

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Upton

Moreton Road, Upton, Wirral, Merseyside CH49 6LL

Inspection dates

18–19 October 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities does not enable these pupils to make good progress.
- The pupil premium grant is not spent wisely. Disadvantaged pupils do not make good progress, particularly the most able.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are too variable and have been affected by many staff absences. The teaching of experimental science and of writing is not good. In mixed-age classes, teachers do not make sure that older pupils are taught higher-level skills and knowledge.
- Some teaching assistants do not provide best value, and some have weak knowledge of the subjects they teach.
- The most able pupils do not make good progress and so do not exceed the expected standards for their year group. Activities are often too simple and some teachers do not deepen pupils' thinking or skills.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have high rates of absence.
- Pupils in some classes often waste time, talk and disturb other pupils' concentration. Parents, pupils and staff have identified instances of bullying and name-calling.
- The governing body has not made sure that the school makes best use of its funding. It has not met the requirements in relation to publishing the expected information on the school's website.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in Reception make good progress because they are taught well. Activities are challenging and enable over three quarters of children to attain a good level of development. Most children are ready for Year 1.
- Pupils know how to use phonics to read and spell words. Their attainment in reading by the end of Year 1 is above average.
- There are strengths in teaching in Year 6 and in some subjects, such as French and history.
- The new deputy headteacher has made a significant difference to the effectiveness of leadership. The school is improving. Leaders have a clear vision and ethos which is rightly centred on raising expectations for pupils' progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by making sure that:
 - teaching assistants are skilled and knowledgeable enough to accelerate pupils' progress and provide best value
 - activities challenge the most able pupils to extend their thinking and their skills
 - teachers develop pupils' skills in experimental science and in writing
 - older pupils in mixed-age classes complete more complex activities.
- Improve the leadership of special educational needs and disabilities, and the leadership of provision for children who are looked after, so that:
 - the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities increases
 - pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least good progress
 - the school's provision for special educational needs meets national requirements
 - the documentation for pupils who are looked after is thorough, up to date, accessible and identifies clear targets for improving their outcomes.
- Ensure that leaders at all levels and the governing body make best use of the pupil premium grant so that:
 - disadvantaged pupils' needs and barriers to learning are precisely and accurately identified
 - disadvantaged pupils' attendance increases
 - disadvantaged pupils make at least good progress
 - the most able disadvantaged pupils attain higher standards.

The governing body should arrange for an external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not good. The school's special educational needs offer does not contain the information that it should. Leaders do not have a secure enough understanding about the different types of special educational needs and disabilities that are in school because there is no detailed analysis of pupils' needs. Leaders did not have a precise understanding as to why pupils did not attain well in the national mathematics tests in 2016. They do not measure precisely the impact that strategies have on helping this group of pupils make good progress or catch up with other pupils. Leaders have not made sure that the small-group teaching, led mainly by teaching assistants, is effective.
- Senior leaders and the governing body have not used the considerable funds from the pupil premium grant wisely. Approximately £200,000 has been spent in two years, mainly on teaching assistants, yet there is only limited impact. Leaders have not analysed assessment information in depth to identify pupils' needs and their barriers to learning. Consequently, ineffective approaches have been allowed to continue from the previous year and pupils have not caught up quickly enough with other pupils nationally. Leaders have an over-positive evaluation of impact because they are not comparing this group of pupils with non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.
- Progress since the previous inspection stalled in 2015. Significant changes to leadership and teaching, accentuated by staff illness, prevented the school from tackling all the areas for improvement. As a result, writing and the teaching of most-able pupils remain areas for improvement. The headteacher has spent much of his time tackling significant staffing and leadership issues, which has prevented him from successfully tackling all the school's weaknesses.
- The headteacher has introduced a new system to manage the performance of teachers and to hold them to account for the outcomes of pupils in their care. Senior leaders have taken some difficult decisions to raise expectations of staff and this has resulted in some teachers leaving or being given extra support to improve. Parents have been rightly concerned with the disruption to their children's education and their complaints to Ofsted are valid. The school has started to improve more quickly, as noted by parents and pupils. One parent wrote, 'School has improved massively under the leadership of Mr Parry... communication with parents has improved lots with the addition of class dojo and it is really making a difference.'
- The curriculum is broad and balanced but has not had a good impact on the most able pupils. The content of the curriculum is taught in mixed-age classes but is not challenging enough, which means that the most able pupils in Year 6 are completing the same worksheets and work as the lowest-attaining pupils in Year 5, particularly in science.
- The curriculum has helped pupils to learn French and to develop their knowledge of historical events and famous people in history. The impact in history is slightly diminished when pupils are asked to write in a genre which would not have existed at the time. For example, pupils were asked to write a diary entry from the viewpoint as a Viking, yet there is no evidence that Vikings wrote diaries. In addition, aspects of

equality are not threaded through the curriculum, so in the topic of Vikings there is very little about the important role of women. The curriculum has been extended by adding a range of activities for pupils to take part in outside lessons such as cookery, singing and a good range of sports.

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have improved provision for pupils to learn about other religions, cultures, countries and different festivals. These are now a key part of the curriculum. There are more opportunities, for example, for pupils to visit other places of worship such as a synagogue and a mosque.
- The school promotes the pupils' moral development and has extended pupils' knowledge about the wider world and life in modern Britain. For example, pupils have considered and challenged stereotypical views about asylum seekers and refugees. In Year 5, pupils thought about and had the chance to express their feelings about current affairs relating to refugees.
- Pupils' understanding of British values is limited. Although there was a useful visit to the Houses of Parliament, this was not followed up in class by developing pupils' understanding of the role of democracy and the formation of law, which means that pupils were still unsure what a member of parliament is and what they do. The school's work to promote equality is starting to improve and it makes sure that policies, procedures and systems cover the full range of characteristics identified in the 2010 Equality Act.
- There is a plan in place, on the website, to show how the sport premium is spent. It has, however, not been evaluated, so parents cannot see the impact of the spending. The grant has been spent on buying in specialist sports coaches who have demonstrated to staff how to teach different sports. In Reception, for example, the sports coach, observed by the teacher, enabled children to make good progress in their ability to roll in the tuck position.
- The local authority provides very effective external support. Its evaluations of lessons and leadership have led to improved teaching and to greater links with other schools. It has brokered the secondment of a deputy headteacher from another school. As one parent wrote, 'The appointment of a new deputy head from September 2016 has made a huge and significant impact upon the school – within the last half term, she has been responsible for improving a number of areas'. The local authority has also provided effective assistance with staffing and leadership issues.

Governance of the school

- Governors do not make sure that the pupil premium grant is spent effectively and has an impact on pupils' progress. The measures the governors use do not allow them to evaluate how well this group's attainment is closing on the attainment of other pupils nationally. Similarly, they have not made sure that the funding for special educational needs has resulted in this group of pupils making good progress. They have not checked the website well enough to make sure it meets requirements.
- The governing body has acted on the recommendations of the external review. It has helped to guide leaders to establish a new vision for the future and has helped to shape a culture of higher expectations of staff. It has recruited new members to fill in gaps in its knowledge and skills.
- The governing body has raised its expectations in relation to the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Governors have an improved overview of the effectiveness of teaching on the progress that pupils make because they have greater access to

assessment information. They ask challenging questions about the progress of different groups of pupils and acknowledge that in 2016 not enough pupils achieved as well as they could.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The headteacher has taken action to improve the security of the site, which pupils cited as a reason why they now feel safer in school. As one parent commented, 'There have been many positive changes in recent months, particularly in terms of safeguarding pupils and raising awareness of this'. Another parent wrote in the survey. 'There has been a drastic change to the school since Mr Parry was appointed. Safeguarding has improved greatly robust systems, such as start of school day'. Safeguarding is a high priority for senior leaders and governors.
- Staff are knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities in protecting children because they are well trained and receive frequent updates from leaders. There is a good system in place to train staff who are new to the school. Pupils confirmed that they feel there is someone they could approach if they were worried about anything.
- There is an effective system in place to check the qualifications of staff and to make sure that adults working with pupils are appropriately vetted.
- Leaders have not ensured that the paperwork for the pupils who are looked after is readily accessible and securely stored. The files are disorganised, incomplete and lack precise targets for pupils' progress and development. Similarly, the system to record behaviour and bullying incidents is not good and does not allow leaders to easily compare information about incidents.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is not effective in enabling disadvantaged pupils to make good progress. There is no targeted teaching for the most able and teaching in class is not good. As a result, this group does not make as much progress as it could. The pupil premium grant has been used to employ teaching assistants to support disadvantaged pupils but this approach has not been successful in the past. Leaders have changed the deployment of assistants but as yet there is no positive impact on pupils' progress. Assessment of disadvantaged pupils' needs is not thorough enough. As a result, teachers do not plan lessons that enable pupils to overcome any barriers to learning.
- Teaching for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has not helped them to make good progress. They are often taught in small groups by teaching assistants, but some assistants do not have the necessary skills or knowledge to teach this group of pupils well. For example, in English, a small group of pupils were taught incorrectly about how to use punctuation marks and the teaching introduced errors into pupils' understanding. In another example, in mathematics, a teaching assistant and a teacher used incorrect mathematical terminology.
- Teaching for the most able pupils does not help this group to make good progress. This is because activities are sometimes too simple and do not require pupils to think or to extend their knowledge into more complex ideas. For example, in mathematics, pupils follow the method of solving the calculation without understanding how that method works and how it can be applied in different situations. There is an over-focus on following methods to get the right answer instead of understanding the mathematics.

- In subjects other than English and mathematics, different year groups are taught together and cover the same content. The most able pupils in these contexts are not challenged enough to produce a higher level of work. For example, in history, in key stage 1, most-able pupils coloured in pictures poorly and completed low-level worksheets and did not have the opportunity to extend their writing skills.
- Teaching is more effective in some classes and some subjects than others. In French, for example, pupils learn to recognise and say common French words in sentences. They learn how to use good pronunciation because the teacher has high expectations of pupils' language abilities. They listen to authentic French voices and make good progress.
- Pupils are taught how to read systematically. Teachers introduce the sounds progressively in daily reading lessons and pupils use the sounds to help them read unfamiliar and complicated words. They enjoy reading and read often in and out of class.
- In a majority of classes, teachers use questions well to assess pupils' understanding. They use pupils' answers to redirect their teaching and use errors to help pupils improve their work. Teachers often plan lessons or additional teaching based on errors that pupils have made in previous lessons. Since the previous inspection, the impact that teachers' feedback, including marking, has on pupils' progress has improved. Teachers' feedback enables pupils to tackle their mistakes and improve their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils do not have enough to do at break and lunchtime. They are not allowed to run freely around the outdoor spaces and the restrictions are hampering good personal and health development.
- Pupils reported that pupils tease each other and there are examples of name-calling, including racist terminology and 'gay' as a derogatory term. They also commented that when these are reported there is further name-calling such as 'snitch'.
- Pupils reported that there is bullying at school and sometimes it continues after being initially tackled. The school's reporting systems do not log well enough whether there are any future incidences or whether incidents have ended.
- Since April 2016, there have been improvements. There is stronger action taken against pupils using inappropriate language or being involved in any form of bullying. Pupils have an appropriate awareness of cyber bullying and confirmed that it is rare.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe in a range of contexts, including when in water and when using roads. They know how to keep themselves safe when working online and how to evacuate when there is a potential fire.
- Pupils are articulate, self-confident and willingly take up roles and responsibilities in the school, for example in the school council or as play leaders.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities

are absent too often. Their absences are monitored but there has been little improvement in their attendance since the previous inspection.

- In too many lessons, pupils' learning is disrupted by other pupils talking, not following instructions or calling out. Pupils become disengaged and lose concentration in too many classes, and in particular in classes covered by supply or temporary teachers. The most able pupils said that they found it difficult to concentrate in some lessons.
- The monitoring of behaviour requires improvement because there are too many ways of recording poor behaviour. Leaders do not analyse patterns of behaviour and make sure that incidences are recorded consistently.
- Pupils around school are generally well-mannered, polite and friendly. They socialise well together regardless of age, gender and background. In class, they respond well to instructions and in some classes are eager and keen to learn. They said that behaviour has improved since April 2016.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve well. Their attainment lags behind that of other pupils nationally by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in a range of subjects. They do not make the accelerated progress needed to catch up with other pupils nationally. Most-able disadvantaged pupils are not catered for and, as a result, they do not make good progress. In key stage 1, for example, pupils' reading books were not well matched to their ability and some they had read in the previous year. This prevented them from extending their reading skills.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have for the last three years made slow progress. Their support is not well devised and not targeted, which means that they do not make the progress they should. For example, in an activity led by a teaching assistant, two boys made little progress because the task was too difficult and the teaching assistant did not know the level of the boys' ability well enough.
- The most able pupils make slow progress from their starting points. Too few middle-ability pupils are extended to attain the highest standards across subjects. In science, for example, middle- and higher-ability pupils completed the same work as the lowest ability, there was no extension of experimentation skills or writing up of experiments to make them think of more scientific ideas. The most able pupils' writing is hampered by low-level worksheets with prepopulated writing spaces, which restricts extended writing.
- In 2016, key stage 2 pupils made very slow progress in writing and slow progress in mathematics. In contrast, there has been a three-year increase in pupils' writing skills by the end of Year 2. One of the reasons is that teachers have in the past not made sure that the pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling skills are embedded in every piece of writing before moving on to more complex pieces. Pupils were not always given the advice they needed to improve their writing. Most-able pupils, for example, made errors in the use of inverted commas in speech for over two weeks' work, which were not picked up by the teacher.
- Pupils who are looked after, or who have been adopted from care, achieve well and make similar progress to their peers.
- Pupils' ability to use phonics to read and spell words by the end of Year 1 is above

average. Pupils, as they go through the school, use their phonic strategies to read unfamiliar words. For example, a pupil struggled on the word 'flat' until he split it up into different sounds.

Early years provision

Good

- Children start in Reception with the skills and development that are typical for four- and five-year olds. They can, for example, jump, hop and run. They can hold pencils with good grips to make marks and letters. By the end of the year, they have made good progress and for the last three years have attained an above-average level of development. In particular, their knowledge and understanding of the world and expressive arts and design are above average. For the last three years, the weakest subject has been writing.
- One of the differences with the main school is that the most able children are challenged in their activities. Teachers target their questions and more complex activities to make sure children think more deeply and make progress towards more challenging skills and knowledge.
- The staff know the children well and gain a great deal of information before they start school, which allows them to teach a curriculum which is effective in challenging children of all levels of ability. Similarly, teachers put in place what is needed to help the disadvantaged children make progress.
- Children are well prepared for Year 1. Teachers make changes to their style of teaching and to the curriculum to make sure they are ready for the different style of teaching in the main school.
- Children are safe, well behaved and they concentrate well on tasks for long periods of time. They respond well to adults' teaching and instructions and are keen to learn. They access resources and equipment independently and use their imagination in creative activities. They know the purpose of the activities they are involved in and can articulate what they are learning and why they are learning it. For example, children explained to inspectors why they were completing finger strengthening exercises which would help them with their writing in the future. Staff make sure that the statutory requirements regarding welfare are met.
- The early years leader has a good understanding of the strengths in the provision and what needs to be improved. She has taken effective action to increase the level of challenge for the most able children and to improve the teaching of writing. She has monitored and given advice to other adults in Reception to help them improve their teaching. She has a detailed and comprehensive overview of Reception assessment information and changes provision in light of moderation by external agencies. There are effective systems in place to work with parents, other schools and other agencies. These systems enable the leader to continually change and improve the provision.

School details

Unique reference number	105068
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10019792

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	303
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Graham
Headteacher	Paul Parry
Telephone number	0151 677 3970
Website	www.stjosephs-upton.co.uk
Email address	schooloffice@stjosephs-upton.wirral.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 October 2014

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the school's special educational needs offer and the impact of the spending of the sports premium on its website.
- St Joseph's is larger than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be disadvantaged is in line with the national average. The proportion identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- In 2015, the school met the government's floor standard (the minimum expected of pupils' attainment and progress).
- Since the full inspection in October 2014, the previous headteacher was ill for around 10 months. She resigned in October 2015. Her position was taken on a temporary basis by the deputy headteacher, who subsequently became the substantive headteacher in April 2016. The teacher in charge of leading mathematics and the assistant headteacher both resigned on the latest possible date in May 2016, hampering the school's ability to secure permanent

replacements. At the time of this inspection, four out of the six classes in key stage 2 were covered by temporary teachers. The teacher in charge of English has been leading the subject since February 2016 and the teacher in charge of mathematics has been leading the subject since September 2016.

- The local authority seconded a deputy headteacher from another school for a year. She started in September 2016.
- Three non-qualifying complaints were received by Ofsted since the inspection in 2014. Inspectors considered the circumstances surrounding the complaints but did not investigate the complaints directly.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in each class and in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, physical education, French, history and personal, social and health education. They looked through a range of pupils' work. They also observed teaching assistants teach small groups of pupils.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally in groups and informally around school. They heard pupils read and discussed reading books. They considered the views of 31 pupils who completed Ofsted's questionnaire.
- Inspectors spoke with some parents at the start of the day and took into account the views of 43 parents who completed Ofsted's online survey. They also considered the written views of 23 of the parents who added comments.
- Inspectors met with a representative of the diocese, a representative of the local authority and four members of the governing body. They also met with a range of teaching and non-teaching staff.

Inspection team

Allan Torr, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Woodhouse	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Bentham	Her Majesty's Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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