

St Joseph's Washington RC School

Village Lane, Washington, Tyne and Wear, NE38 7HU

Inspection dates 18–19 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils learn well. They make good progress through the school and are well prepared for secondary education when they leave Year 6.
- Teaching is good. Pupils enjoy lessons and make progress because work is set that helps them learn, whatever their ability.
- Lessons are often planned well so that pupils learn new things in different and interesting ways and use and apply their skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers are supported by well trained teaching assistants who make a good contribution to the progress of the pupils they support.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and take care to ensure that they are safe. Pupils understand what is expected and respond by behaving well. Attendance has improved in the last year.
- Morale among staff is high.
- Leadership is strong. All are very clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have led improvements in the quality of teaching and in pupils' learning.
- Governors know the school very well. They hold staff to account for the quality of teaching and for the results achieved by pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment and progress in writing are not as strong as in reading and mathematics, because not enough attention is given to work being corrected and re-drafted.
- Not enough teaching is outstanding because teachers do not share their ideas and expertise fully enough across the school.
- Teaching does not give pupils enough opportunities to work things out for themselves.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 12 lessons. One of these was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at their work in books.
- Meetings were held with pupils, governors, a representative of the local authority and school staff. Informal discussions were held with parents.
- The inspectors took account of the 16 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), and questionnaires carried out by the school.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the way the school checks its performance, the improvement plan, analysis and tracking of pupils' progress, and school policies.

Inspection team

Mick Hill, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Anne Vernon

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an averaged sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is average.
- The proportions of pupils supported at school action and at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2010.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the standard of writing in all years so that it matches that in reading and mathematics by:
 - making sure that pupils are given time to correct and practise spellings and grammar and re-draft work after teachers have marked it
 - ensuring that the pupils' written work displayed in classrooms and around the school is of the highest standard so that pupils learn from the best.
- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching by:
 - giving pupils in all classes more opportunities to work things out for themselves
 - making sure that teachers share ideas and expertise more fully.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start school with skills which are similar to those typically expected for their age. However, a number of boys have skills below those expected for their age, especially in their emotional development. All pupils make progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 which is similar to that found nationally. They make particularly good progress in reading. This is because they are taught about letters and sounds (phonics) well enough to read unfamiliar words.
- Pupils do very well in Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6 they exceed expected standards for their age and are well prepared for the move to secondary education. This is the result of the good preparation provided by teachers and teaching assistants in their earlier years and the typically effective teaching in Key Stage 2.
- Although pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics in Key Stage 2 exceed that seen nationally, it is weaker in writing. This is because, while teaching overall is good and improving, there are shortcomings in how teachers encourage pupils to do their best when writing.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do as well as other pupils. This is because they enjoy school and lessons are planned well to meet their needs and because of the good support given by teaching assistants.
- Those pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium make at least as much progress as that of other pupils. As a result the gap between how well these pupils are doing and others in the school is far less than that seen nationally. This is true in all key stages and reflects the school's strong commitment to promoting equality of opportunity.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good across the school with some examples of excellent practice. Teachers are good at setting work that helps pupils to learn well, whatever their ability. Lessons are often carefully planned so that pupils learn new things in interesting ways. This is why pupils exceed expected standards by the end of Key Stage 2.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 the teaching of phonics is organised in a way that pupils enjoy and which captures their interest and helps them to learn. In one example of a good phonics session in Year 1, pupils wrote short captions for a seaside picture and rose to the challenge of commenting on each other's attempts.
- In Key Stage 2 learning is enlivened by a range of activities, a project on the history of the local mining industry for example, which interests pupils and provides them with opportunities to use and apply their skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- While the overall quality of teaching is good, it is not outstanding because teachers do not regularly observe and learn from each other so that all teaching matches the very best.
- Pupils are not given opportunities to work things out for themselves often enough. When they are, they make rapid progress and enjoy learning all the more. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, pupils were asked to produce a Christmas shopping list for their teacher, guided by the school's 'steps to success' approach which sets out the stages pupils should follow to complete the task. The pupils greatly enjoyed the challenge, while developing their skills of division and multiplication. As a result they made exceptional progress.
- The quality of marking is high. All teachers regularly mark work in detail following the school's helpful colour-coded system for identifying strengths and weaknesses. Comments are added to help pupils improve their work. However, too little encouragement and time is given to allow pupils to act on the comments and correct their work.
- Pupils' work is very neat and their books are tidy and well presented. However, although there are attractive displays in classrooms and around the school, these often do not contain examples of high quality and accurate writing which pupils can compare to their own and so

be encouraged to improve.

- Teaching assistants help groups of pupils who might otherwise fall behind to learn well, in and out of lessons. This is because they are well trained, work closely with the class teacher to plan the lesson, and avoid spoon-feeding those they support.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have clear rules and robust routines to follow. There are positive relationships with staff. They are encouraged to behave well by lots of praise and rewards, through the award of house points, for example. The result is that behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. For example, there have been no exclusions in the last two and a half years.
- Pupils are typically courteous and very welcoming. They usually work well together in a friendly and supportive way, enjoy school and are eager to learn. They respond well when given opportunities to work individually or in groups to solve problems for themselves.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying and say that it is rare and very quickly dealt with if it happens.
- Pupils' attendance has improved and is currently at the level generally seen in primary schools nationally. This is the result of the school working closely with parents to share an understanding of the damage absence from school does to pupils' learning.
- Pupils feel very safe. This includes those whose circumstances might put them at risk. This is because the school building and grounds are secure, there are good procedures to safeguard pupils, and the staff and pupils are alert to potential dangers, for example those posed by the Internet.
- Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong and are encouraged to develop spiritually, through meditation for example. Pupils understand that people have different cultures, backgrounds and faiths. This is because of the many links and activities the school has developed. Examples include work with a school in India and a project on 'Black History'.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a very sharp focus on what the school does well and what needs to improve further, and has a clear plan for the way forward. Staff morale is high and staff are fully behind the drive to make the school even better. They speak of the improvements they have seen in the last year. Parents and pupils also report seeing improvements.
- The senior team is key to the further improvement of the school. It is keen to work more closely to share ideas and expertise, and to coach other staff so that all teaching matches the best. This is at the early stages of development and its impact is only beginning to be felt. The progress made already has much to do with an increasing openness by teachers to constructive criticism and to learning from each other.
- The headteacher accurately and regularly checks the quality of teaching and the performance of staff, who understand what is expected of them. Rewards for staff are firmly linked to their success in helping pupils make good progress in their learning; staff training is geared to this end.
- The school's curriculum is carefully planned and full of exciting and varied opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding, knowledge and skills. Trips, themes, and activities such as wildlife film-making, make learning fun.
- The local authority has provided close and effective support for the school over the last nine months. This support has made a very positive contribution towards improving the quality of teaching and the attainment and progress of the pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is strong. Governors know the school well and visit regularly. They are prepared to challenge the headteacher and senior staff firmly about the quality of

teaching and pupils' achievement. A 'Headteacher's Challenge Group' asks searching questions about the school's performance. The school's finances are carefully managed. In particular, governors have spent the pupil premium wisely. This is seen in the much narrower gap than that seen nationally between pupils eligible for the premium and others.

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 pupil's 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 pupil's needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	108850
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	405199

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mark Jakeway
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Jary
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2010
Telephone number	0191 219 3805
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