders' successful drive to improve pupils' achievement even more.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make progress equal to similar pupils nationally. They make good progress as the school provides well-targeted support in the classroom.
- In 2014, there was no gap in Key Stage 1 between the attainment of disadvantaged and others pupils in reading, writing or mathematics. There was a significant historical gap in the progress made between disadvantaged and others pupils in Key Stage 2 that in 2014 could not be closed. In mathematics, disadvantaged pupils were over two terms behind and half a year behind in reading, writing and English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Compared to other pupils nationally, the gap was over two terms for mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling, half a year for reading and half a term for writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are making the same good progress as other pupils. This reflects the improvements in the quality of teaching and the school's monitoring of pupils' progress since it became an academy. Any remaining gap in attainment, compared to other pupils in the school and nationally, has been reduced significantly.

The early years provision is good

- Children's knowledge and skills are typically below the level expected on entry to Nursery, especially in speaking and knowing about shape and measure, and people and communities. They make good progress, especially in making relationships, shape and measure, and using technology.
- A greater than average proportion of children reaches a good level of development and is well prepared for the step up to learning in Year 1. This is a significant improvement since the school became an academy and reflects the good leadership of the early years leader in improving all areas of early years provision rapidly, especially the opportunities for purposeful play outside.
- Adult-led activities are carefully planned to help each child make good progress from their starting points. For example, the most able children join with pupils in Key Stage 1 for the highly interactive phonics sessions, so that they are challenged to develop their skills in reading and spelling.
- Learning opportunities are highly engaging and carefully planned to extend children's skills and knowledge. For example, a group of nursery children were concentrating on modelling a telescope,

reflecting their level of engagement with the topic of 'Pirates'. The children confidently talked about the use and features of their telescope.

- Children are safe and happy and all welfare requirements are met. Behaviour is good, with children showing very positive attitudes to their learning. For example, in the Reception class, children playing in the role-play area, 'At the seaside', were helping each other put on swimming costumes, flippers and goggles when one said, 'Don't forget sun cream' and helpfully pretended to apply lotion on their friend.
- Parents are very positive about the early years and enjoy the opportunity to 'meet and greet' the staff each day. The 'Proud Parent' wall reflects the many achievements at home that are shared with school and children enjoy telling the rest of the class what has been written in their sharing book. This can be what the child has enjoyed over the weekend, on holiday or a new skill they have mastered at home.

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	140340
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	450213

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Trevor Horton
Headteacher	Philip Patterson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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