

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

St Joseph's Close, Ombersley Way, Droitwich, WR9 0RY

**Inspection dates** 9–10 June 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Children get a good start to school life in the Reception class. Exciting activities help them develop skills and an early love for learning.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Those who need extra help are supported effectively in lessons so that they can achieve well alongside their classmates.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are expertly helped to acquire English language skills. They make rapid progress as they move through the school.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and know their pupils well. Lessons are interesting and teachers make excellent use of the school grounds to give pupils practical learning experiences.
- Pupils behave well in and around school. They are polite and helpful to adults and to each other. Pupils try hard in lessons and are enthusiastic about their learning.
- Pupils feel very safe in school and attribute this to the excellent way adults look after them. They have an acute sense of how to keep themselves safe in different situations beyond school.
- Attendance is above average.
- The school is well led. Despite some recent changes to leadership, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have ensured that these have not disrupted the good teaching and progress that pupils make.
- Leaders check regularly to make sure any pupils at risk of falling behind are helped to keep up. They ensure that pupils feel completely safe and behave well.
- Governors are very supportive. They challenge leaders to continue to improve the school and visit regularly to see the improvements for themselves.
- The school's values provide an excellent base for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and permeate all aspects of school life.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, the most-able pupils do not have work challenging enough to help them make even better progress in lessons.
- Pupils do not routinely apply the literacy skills they learn in English when writing in other subjects.
- Leaders who are new to the role have not yet fully developed the skills they need to initiate improvements to teaching, and to rigorously check how the changes they make are improving pupils' learning.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 15 lessons, eight of which they observed together with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspection team held meetings with the headteacher and other staff, three groups of pupils, three governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors held informal discussions with pupils and 32 parents.
- Inspectors took account of the 87 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, 121 responses to the school's own parental questionnaires and the 21 completed staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and reviewed a range of documentation, including: the school's checks on its performance; its analysis and tracking of pupils' progress; records of behaviour and safety; school improvement plans; records relating to classroom observations and the management of staff performance; safeguarding arrangements; and records of meetings of the governing body.
- The inspectors also looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read and checked information on attendance.

## Inspection team

Susan Hughes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Colin Daghish

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the early years start in a full-time Reception class at the beginning of the year in which they are five.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is lower than in most schools but an above-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority, is below average.
- The literacy and numeracy leaders took up post in September 2014. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been leading the early years and special educational needs learning in the school this year in readiness for other staff to take on these roles in September 2015.
- The school works in partnership with other local schools, and particularly the Catholic Sports Partnership.
- The Chair of the Governing Body has been in post for three months. Prior to that, he was Vice Chair of the Governing Body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to raise standards by making sure that:
  - all teachers help the most-able pupils make even better progress in lessons by ensuring that they set work that challenges the pupils and extends their learning
  - pupils are expected to apply the spelling, punctuation and grammar skills learnt in literacy lessons in their writing in other subjects.
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that leaders who are new to the role develop the skills they need to drive improvements in their areas of responsibility.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's commitment and drive is evident in the continuing improvements in the school. She and the senior leaders make sure that all groups of pupils achieve well. They diligently check that any pupils who are at risk of falling behind are helped to keep up.
- Leaders ensure that teaching is good. The appraisal system, which rewards teachers with a pay rise only when their pupils achieve well, is supporting the improvement in teaching. The system makes sure that teachers understand what is expected of them. It provides support and training for teachers to meet their challenging pupil achievement targets. All staff who spoke to inspectors, or who completed the questionnaire, agreed that the school helps them develop their teaching and leadership skills.
- Subject leaders understand how well their subjects are taught. They have worked with the headteacher and deputy headteacher to draw up plans to improve teaching and raise standards in their areas of responsibility. The plans are being effectively implemented, but not all leaders have developed the skills needed to accurately measure the difference recent actions are making to pupils' learning.
- Strong partnerships with other local schools provide opportunities for staff to share expertise. Teachers participate in joint training and check that their assessments of how well pupils are doing are accurate by comparing them with those in other schools. Working with the Catholic Sports Partnership also gives pupils the chance to work with, and compete against, pupils from other schools.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is used effectively to support more involvement in competitions and tournaments. It is also used to refine teachers' techniques when teaching sports and gymnastics. As a result, the quality of teaching in these lessons has improved and pupils' sporting skills are better developed. The school has recently been very successful in the local football and netball tournaments. The funding is also used to introduce pupils to different sports. Pupils enthusiastically told inspectors how much they enjoy the 'New Age Curling' and bell boating activities.
- The pupil premium is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils so that they achieve as well as others. Additional adults work alongside teachers to make sure that any pupils who would benefit from extra help receive it. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported and soon acquire the skills to make rapid progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are equally effectively helped. Teaching in small groups and one-to-one support are used when needed. However, most of these pupils are able to make good progress alongside their classmates because of skilled teaching and support in the classroom.
- The subjects pupils learn are exciting and interesting. Teachers help pupils develop literacy and numeracy skills across different subjects. For example, pupils in Year 4, learning how to write diary entries, used their study of rainforests as a setting for their diaries. They appreciated the need to fully understand conditions in the rain forest to make their diary entries credible. Some teachers, however, are less successful in developing pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling skills through other subjects. They do not have the same high expectations of grammar, punctuation and spelling in all subjects, so they do not insist that pupils apply what they learn in English when writing in other subjects.
- The school is committed to equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. Leaders make sure that no groups of pupils fall behind. The school's values of 'live, love and learn' underpin all it does and support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. For example, pupils encourage each other to use the 'right judgements' and 'kindness' when out on the playground and around school.
- Adults are good role models and pupils follow their lead. Pupils learn about other religions and, from an early age, celebrate festivals from other cultures. They told inspectors that, regardless of faith, background or culture, everyone was respected and valued, and pupils demonstrated this in their

behaviour to each other.

- The school makes sure that pupils understand about British values, such as democracy. Pupils told inspectors, 'We are lucky in this country because people can vote for leaders and that doesn't happen in all countries.' They have fair elections every year for the school council. Pupils also learn about the Royal Family and British government. To develop their literacy skills, pupils in Key Stage 1 wrote letters to Princess Charlotte after her birth, while pupils in Year 5 wrote to the government about an imaginary extension of the M5 motorway through their school grounds. Such activities and experiences prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders ensure that the school's safeguarding arrangements are robust and effective. They meet statutory requirements and staff apply them consistently throughout the school. Staff receive regular training on safeguarding issues and are diligent in reporting any concerns about pupils' well-being. Senior leaders make sure that they rigorously follow up any concerns raised by staff.
- The school regularly seeks the views of parents through questionnaires and informal discussion at school events. Leaders run workshops and meetings for parents to inform them about changes in the curriculum, alert them to potential internet dangers and keep them up to date with new teaching methods in the school.
- A high proportion of parents who completed Parent View felt strongly that the school was not providing a good education for their children, pupils do not behave well and leaders do not listen to, or communicate well with, parents. However, this was not reflected in the views of the vast majority of parents spoken to during the inspection, nor in the school's own questionnaires that had been completed over the last two years. The school's questionnaires, and the views of parents spoken to, were overwhelmingly positive. A number of parents told inspectors that the Parent View response was not a true reflection. Their children are very happy at the school and staff are helpful and approachable. Having not received any formal complaints recently, governors were surprised at the Parent View response. However, they take it seriously and are committed to addressing parental concerns if they can.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are very supportive and highly aspirational for the school. They understand their role well and challenge leaders to continue to make improvements. Governors visit the school regularly, talk to staff and pupils and see for themselves what is happening in school. Governors are very reflective of their work and consistently strive to improve their own practice through training and by making the best use of the skills they already have. The Chair has recently introduced systems aimed at further strengthening the rigour with which governors check on how well the school is doing and how this information is reported.
  - Governors use school achievement data confidently to compare the school's performance with that of other schools nationally and to make sure that all groups of pupils achieve well. They ensure that the pupil premium enables disadvantaged pupils to achieve at least as well as their peers. Governors also check that the primary physical education and sports premium is improving pupils' sporting skills and widening opportunities for pupils to participate in competitive events.
  - Governors know that teaching in school is good and that the appraisal system supports this. They make sure that only good teaching is rewarded and any weaker teaching is improved.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and helpful to adults and each other. Older pupils readily look out for younger ones and model good behaviour around school. During the inspection, pupils held doors open and were overheard politely offering, or thanking each other for, their help.
- Pupils told inspectors that they behave well and everybody gets on with each other. They said that, while they were keen to make a good impression, the behaviour seen during the inspection was very typical of behaviour on other days. At times, inspectors saw exemplary behaviour and attitudes.

- Pupils are very enthusiastic about their work. They try hard in lessons and are keen to talk about what they are doing. From a young age, pupils explain how well they are learning. During the inspection, pupils in Year 1 cited 'staying on task', 'making improvements to my work' and 'checking for mistakes' as examples of good learning habits.
- Pupils readily take on roles of responsibilities, especially in Years 5 and 6. For example, 'Prayer Leaders' and members of the 'Sports Crew' proudly explained to inspectors how they work with other pupils to develop spiritual and sporting experiences. Along with 'buddies', they encourage younger pupils to play together and relate to each other harmoniously and in accordance with the school's values. Pupils see themselves as role models and feel that their help, and their views, are valued by the school.
- The school works closely with parents and carers to make sure that their children attend well and are punctual. As a result, attendance has improved and is currently above average.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel completely safe in school and say that all adults look after them well and keep them safe. Pupils spoken to during the inspection felt there was always someone in school that they could go to if they had a problem.
- Pupils know what bullying is and the different forms it can take, including emotional, physical and cyber-bullying. They were adamant that bullying rarely happens in the school, though pupils do sometimes 'fall out' with each other. Any incidents are speedily and effectively dealt with by adults.
- From as young as the early years, pupils are given plenty of opportunities to learn what constitute safe and unsafe situations. For example, in the 'forest school' outdoor learning area, children from the Reception class enjoyed climbing and swinging, which developed an understanding of appropriate levels of risk. Vigilant staff made sure that the children were acting in a safe, responsible way, without limiting their chance to explore for themselves. Gentle reminders to be mindful of other children when carrying large sticks to build a bridge, developed a greater awareness of the safety of others.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe beyond school. They are extremely knowledgeable about the potential risks when using the internet and told inspectors how they could use it safely. Pupils know not to give away personal details and how to report anything that concerned them. Other safety guidance for pupils includes keeping safe when walking to school, when riding their bicycles and water safety, especially in connection with bell boating activities.
- Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their feelings and changes in their life. They develop appropriate vocabulary to help them explain feelings such as resentment, anxiety or rejection, which could enable them to explain their need for help should it be necessary. Older pupils learn about dealing with potentially unsafe situations with other adults beyond school. They showed a high level of maturity in the way this was shared with inspectors in the presence of younger pupils.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers are enthusiastic and make lessons interesting. They plan practical activities and real-life situations to help pupils see a use and meaning to their learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 produced a report about a new training shoe. They appreciated that report-writing skills will be useful for them in their adult life as many jobs require this.
- During the inspection, teachers used the school's grounds and hall especially well. Pupils in Year 4 carried out investigations into the way sound travelled outside in the playground, while, in the school hall, pupils in Year 3 investigated how light travels in straight lines and can be reflected. Pupils in Year 1 searched for words on the playground fence having listened to their spellings recorded by the class teacher, while Reception children worked in the forest school area. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy having plenty of opportunities to work outside, not just in sports but also in other subjects.
- Writing is taught well. Pupils' enthusiasm is captured and this inspires them to try hard. For example,

pupils in Year 5 were fascinated by a film of a dandelion, speeded up to show the change from flower to seed dispersal. The teacher encouraged them to develop poetic language to describe what they saw. Probing questions by the teacher made the pupils think deeply about their suggestions. They helped pupils to identify which writing techniques to use, such as personification, metaphor and alliteration, to ensure high-quality writing. Pupils use grammar, punctuation and spelling to good effect in their writing in English lessons. Some teachers encourage pupils to use their newly acquired grammar skills when writing in other subjects, but this is not the case in all classes.

- Mathematics is taught well. Teachers make sure that pupils have opportunities to practise the skills learnt in lessons in practical problem-solving situations. For example, pupils in Year 2 used coins to make agreed amounts of money. They worked well in pairs and small groups to compare the different permutations and discussed which would be easier to use when shopping.
- Reading is taught equally well. Skills in phonics (the sounds letters represent in words) are taught from the early years and through Key Stage 1. Pupils use these skills to read and spell unfamiliar words. The results of the most recent screening of how well Year 1 pupils understand phonics were above average.
- Teaching assistants work very effectively alongside the class teachers. They are well briefed so that they understand what learning is to take place. The teaching assistants are well trained and pupils hold them in high esteem, telling inspectors, 'We call them all teachers.' This is because of the high-quality support teaching assistants give to any pupils who need additional help. In some lessons, they work with disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, while on other occasions they support disadvantaged pupils or those who speak English as an additional language. All pupils' individual learning needs are regularly reviewed, and additional support provided as appropriate.
- Although the most-able pupils make good progress, there are some occasions when they are not set work which would help them make even better progress. For example, very occasionally, they complete work that they already understand, before more challenging work extends their learning. On other occasions, they sometimes complete work quickly and are not moved on to the next level soon enough to enable them to make more rapid progress.

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1. In 2014, pupils left the key stage with average standards, which represented good progress from their starting points. Standards of pupils currently in Key Stage 1 are improving and some pupils are working at levels above those expected for their age.
- In 2014, pupils left Key Stage 2 with average standards in reading and mathematics and above-average attainment in writing. They had made exceptionally good progress in writing since leaving Key Stage 1, but less rapid progress in mathematics. However, progress in their final year was good. Progress of pupils throughout the school was equally good in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils currently in the school continue to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics; some pupils in Year 6 are working well above the level expected for their age. A much larger proportion of pupils than last year are working at the highest levels in mathematics.
- In 2014, there were too few disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 to report on their attainment without risk of identifying individual pupils. However, throughout the school, disadvantaged pupils make progress at least as good as other pupils. In many cases, they make even better progress and any gaps in attainment between the groups narrow as pupils move through the school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make especially good progress. Their individual learning needs are swiftly identified, sometimes as early as in the Reception class. Appropriate support is provided, often within lessons and sometimes in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. As a result, these pupils make rapid progress, while not becoming too dependent upon adult help.

- Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make rapid progress. Bilingual staff help young pupils understand what is happening in lessons and encourage them to develop, and increasingly use, English. Clear explanations by teachers, some bilingual posters and the willing help of classmates mean that pupils very quickly acquire the skills they need to achieve well in all subjects.
- The most-able pupils make good progress. Teachers set them work which helps them strive for, and achieve high levels. Just occasionally, however, the work in some lessons lacks sufficient challenge, and so pupils do not make the even more rapid progress of which they are capable.

### **The early years provision**

**is good**

- Staff in the Reception class have developed a safe, secure learning environment for children. This gives the children a good start to school life. Although children join the school from many different nurseries and home situations, they soon settle in under the nurturing care of the early years staff.
- Children are happy and well behaved. They quickly learn to share, take turns and listen to each other. For example, during the inspection, Reception children took turns to hold the 'talking teddy' and tell the rest of the group about some work they were proud of. All children respected each other's contribution and only spoke when they held the teddy bear.
- Teaching in the early years class has improved over recent years and is good. Teachers plan activities that build on children's previous learning and interests. Children start in school with well-developed knowledge of the world and strong technical skills. Language and number skills, however, are weaker, so all adults make sure that they help children develop these. Sometimes adults question pupils about their learning, helping them to extend their vocabulary. On other occasions, adults model the correct language to make sure that children's speaking and writing are grammatically correct.
- The early years is led well, currently by the headteacher. She makes sure that children's progress is carefully tracked and assessments are accurate. Teachers use this information to plan future activities. Any child's specific learning needs are quickly identified and support provided to help them keep up with their classmates.
- In 2014, the proportion of children who reached a good level of development was above average. The proportion of pupils currently in the Reception class who are on track to achieve a good level of development is even higher. This means that children are well prepared for their move to Key Stage 1.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116876
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	461821

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	201
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Duncan Kennedy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miranda Gibbs
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 October 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01905 773572
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