

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Upton

Moreton Road, Upton, Wirral, Merseyside CH49 6LL

## Inspection dates

16–17 April 2019

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Senior leaders have addressed the weaknesses in teaching and learning effectively. They have set higher expectations of staff and pupils to ensure that the school is now good.
- Staff development has been at the core of school improvement. Teachers have been supported well to improve their practice. Leaders have appointed skilled teaching assistants who cater for pupils' needs well.
- The headteacher has set high expectations of pupils' behaviour to ensure that the school's culture has been transformed into one of respect. This is based on the excellent relationships between staff and pupils.
- Senior leaders have defined the essential knowledge and skills in each subject effectively to ensure that there is a broad and balanced curriculum. However, subject leaders have not designed the curriculum to offer challenge for the most able pupils to achieve the highest standards in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Governors have a secure awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have ensured that the use of funding for disadvantaged pupils is tailored to pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils' progress has improved dramatically.
- The personal development of pupils is outstanding. They understand well the principles of equality and have a strong understanding of British values.
- Pupils' progress and attainment at the end of key stage 2 have improved to be broadly average. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined is below that seen nationally.
- Teachers regularly check on pupils' learning to address any misconceptions and support them to make good progress.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress. However, variable support for the development of their basic skills in writing and mathematics means that some gaps remain due to previously weak teaching and learning.
- In the early years, leaders have been successful in maintaining a good level of provision. However, the quality of adult interactions sometimes does not extend children's learning. Safeguarding is effective. Pupils feel that they can approach staff with any concerns. They have excellent relationships with staff.

## Full report

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

- Develop the leadership of subjects other than English and mathematics to ensure that the curriculum consistently challenges the most able pupils to achieve even higher standards.
- Improve teaching and learning to ensure that there is greater consistency in the support provided to pupils with SEND so that they have opportunities to consolidate basic skills in writing and mathematics.
- Improve outcomes so that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the combined measure in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 matches or exceeds that seen nationally.
- In the early years, improve the quality of adult interactions to ensure that staff use every opportunity to extend children's learning.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Pupils, governors, staff, parents and carers are unified in their praise for the way in which senior leaders have transformed the culture of the school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have overcome the effects of historically weak leadership to set high expectations of staff and pupils. They have established a dynamic team of staff who are committed to meeting the needs of pupils.
- Leaders have tackled effectively the weakest teaching in the school. They have established systems to ensure that teachers are accountable for the progress pupils make. Leaders provide effective feedback to teachers about how they can improve their practice. They pair staff together to support each other's development. Staff are positive about the opportunities that they have to improve their skills. Staff are proud to be part of the school.
- Leaders have recruited high-quality teaching assistants. They have provided continual support for their development by sharing the good practice in the school. Leaders have created purposeful spaces to facilitate small-group support. This has been effective in improving pupils' progress and attainment and filling the gaps in their knowledge and skills in English and mathematics.
- The English and mathematics leaders are experienced and passionate about their roles. They have brought about improvements in the standard of pupils' writing and mathematics work. They check on the progress of pupils regularly and have a strong understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their subjects.
- The leadership of SEND has improved significantly since the previous inspection. The special educational needs coordinator has ensured that the identification of pupils' individual needs has been refined so that staff can better support their learning.
- Senior leaders have ensured that the curriculum provides pupils with a broad and balanced education. The skills and knowledge for each subject and in each year have been defined well. This ensures that pupils' learning builds on their prior knowledge. However, in subjects other than English and mathematics, leaders are at the early stages of developing the curriculum to challenge some of the most able pupils to achieve even higher standards.
- Leaders have put in place new structures for discipline that have transformed behaviour in the school. The headteacher has ensured that there are higher expectations. Pupils commented to inspectors about how the headteacher's 'firm but fair' approach has inspired them to strive to be better in all aspects of school life.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Leaders have ensured that the promotion of pupils' personal development and spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is woven through the curriculum effectively.

## Governance of the school

- Governors have ensured that the Christian values of the school have informed the way in which leaders have led improvements. This has resulted in a distinctive ethos of nurture and support for pupils. As a result, relationships among staff and pupils are excellent.
- Following a review of their practice, governors made sure that the school's pupil premium allocation was targeted more effectively on improving individual pupils' learning. Governors are aware of how the systems to identify and support disadvantaged pupils are improving their outcomes.
- Governors have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The minutes of their meetings show a high degree of questioning of leaders, which helps to inform their strategic view of school effectiveness. Governors continue to see the school as 'a work in progress' and are proud of the steps that they have taken to build sustainable improvements.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils feel safe in school. The pupils with whom inspectors spoke, and those responding to the pupil survey, feel that they can approach staff with any concerns that they have. This is because of the excellent relationships that exist within the school.
- Leaders have put clear systems in place to report any concerns regarding the safety of pupils. Staff receive regular updates and training on safeguarding matters to ensure that there is a culture of vigilance in the school.
- Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when online. The vast majority of parents believe their child to be safe at school.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teachers have a strong awareness of pupils' needs because they regularly check on pupils' learning and progress. They ask targeted questions to probe pupils' understanding and prompt them to think carefully about their work. These checks also inform the identification of pupils who need further support in their work.
- In English and mathematics, teachers provide challenges that are designed to stretch pupils' thinking and enable them to apply their learning in a range of contexts. Teachers use pupils' misconceptions skilfully as teaching points in order to deepen pupils' understanding of the topics being studied. Pupils are positive about these challenges and aspire to improve their work.
- The support that teaching assistants provide to pupils is effective in promoting good progress. Staff understand the next steps in pupils' learning and they receive comprehensive training to develop their skills, for example in the teaching of phonics.
- In reading, staff match texts well to pupils' abilities and interests. Pupils use their

phonics skills well to read accurately. They are confident and read for pleasure. Older pupils read fluently and with expression to comprehend the meaning of the books that they read.

- Pupils' written work shows that they make good progress from their starting points. Effective teaching has ensured that gaps in pupils' learning have been addressed. This is resulting in better progress for pupils in key stage 2.
- In their mathematics work, pupils have opportunities to use their skills to solve problems. They explain their answers using the correct terminology. Teachers ensure that there are consistent opportunities for pupils to apply their reasoning skills in lessons. This is reflected well in pupils' work.
- Disadvantaged pupils progress well. Pupils receive targeted support where necessary to ensure that they are challenged to make the progress that they are capable of.
- The work of pupils with SEND shows gaps in their basic skills that have persisted from historically weak teaching. For example, in writing, pupils' work shows that there are basic errors in their use of punctuation that persist over time. The support that they receive for addressing these basic skills is sometimes variable in its effectiveness. Nonetheless, pupils with SEND generally make good progress because their needs are identified well through individual profiles and targets.
- As well as English and mathematics, pupils study a wide range of subjects in depth. For example, in science, pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 study light by exploring the movement of shadows. They have good opportunities to develop their scientific investigation skills, especially in key stage 2.
- In other subjects, pupils have opportunities to experience a diverse curriculum. For example, their work in design and technology enables them to design, make and review their work, for example in Year 4, where pupils create their own volcano. In Spanish, they learn to use and write simple phrases. In their artwork in Year 2, they have opportunities to study the work of famous artists such as Van Gogh in their use of colour and shape. However, in subjects other than English and mathematics, the work of some of the most able pupils lacks ambition and does not reflect their true capabilities.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Governors and leaders have prioritised the development of the school's pastoral care. As a result, they have created a strong ethos of mutual respect within the school. Excellent relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves have a marked effect on the quality of pupils' learning.
- Pupils enjoy their work. They are self-confident and display the qualities of successful learners well. Pupils support each other's learning well in paired and shared work. They have positive attitudes towards each other. Pupils are motivated, inquisitive and keen to learn.
- Pupils speak very highly of the pastoral officer and how she makes a positive difference

to their social and emotional well-being and their mental health. For example, some pupils are supported to build their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils feel that they are now much better equipped to handle issues that may arise in their lives.

- Pupils embody the values of respect and acceptance. They have an exceptionally mature awareness of equalities and they actively celebrate difference. Staff foster respect between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves. They have an exceptional awareness of the different protected characteristics.
- Pupils also have a well-developed understanding of British values. Older pupils debate issues. They have a strong understanding of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law.
- Pupils' spiritual awareness is excellent. They have a clear understanding of other faiths and how they differ from, and are similar to, their own.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is impeccable. Pupils attribute this to the high expectations that the headteacher has brought to the school. They are aware that behaviour in the school was previously poor. Pupils speak enthusiastically about how leaders have transformed the culture within the school.
- Pupils say that poor behaviour is now rare and that this is tackled effectively by staff. They say that bullying is rarer still. Pupils understand the consequences of their actions and how their behaviour affects others. The vast majority of parents are highly positive about behaviour in the school and the changes that have been brought about by leaders.
- Older pupils act as role models for younger pupils as play leaders at lunchtimes. They know the importance of physical activity and how this contributes to staying healthy. They have been trained to support younger pupils in managing minor disputes and actively contribute to maintaining the strong, supportive and nurturing ethos within the school.
- The school environment is calm and orderly. Pupils thrive in an atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Attendance has improved at the school and it currently matches the national average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has been reduced. Governors and leaders are keen to continue to improve this aspect of the school's provision.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- In 2018, pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 was broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. This has risen steadily and represents a significantly improved picture, particularly in writing and mathematics, from the very low results experienced by the school in 2016.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the combined measure for reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 remains below the national

average. However, attainment has risen from one third of pupils reaching this standard in 2016 to well over half of the cohort in 2018. Furthermore, pupils' attainment in each of these subjects was much closer to the national average. Effective challenge for some of the most able pupils has also seen the proportion of pupils achieving the highest standards improve in reading, writing and mathematics.

- These positive improvements are also mirrored in the performance of disadvantaged pupils. Although their progress in writing remains lower than that seen nationally, this has been significantly improved in the last two years.
- In reading, pupils' grasp of phonics ensures that they read accurately. As they move through the school, they develop fluency and expression to become competent readers.
- Current pupils' writing demonstrates good progress from their starting points. From impressive starting points in key stage 1, pupils continue to develop their use of increasingly complex vocabulary and sentence structure to achieve good standards by the time they reach upper key stage 2.
- Although boys' performance in writing at the end of key stage 2 in 2018 was below that seen nationally, the work of current pupils across the school shows that boys make positive progress in their work.
- Gaps in learning persist for some pupils with SEND in writing and mathematics because basic skills were not taught well enough in the past. Although they make good progress, the attainment of some of these pupils continues to be lower than the national average.
- The work in pupils' books for subjects other than English and mathematics demonstrates good progress in pupils' acquisition of knowledge and skills. However, demands made on some most-able pupils are not high enough. Their work is sometimes of a similar standard to work produced by pupils of other abilities.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- The early years leader has an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's provision. Children progress well from starting points that are typical for their age. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development in 2018 was just above the national average. This maintained a consistent level of performance over recent years.
- Children are well prepared for Year 1. For example, their writing at the end of the Reception Year as they move into Year 1 shows that they are ready for higher expectations in key stage 1.
- The quality of teaching is good. Children are encouraged to work to the best of their ability. High expectations are evident in the challenges set for children, which helps to structure their independent learning. There is a strong emphasis on developing children's early literacy skills, and inspectors observed a number of boys whose writing was of a high quality.
- When learning, children work together effectively. They have excellent attitudes towards their work and all children are engaged in meaningful activities. Children

display effective characteristics of learning. However, adult interactions do not consistently promote depth in children's learning. Teachers prompt children to access different activities but do not question well enough to challenge them to extend their learning even further.

- Phonics lessons target different groups of children so that tasks are matched to their needs. They use their skills well when they are reading and writing.
- Leaders have created an open space to widen the range of activities on offer for children's learning. Children are allowed to explore in order to develop their knowledge and skills well, such as in mathematics, where children use the language of capacity to describe their learning.
- Safeguarding is effective. The awareness of staff ensures that children are safe. The way in which they respond to adults shows that they feel safe in the setting. Children work with respect and value each other's opinions.
- Parents are involved well in their child's education through homework books that enable them to support their child's learning at home. Partnerships with external agencies and other early years providers are effective in providing for the needs of children and their families where necessary.

## School details

Unique reference number	105068
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10057915

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	288
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Nicola Robinson
Headteacher	Mrs Claire Marrin
Telephone number	0151 677 3970
Website	<a href="http://www.stjosephs-upton.co.uk/">www.stjosephs-upton.co.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:schooloffice@stjosephs-upton.wirral.sch.uk">schooloffice@stjosephs-upton.wirral.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	18–19 October 2016

## Information about this school

- St Joseph's is larger than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be disadvantaged is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly similar to the national average.
- Since the full inspection in October 2016, the headteacher has left the school. The deputy headteacher became the acting headteacher before being appointed permanently in this role in April 2018. The acting deputy headteacher was also appointed to the substantive post of deputy in June 2018.
- The school has a before- and after-school club on-site that is run by a private provider and is therefore subject to a separate inspection.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in classes across the school, including joint observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors examined a range of pupils' work from each year group in subjects across the curriculum. Inspectors also examined work of pupils with SEND alongside their individual profiles and targets.
- Inspectors listened to pupils from all year groups read, both individually and as part of classroom activities.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, at breaktimes, at lunchtimes and when pupils were moving around the school. They spoke with pupils formally in groups and informally around the school.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 29 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. They also considered 51 responses to the pupil survey and the views of 19 members of staff who completed the staff survey.
- Meetings were held with governors, senior leaders and middle leaders.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, such as the school's evaluation of its own performance and its areas for development. They looked at attendance and behaviour records.
- Inspectors also reviewed safeguarding documentation, considered how this relates to daily practice and spoke with staff and pupils.

## Inspection team

Steve Bentham, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mandy Dodd	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Howard	Ofsted Inspector

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