

St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School, Exmouth

Regents Gate, Exmouth, Devon EX8 1TA

Inspection dates

11–12 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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Different groups of pupils, particularly the most able, the most able disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are not making the progress of which they are capable.
- The multi-academy trust has not provided adequate support to leaders since the last inspection to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- Teachers are not fully confident in their use of assessment. As a result, assessment is not always accurate enough to ensure that pupils make more rapid progress.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Pupils’ attitudes to learning are not sufficiently well developed. As a result, pupils lack the resourcefulness, self-sufficiency and engagement with learning to make the progress of which they are capable.
- The feedback that teachers provide to pupils, in line with the school’s policy, does not at times help them to improve their work.
- The attendance of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is not good enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Recently appointed senior leaders are providing purposeful, committed leadership that is improving the school.
- Overall attendance is above the national average.
- Reading is a strength in the school. Pupils enjoy their reading and achieve highly in this area.
- Senior leaders have developed good lines of communication with parents. Consequently, parents feel more involved in the life of the school.
- Leaders are well supported by governors, who provide a strong degree of challenge and hold leaders to account.
- Leaders’ monitoring of the quality of teaching and staff performance is now more rigorous and has a greater impact on the quality of teaching.
- Children are well looked after, taught effectively and make good progress in the early years.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement by enabling all pupils, including the most able, the most able disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to make the progress of which they are capable by ensuring that:
 - teachers have the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - teachers plan work and activities that meet pupils' academic needs more effectively
 - teachers use assessment more accurately to identify and tackle pupil underachievement swiftly, and set appropriate targets.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that feedback from teachers makes clear what pupils need to do to improve their work
 - ensuring that recently improved monitoring and appraisal processes are sharpened further, and applied consistently, to provide staff with the high level of support and challenge necessary to improve their practice quickly.
- Improve behaviour by:
 - developing pupils' attitudes to learning in their lessons so that they become more resourceful and self-sufficient, and have higher, more ambitious expectations of themselves
 - taking further action to reduce bullying and deal with it effectively when it occurs.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection in 2011, leaders have not sufficiently fostered a culture in which pupils are encouraged to be academically ambitious. As a result, pupils, particularly the most able, do not achieve to the best of their ability in some of their subjects.
- The school has recently gone through an unsettling and challenging period of change following the recent retirement of the previous headteacher. Since that time, governors have not been able to appoint a permanent headteacher, which has hampered efforts to secure bold and substantial improvements.
- However, the recent appointments of the acting headteacher and the executive headteacher in April 2016 have been very positive for the school. These leaders are taking the right action to improve the school because they are fully aware of what needs to be done. While 'green shoots' of improvement are apparent, their work is too recent to have had full impact.
- The acting headteacher and executive headteacher are driven by a strong moral purpose. They care about the school and are committed to making rapid improvements. These leaders understand the importance of an ambitious culture in which all are encouraged to achieve their best. As a result, they have established higher expectations of pupils and staff.
- Leaders have not been well supported by the multi-academy trust to which the school belongs. Plymouth CAST (the trust) does not have a detailed knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This is because, historically, it has had too little involvement in monitoring the effectiveness of the school. Consequently, the trust has not taken decisive action in the past to ensure that pupils are challenged to achieve their full potential. The recently appointed area adviser for the trust has quickly begun to develop her understanding of the school and tailor her support appropriately. It is too soon to see the impact of this work.
- The services of the executive headteacher, who leads another school outside of the trust, were secured by the governing body. The external support she provides continues to be a very important source of expertise and guidance. The combined actions of the executive headteacher and acting headteacher are helping to drive improvements in teaching and behaviour.
- The special educational needs coordinator does not have a confident grasp of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school does not yet have a sufficiently cohesive, systematic approach to ensuring that differing needs are met and that any intervention is evaluated in order to check what difference it is making.
- The curriculum is not sufficiently well balanced. Although there is an emphasis upon developing necessary literacy and numeracy skills, work in pupils' books indicates that there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of other aspects, such as the humanities and arts.
- The leadership of teaching is improving because systems to manage staff performance and monitor the quality of teaching have become sharper and more focused on evaluating what difference it is making. As a result, leaders are more able to identify and

tackle weaknesses swiftly. Leaders rightly acknowledge that further refinements to the system will help to improve teaching further.

- It is not clear whether additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is being used to best effect. While leaders have clear plans in place for the use of this funding their analysis of the impact of planned actions relative to their cost is not precise enough. This hampers leaders' ability to make changes quickly and ensure that planned actions maximise pupils' achievement.
- The sports premium additional funding is being effectively used to provide specialist physical education teaching, to enable pupils to participate in a wider range of sports competitions and to ensure that all pupils can swim by the time they leave the school.
- Senior leaders have successfully secured the support of staff to make the necessary improvements. Staff are rising to the challenge because they feel valued by leaders, who are working effectively with them in an open and honest way.
- Leaders are successfully securing greater support from parents who comment that staff are more accessible. They feel that communication between the school and home is improving. The vast majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, stated that their children were happy, safe and effectively looked after in the school. One parent commented, 'I think the school has improved greatly under the new leadership.' Other parents, who approached the lead inspector at school, were very keen to emphasise the positive difference being made by the new senior leaders.

Governance of the school

- Since the time of the last inspection, the governing body has been slow to challenge leaders to develop an aspirational culture in which pupils are encouraged to achieve their best. However, the make-up of the governing body has changed more recently so that it is now more effective in its work. Governors, capably led by the new chair and vice-chair, are fully aware of the importance of their work and the responsibilities they hold. As a result, they are now not afraid to take a lead, to make key decisions and provide a strong degree of challenge to school leaders. For example, governors were instrumental in appointing the acting headteacher and brokering the support of the executive headteacher. These appointments have been essential in enabling the school to improve further.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. Consequently, the checks and processes to ensure that pupils are kept safe are robust, comprehensive and up to date. This includes checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with pupils. All staff and visitors are made aware of leaders' expectations in terms of their conduct and behaviour around pupils. Furthermore, all staff have received appropriate training so that they are able to recognise when pupils may be at risk of abuse. They also know the procedures to follow in order to follow up concerns.
- Leaders have positive links with other schools and external agencies, so that intelligence is readily shared. This is particularly useful in order to monitor and track potentially vulnerable pupils who move from school to school in the Exmouth area.
- The school site is secure, with appropriate use of electronically-operated gates and doors to manage entry and exit appropriately for pupils and visitors. Risk assessments are in

place for different school activities, including trips and visits. Pupils are often encouraged to produce their own risk assessments in advance of a trip so that they can learn to manage risk.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, pupils, but particularly the most able and the most able disadvantaged, are not challenged by the work they are set. These pupils make some progress but because they are 'coasting' they do not achieve what they are capable of. Pupils who spoke to inspectors reported that they would welcome more challenging work.
- Although teachers have in-depth subject knowledge which enables them to teach with confidence and conviction, over time, some teachers do not plan activities that effectively meet pupils' academic needs. This means that some pupils are not well placed to tackle activities unaided and require further support which, at times, is not available to them. Other pupils finish tasks too quickly because they find them too easy.
- Teaching is now improving because staff are being better held to account by leaders. Teachers more readily understand the strengths and weaknesses of their practice and are working collaboratively with each other to improve it. They acknowledge that expectations of pupils need to be higher and are embracing the challenge because of the new culture that leaders have created.
- The feedback provided by teachers to help pupils improve their work, in line with the school's policy, does not always provide clear, succinct advice for pupils. As a result, too many pupils are not clear what they need to do to improve their work.
- Although staff are becoming more confident in their use of the school's assessment system, assessment is still not accurately and consistently applied, particularly in terms of assessing pupils' writing. There is a lack of clarity about the progress being made by pupils and as a result the targets set for pupils are not ambitious enough.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Although pupils are confident, articulate and assertive, they do not yet demonstrate attitudes to learning in the classroom that show that they are committed to achieving their best. They lack the resourcefulness, self-sufficiency and engagement with learning that would prompt them to set their sights on achieving at the highest level.
- Although leaders and staff have taken successful action to improve behaviour recently, pupils who spoke to inspectors reported that there was some bullying and that it was not always effectively dealt with. A significant proportion of parents who responded to Parent View also agreed that bullying was not always effectively dealt with.
- Pupils are well known as individuals and receive suitable support from staff should they have any worries or concerns. One parent who responded to Parent View commented, 'St Joseph's has a lovely family atmosphere with children supporting each other.'

- Pupils' spiritual, social and moral education is underpinned by the school's ethos. Pupils' daily school lives are rooted in recognition of the importance of mutual respect, tolerance and kindness.
- The school environment is bright, colourful and welcoming. Displays of pupils' artwork are prevalent around the school, celebrating their achievements. Classrooms also present vibrant, lively displays that act as additional resources to help pupils with their learning. These environments encourage pupils to see learning as a fun, exciting and exploratory process.
- Pupils are very clear about how to keep themselves safe online. They know the risks posed by the internet and understand how to navigate social media sensibly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Although the overall attendance of pupils is above average, attendance for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average and does not show signs of improvement. Leaders have taken action to address poor attendance, such as early phone calls home and working closely with the education welfare officer. However, these actions are not yet improving the attendance of a small number of pupils.
- Leaders have successfully taken action to improve behaviour. Pupils are clear about what is expected of them and staff apply rewards and sanctions with greater consistency. As a result, incidents of low-level disruption are declining. However, leaders recognise that there is more to do to eradicate low-level disruption, which now mainly occurs when pupils are insufficiently engaged in, or challenged by, their learning.
- Parents are pleased with the impact of school leaders' work to improve behaviour.
- Pupils are punctual to lessons, well equipped and wear their uniforms with pride. This pride is largely mirrored in their work, which is neat and well presented.

Outcomes for pupils

Require improvement

- Although pupils' attainment has been in line with or higher than average over time, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable of against their starting points. This is because teaching does not challenge pupils to achieve the highest academic standards.
- Teachers have not been sufficiently aware of the progress made by different groups of pupils. As a result, the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not realise their potential in all of their subjects.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make the progress of which they are capable. Leaders are not clear what difference the support for these pupils is making. Work in pupils' books shows that too often work is insufficiently tailored to meet their specific needs and as a result their progress slows.
- The support provided to disadvantaged pupils enables them to make progress but they are capable of much more. Different interventions that support academic achievement and wider extra-curricular participation have not been fully evaluated to determine which are the most effective in promoting pupil progress.

- Reading is well taught at the school and pupils achieve highly in this area throughout the school. Pupils' achievement in phonics is consistently high over time and in 2016 a large number of pupils attained a high level in the key stage 2 tests.
- Pupils of all abilities are encouraged to enjoy their reading and to read for pleasure. They choose books that are appropriate to their reading abilities and appeal to their interests. Pupils who read to the lead inspector, particularly the most able, read expressively and with interest. When reading speech, pupils gave characters rich and charismatic voices. When they came across tricky words, all pupils, including the least able, persisted and used their reading skills to correctly sound out the words.
- Pupils are successfully taught to work with others for the common good and to be considerate, kind and helpful citizens. They are well looked after by staff, who have developed pupils' confidence and social skills so that they are ready to move to secondary school.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of the early years is strong because the leader has a detailed knowledge of the provision's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, she has taken decisive action to address weaknesses, such as redeveloping the outdoor environment to provide better learning opportunities.
- The early years leader has a good understanding of the needs of the children. Her understanding is informed by accurate and robust assessment information, which is used to plan carefully tailored activities that promote rapid learning for individual children.
- Teachers use their precise understanding of the progress pupils are making to support pupils to achieve their early learning goals. As a result, the number of children achieving their early learning goals is consistently above average over time.
- Effective support from the acting headteacher and the executive headteacher empowers the early years leader to take responsibility for this area of provision and to exercise her initiative in the best interests of the children.
- Staff are provided with training that helps them to develop their assessment practice so that children are supported to think and reflect more deeply. As a result, the quality of teaching continues to improve.
- The early years environment is safe and secure. Safeguarding procedures and expectations mirror those of the main school so that children are safe. Comprehensive monitoring systems ensure that concerns are recorded and acted on. Staff are vigilant that children play and work together safely. For example, a team inspector observed a member of staff reminding a child about how to hold a pair of scissors correctly.
- Children engage well with learning and enjoy exploring, asking questions and setting their own challenges. The curriculum offers a range of stimulating activities which are focused upon the needs of pupils. For example, a group of children were observed outside filling up containers with sand and comparing them, so that they developed a better understanding of the concept of quantity.

School details

Unique reference number	140766
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10021137

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sandi Forte
Acting headteacher	Nicola Taylor-Bashford
Telephone number	01395 264875
Website	www.stjosephsprimaryschool.com
Email address	admin@stjo.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school and is part of the Plymouth Catholic and Anglican Schools Trust (CAST). The school became an academy on 1 April 2014.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance to provide details of the academy trust's scheme of delegation for governance functions.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the delegation of governance functions on its website.
- The current acting headteacher was appointed in January 2016 as assistant headteacher before becoming acting headteacher in April 2016.
- The executive headteacher took up post in April 2016.

- The majority of pupils are from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs who receive support is well above average. The proportion of pupils who have disabilities and special needs who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The school started to take children from the age of two in September 2016. This aspect of provision will be inspected separately.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a number of lessons, some of which were jointly conducted with leaders.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, the executive headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and the area adviser for the Plymouth CAST multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation. These included the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, governing body minutes, attendance records, pupil premium, sports premium and early years action plans, and safeguarding records.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and observed their conduct at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors took account of 38 responses to the online Parent View survey and 10 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Steve Smith, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mark Ackers	Ofsted Inspector
Adam Morris	Ofsted 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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