

St Joseph's RC Primary School

Market Street, Mossley, Ashton-Under-Lyne, OL5 0ES

Inspection dates 7–8 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 throughout the school make good progress and they achieve well.
- They are given a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress from starting points which are typical for their age.
- Standards currently in the school are above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, plan well and teach confidently.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are keen to learn and work hard in lessons. They say that they feel safe in school and enjoy each other's company.
- Senior leaders are very clear about the direction of the school and, with the governing body, are very committed to its success. They managed teaching and learning well and have maintained good standards and rates of progress through a period of staff changes.
- Governors know the school well and provide strong challenge and support.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not yet enough outstanding teaching in the school. Good practice in marking is not consistent in all classes and across subjects. Occasionally, progress in lessons is slow because pupils are not always expected to listen well.
- Middle leaders (with responsibility for subjects) have not had time to develop all the leadership skills that they need to undertake their roles and carry out their responsibilities fully.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons and part-lessons.
- Meetings were held with staff members, parents, pupils, representatives from the local authority and members of the governing body.
- Also taken into account were the views of 40 parents who responded via the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), letters addressed to inspectors and questionnaires completed by members of staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and examined a wide range of documentation which included: national assessment data and the school's own assessments; samples of pupils' work; the school's own view of its work; previous reports on the school; minutes from governing body meetings and; safeguarding documents.

Inspection team

Kevin Johnson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jean O'Neill	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are White British.
- An average proportion of pupils is supported by the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets current floor standards which are the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to outstanding in order to raise pupils' achievement further by:
 - making sure that pupils always listen intently when the teacher is talking to the class
 - extending the good practice in marking to all subjects so there is clear guidance for pupils on how to improve and time for them to check their mistakes
 - making sure the most successful approaches to teaching and learning are adopted across the school.
- Ensure that teachers in charge of subjects other than English and mathematics receive the training they need to check accurately the quality of teaching and learning and standards in their subjects and to lead improvements effectively.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils enter nursery with knowledge and skills that are broadly typical for their age. They are taught well. Their personal and social skills are developing well so they become keen to learn and interested in the world around them. Speaking and mathematics skills are also promoted well and by the end of Reception most reach a good level of development.
- This good start is built upon well in Years 1 and 2. Progress has gathered pace and standards in reading writing and mathematics in Year 2 are currently on track to show good improvement over the broadly average standards of previous years.
- Pupils' current work and school assessments show good progress in Years 3 to 6. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 6 are on track to be above average this year. These standards are consistent with pupils' achievement over the past five years. Although standards dipped to average in 2013, pupils in that year group had untypically low starting points and had made very good progress by the time they left the school.
- Achievement in reading is a strength throughout the school. Pupils in Year 2 are very enthusiastic readers. They read fluently and with confidence because of earlier successful teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make). They understand what they read and can make accurate predictions about what might happen next in a story. They know how fiction differs from non-fiction and happily talk about their favourite books at home.
- By Year 6 pupils recognise the importance of reading and read widely to improve their learning. Some pupils read from electronic devices because, they say, 'It's better value for money'. They have a very good understanding what they read, including underlying meanings. They read clearly and use good expression when they read aloud to an audience.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Gaps in their learning are quickly identified and specific plans are made for them. Pupils are supported skilfully in lessons and in small groups to achieve well from their starting points.
- Pupils supported by pupil premium funding make good progress. School leaders and governors keep a particularly close watch over their progress to make sure that the funding is used effectively to ensure that the school provides equality of opportunity for all. There was no difference in the attainment in reading, for Year 6 in 2013, between the few pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and others in the school. Gaps in writing and mathematics are closing and, in 2013, the attainment of pupils supported by the pupil premium in Year 6 was about two terms behind that of their peers.
- The most able pupils are well provided for. Good challenges are planned for them and assessments show that they normally reach the expected higher standards, with a few gaining the even higher Level 6 in English or mathematics in Year 6.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching over time has underpinned pupils' consistently good achievement. More recent changes to teaching staff have not halted the good rates of progress. Indeed, improved progress is evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 2. However, the best aspects of teachers' work are not used often enough as a model and guide for all teachers in order to improve the overall quality further.
- Well-planned challenges generally bring out the best from pupils in mathematics. A very good example was seen in a lesson where three distinct groups made good progress in mathematics, with work set at the right level for each group. Learning was well planned and well organised and all adults had good subject knowledge and high expectations of the pupils.
- Literacy is also taught well. There are many opportunities for pupils to write for different purposes and in different styles. Pupils' studies of the works of different authors, including

Shakespeare, are often an effective stimulus for writing. Grammar, punctuation and spelling have a high priority and overall pupils take pride in their work and present it neatly.

- Good use is made of available resources to help pupils learn. For example, teachers' good use of the school's electronic whiteboards keeps pupils focused on their learning. The good pace of learning in a lively phonics (the sounds that letters make) lesson, to give another example, was largely the result of thorough preparation which was assisted by the sensible use of appropriate equipment to support learning.
- Displays of science investigations, topic work, art and the collection of sports trophies are further evidence of pupils' good learning and achievement.
- Classes are mostly managed well. Pupils are motivated to learn. Approaches to learning capture pupils' interest and fire up their imagination. Occasionally, however, expectations are not made clear enough so pupils do not listen well, for example, when they are sitting together on the carpet. This slows their learning, and they are sometimes unsure about what to do when activities begin, as a result.
- Systems for checking pupils' progress are used effectively to set end-of-term and end-of-year targets. These are regularly checked and revised. Good questioning and checking of progress in lessons informs teachers and pupils of their daily progress.
- Teachers' marking is not as effective as it could be. Although there is good practice in some literacy books where there is clear guidance on how to improve and time for pupils to check mistakes, this practice is not found consistently throughout the school or in all subjects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy school. They are mostly attentive to their teachers in lessons and are keen to learn.
- They move sensibly around the school and are usually polite, helpful and very well mannered.
- Pupils adjust their behaviour appropriately, for example during assemblies or in the dining hall and enjoy playtimes. They follow the school rules closely and behave in a way that reflects the strong Christian values that the school teaches.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Although a small number of parents express concerns about the way that the school deals with behaviour and safety, the large majority agree that pupils behave well and are very supportive of the school for the way it cares for their children.
- Pupils themselves say that they are safe in school. They have a clear understanding of different forms that bullying can take, including those linked to the Internet and mobile phones. They state firmly that there is no serious bullying in school, or offensive name-calling, and that they know how to deal with it, should it occur.
- Pupils are confident that there is always an adult on hand to help them when needed.
- Pupils make a good contribution to the daily life of the school. Attendance was average in the last school year, but an improvement has taken it to above average in the current year. Pupils arrive punctually and neatly dressed in school uniform.
- They are proud of their school and do their very best to keep the playground and corridors tidy.
- Pupils willingly take on extra responsibilities. The school council gives all pupils the opportunity to share their views. Pupils discuss risk assessments carried out by governors. They are very keen to represent the school in the wide variety of sports tournaments that the school enters.

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders are single-minded in their ambition to drive the school forward. This ambition is shared fully with governors and staff members who work collectively to bring about improvements and to raise achievement.

- Senior leadership is strong. Leaders check the school's work robustly and have an accurate view of its overall performance. Their view is shared by the local authority which has provided 'light touch' support and is confident about leaders' capacity to lead and manage the school successfully.
- Teaching and learning are managed well. Less effective teaching has been confronted and resolved by leaders. Good support for new teachers has helped them to settle quickly into the school's ways and good progress has been maintained. The school is now focused on further improving pupils' achievement by raising teaching quality to outstanding.
- Middle leaders are relatively inexperienced. They are making good headway with plans to bring in the changes to the National Curriculum in September 2014. They maintain a varied curriculum that helps pupils to achieve well and enjoy their learning. Nevertheless they have not had enough time or training to gain all the leadership skills they need to oversee the quality of work and to continue to raise standards in their subjects.
- Primary sport funding has boosted work in physical education by enabling the school to extend the range of activities it provides and acquire more resources for them. There are further opportunities for teachers to improve their teaching skills by working alongside specialist coaches. There has already been training in gymnastics. The school successfully provides for pupils' well-being and their personal development through its variety of sports clubs as well as the annual camping trip.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors involve themselves well in the life of the school. They work closely with staff to gain a clearer view of the school's work and provide good support. A current initiative requiring careful planning, for example, is the establishment of a new class in Key Stage 2 and the appointment of a suitable teacher as a step towards raising standards further. Governors are familiar with national assessment data and use it effectively as a tool to challenge the school over standards and progress. Finances are managed efficiently, including the pupil premium and primary sport funding, to ensure best value for pupils. Governors know about the quality of teaching in the school and how increases in salary are linked directly to teachers' performance in the classroom. Safeguarding arrangements meet all government requirements.

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

Unique reference number	106254
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	439571

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	149
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Newton
Headteacher	Sheila Partington
Date of previous school inspection	28 April 2009
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