

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

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

Inspection dates

22–23 November 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and has secured significant improvements since the last inspection. A team of dedicated staff share her ambition for the school.
- The governing body is well informed. Governors provide a good level of challenge and support that has helped the school to improve.
- Weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have been tackled with rigour and success. Teaching and pupils' outcomes have improved.
- Subject leaders provide an effective supporting role in strengthening the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their different starting points. This includes the most able pupils, those who are disadvantaged and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are good. Pupils say they are kept safe in school and they feel safe. This view is supported by parents, staff and governors.
- Children in the early years make good progress from their starting points and most achieve a good level of development.
- Pupils are well prepared for their next stages of education across the school and for transfer to secondary education.
- The school is a calm and orderly environment where pupils behave well. Pupils show consideration and respect towards adults and each other. They have positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and understanding of British values are embedded in their daily routine. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Occasionally, the most able pupils do not make fast enough progress because some staff do not have consistently high enough expectations of them.
- Most pupils' attendance is good but there are a small number who do not attend regularly enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders should ensure that the quality of teaching improves still further so that all pupils make the rapid and sustained progress needed to reach the highest standards of which they are capable, by ensuring that all pupils are consistently set challenging tasks to extend their learning, especially the most able pupils.
- Improve attendance rates for a small group of pupils who do not attend regularly enough.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have worked well to make the necessary improvements since the last inspection. Better governance has also helped the school to improve. Leaders have worked effectively in providing much better training for all staff, and this has helped to secure significant and sustained improvements in teaching across all key stages. Consequently, outcomes for all groups of pupils are now good.
- Leadership at all levels is strong. The quality of middle leadership has particularly improved. Senior and subject leaders work in close collaboration with one another. As a result, the progress that key groups of pupils make is very carefully checked. Any additional barriers to learning are quickly identified and tackled. The school also has a firm focus on promoting equality of opportunity so that all pupils can achieve well irrespective of their backgrounds or starting points.
- The school's system for checking on the performance of teachers is closely linked to improving pupils' achievement. High-quality professional development and training, sourced from both the local authority and independent consultants, is carefully linked to the needs of individual teachers, as well as the school's priorities. Staff work together to reflect on, and share, the best practice they observe. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved throughout the school.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils' strong personal development is in part due to a curriculum that strongly contributes to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- Funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. The impact of key spending decisions is closely checked by leaders and the governing body to establish how well pupils are doing, and to identify any who might be at risk of falling behind. Since the last inspection, end of key stage 2 differences between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally have diminished significantly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is carefully checked by key staff. The special educational needs coordinator ensures that individual pupils' needs are well met by all of the adults. As a consequence, they achieve well.
- Primary physical education and sports funding has been used successfully to widen the range of sports on offer. Pupils have opportunities to develop their skills in a range of different sports including basketball, tennis, karate and football. Participation in after-school clubs has increased, as has involvement in local sports competitions.
- The local authority has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It has provided focused support to help the school make key improvements, particularly in the quality of teaching and learning.
- Leaders' self-evaluation and development planning have improved since the last inspection. Leaders have a sound working knowledge of the quality of teaching and pupils' behaviour. School self-evaluation is accurate and improvement plans typically identify suitable areas for development.

Governance of the school

- Governors share senior leaders' high expectations of staff and pupils. All governors regularly spend time in school, looking at particular aspects of the school's work such as how well disadvantaged pupils are learning. This gives them an up-to-date view of the school's work.
- Governance has improved significantly since the last inspection. Governors are clear about their role and adhere well to a code of conduct. They are dedicated to school improvement. Governors now have a very clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, gained not only from accurate reports and attendance at meetings but also from their own visits to the school and follow-up discussions about the school's performance with middle and senior leaders.
- Governors provide both challenge and support to the school. They are rigorous in their examination of the school's performance data and regularly ask questions regarding the progress of different groups of pupils in different classes. Governors are adept at helping to set priorities for the school, and hold senior leaders to account for the quality of teaching and learning.

Safeguarding

- Robust safeguarding procedures mean that leaders are quickly alerted to any concerns. Leaders and governors treat safeguarding concerns with the utmost importance. They respond rapidly and proportionately, working positively with parents and agencies so that pupils are safe and secure. High-quality, detailed records indicate the strong priority that leaders give to any safeguarding concerns.
- Leaders provide regular training and updates so that members of staff are well equipped with the knowledge and skills to ensure pupils' safety.
- The vast majority of parents consider that their children are happy, safe and secure at school.
- Monitoring of attendance is used effectively to keep pupils safe by identifying, and following up, those who are missing their education.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection. Improvements have come about through a strong commitment to training teachers and offering them professional development opportunities which have both enthused teachers and helped them to make improvements in their practice. This means that teachers have a better understanding of how to meet the needs of different groups of pupils.
- Teachers check pupils' understanding effectively through strong questioning and regular marking of books. This leads to strong planning of activities, which match pupils' needs well. Teachers also provide feedback which pupils understand and which they use well in most classes to improve and correct their work. Teachers have good subject knowledge and devise imaginative activities that capture pupils' interests and give their learning relevance and purpose. Pupils enjoy their learning and want to succeed.

- The regular checks on pupils' understanding also help teachers to quickly identify misconceptions and this also means that the issues can be addressed quickly so that misunderstandings do not persist.
- The teaching of English has improved since the previous inspection. More consistent phonics teaching has strengthened pupils' early reading skills and lifted the Year 1 phonics check results. Teachers give pupils regular opportunities to read so that they can practise and improve their reading.
- Inspectors heard pupils of different abilities read and found that the lower attainers used their phonics skills well when decoding words in their reading books. The most able readers used higher-level skills, such as deduction and prediction of what will happen next, to help them gain a deeper understanding of their books.
- More accurate assessments of pupils' progress mean teachers are quicker to spot pupils who are making slower progress and provide prompt support, including for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Teachers are knowledgeable about teaching writing skills. They successfully teach pupils to use increasingly complex grammar and punctuation in their writing. They encourage all pupils, including the most able, to try out new vocabulary in their writing to create different effects.
- Improvements in the curriculum mean that pupils are more interested in writing than previously. However, variations in teachers' expectations mean that sometimes teachers do not insist that all pupils get on with writing tasks well enough in lessons, with the result that some pupils make slower progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are safe and report that they feel safe and understand why they feel safe. They believe that they are well cared for and that there are always adults to help them in the classroom or around the school.
- Most pupils are self-motivated and have positive attitudes in lessons. They are keen to share their achievements. They are proud of their school and show respect for each other and their teachers.
- Pupils report that bullying is very rare. They know about the different forms it can take and to whom they should report any instances.
- Parents who replied to the online Parent View questionnaire agreed that their child is happy and that children are kept safe in school.
- The daily breakfast club provides welcoming and positive social experiences for the many pupils who arrive before the formal start of the school. These experiences reinforce the school's aims to help to develop respect and independence.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff set high standards to which pupils respond well. Pupils' behaviour in the playground, in the dining hall, in breakfast club and as they move around the school is very good.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and friendly, displaying good manners at all times.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to learning. This is seen in the work they do in books and the willingness to participate in lessons. Pupils show adults and other pupils respect, which has helped all groups of pupils to feel confident to give their views and to do well in their learning.
- A range of strategies have been introduced to improve attendance, including regular meetings with the parent support adviser and sharing with parents the distinction between authorised and unauthorised absence. While this has improved attendance and reduced the number of pupils who are persistently absent, there is still further work to be done to make sure it is even better.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Progress and attainment have improved since the last inspection. Assessment information, the school's own tracking information, and the quality of work in books, clearly indicate that current pupils in every year group are now making consistently good progress in English and mathematics, as well as other subjects across the curriculum.
- Current pupils are now making at least good progress in their learning from individual starting points. By the end of Year 6, pupils are well prepared for secondary school, both in terms of academic achievement and in their knowledge of how to be a successful learner.
- The school is quick to identify any pupils who are at risk of falling behind, including in the early years. Staff make effective provision for these pupils either within class, in small groups or individually. This includes pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils make good progress from their starting points because teachers give them activities that are well matched to their ability and need.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including those who are most able, make good progress across the curriculum from their starting points because of successful interventions in individual or small-group activities.
- There are strengths in the teaching of phonics. Consequently, at the end of Year 1, results in the phonics screening check have improved steadily and are now almost at national average.
- The most able pupils make similarly good progress to their classmates, although sometimes opportunities are missed to add further to the level of challenge and to stretch these pupils' thinking.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress from their starting points. Information indicates that a high proportion met the expected standard

in the national phonics screening test and that such pupils made good progress by the end of Years 2 and 6.

Early years provision

Good

- Children start the early years with skills and knowledge which are generally below those expected for their age. As a result of good teaching, good provision, careful observation and perceptive questioning, the proportion of children who leave the Reception class with a good level of development continues to improve and is above the national figure.
- Children are eager to learn and explore. They thoroughly enjoy the opportunities given to investigate and learn happily together. Reception and Nursery children's play is lively, creative and imaginative.
- Children quickly learn essential personal, social and emotional skills and are able to take turns, share and apply themselves to tasks. They are thoughtful towards each other, such as when one boy kindly tidied up after another who had forgotten to put away some equipment. All adults have high expectations and there is a tangible sense of urgency and excitement in the early years setting.
- Children behave well, take turns, share resources and listen attentively. They are able to sustain concentration for a considerable time because they enjoy, and are relaxed in, their play.
- All adults intervene sensitively and skilfully in order to develop and enrich children's use of language. Adults play and work alongside children to explore and practise new skills, observing children carefully, building on their interests and using open-ended questions effectively to stimulate their imagination and creativity.
- Children behave safely and sensibly at all times. They use their outdoor toys responsibly and considerately when they are outside. Children are well mannered. This was observed by inspectors when two children were working together to lift and relocate containers using pulleys.
- Children with low starting points, as well as disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress because leaders use assessment information well to address any gaps in children's learning.
- Leaders are vigilant in all aspects of safety and safeguarding children's welfare. Judging by the confidence with which children play and learn, they clearly feel safe and secure.
- Good links are being forged with parents. Parents are involved in their children's transition to the school and are kept informed through the use of children's learning journals.

School details

Unique reference number	108508
Local authority	Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Inspection number	10019727

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lynne Potter
Headteacher	Elaine Mathews
Telephone number	01912 739 063
Website	www.stjosephs.newcastle.sch.uk/website
Email address	office@stjosephsrcprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 November 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupil supported by premium funding is higher than that found in most schools. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background is above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak 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.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning in lessons, including one jointly with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors listened to some pupils read and reviewed a sample of their work alongside subject leaders. The inspectors also made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Inspectors held meetings with different groups of people involved with the school. These groups included pupils, governors, the headteacher, other members of the teaching staff and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors viewed a range of documents including information on pupils' achievements, the school's data on current and recent progress and attainment, and the school's view on how well it is doing. Inspectors also viewed the school improvement plan, self-evaluation, documents relating to safeguarding and records of behaviour and attendance.
- The inspectors considered 13 parental responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View). They also spoke to parents as they brought their children to school during the inspection.

Inspection team

Geoffrey Seagrove, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Render	Ofsted Inspector
Frances Gowland	Ofsted Inspector

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Manchester
M1 2WD

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