

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Wallasey

Wheatland Lane, Wallasey, Merseyside CH44 7ED

Inspection dates

9–10 January 2019

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

This is a good school

- The headteacher and governors are united by a vision of nurture and care for pupils at the school. This approach is underpinned by strong Christian values that promote equality well.
- Senior leaders and governors have ensured that effective action has been taken to improve the quality of the curriculum. Subject leaders have been provided with support to improve the quality of teaching and learning in all subjects.
- Teachers are positive about the support that they have received to improve their skills in subjects across the curriculum, including English and mathematics.
- Teachers skilfully address pupils' misconceptions by re-shaping tasks. However, activities are not always challenging enough for the most able pupils in history and geography.
- Pupils make good progress, often from low starting points, in reading, writing and mathematics. However, some pupils struggle to spell and use grammar accurately in their written work.
- Leaders have brought greater consistency to the quality of teaching. For example, an improvement in the teaching of phonics has ensured that all groups of pupils are progressing well with their reading skills.
- Leaders' use of the pupil premium funding has improved engagement with parents and carers. It has also been used effectively to support pupils' early speech and language.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Pupils say that they feel safe.
- Staff give pupils effective support for their personal development.
- Children make good progress in early years.
- The targets set for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not match their needs. It is unclear whether these pupils progress as well as they could.
- More pupils now attain the higher standard in their reading and greater depth in writing at the end of key stage 2. However, not enough pupils attain the higher standard in mathematics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management, so that the targets set for the progress of pupils with SEND, and for looked after children, match their academic, personal and social needs more closely.
- Improve pupils' outcomes further, by ensuring that a greater proportion of pupils achieve the higher standard in mathematics by the end of key stage 2.
- Improve teaching and learning, by ensuring that:
 - there is greater consistency in the teaching of spelling and grammar, so that pupils can confidently apply this knowledge to their written work
 - the work set in geography and history provides sufficient challenge to the most able pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher ensures that the strong Christian values of the school form the basis of the school's vision. The school's ethos is of one of nurture. The relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. School staff provide highly effective levels of care and support.
- Leaders and governors have worked together successfully to set high expectations for staff and pupils. Senior leaders have provided staff with opportunities to improve their leadership skills with notable effect. Subject leaders develop their areas of responsibility well to ensure that most pupils succeed in a range of subjects.
- Leaders and governors have been astute in their appointments of staff. The leaders for English and mathematics are knowledgeable about their subjects. They have shown a clear ability to improve pupils' progress and attainment in these subjects. For example, recent improvements in the teaching of phonics for younger pupils are ensuring that pupils make strong progress in reading.
- There is also strength in the leadership of other subjects, particularly in physical education (PE), computing and science. All leaders have an exact understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision in their subject areas. This has informed their priorities for improving the school. Leaders' use of the PE and sport premium has been recognised locally as an example of good practice. This work has led to greater pupil engagement in sports, as recognised by the school receiving a renewed sports award.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils benefit from an effective curriculum. The structured approach to delivering different subjects in a progressive way enables pupils to build well on their previous learning.
- Leaders have ensured that the funding for disadvantaged pupils is used wisely. They have invested in effective strategies to work with parents. Leaders provide worthwhile programmes to reduce barriers to learning, such as developing the speech and language skills of children when they enter early years.
- Leaders' oversight of the academic achievement of looked after children and pupils with SEND is patchy. Targets set to support individual pupils do not match their needs closely enough. Consequently, it is not clear whether these pupils are making enough progress in their learning and their personal and social needs.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain by promoting pupils' understanding of equalities and respect for the beliefs and opinions of others. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- Leaders are involving parents successfully in their children's education. Parents have opportunities to find out how to support their child's learning, for example in developing early reading through phonics workshops.

Governance of the school

- Governors display a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This is because they question leaders carefully about the effect of actions taken to improve teaching and pupils' outcomes. Many governors come from educational backgrounds and so bring an informed view to their roles. They are supportive of staff and they use a range of information, including visits to the school, to see the results of the actions that leaders have taken.
- Governors have ensured that the funding for disadvantaged pupils has been used well, for instance to develop effective support for pupils' well-being. They are proud of the kind and caring ethos that the headteacher has maintained at the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding processes and procedures are fit for purpose. For example, the pre-employment checks that the school carries out on new staff meet requirements fully. The nominated governor for safeguarding has received training in safer recruitment to better inform her role. Senior leaders and governors have established a strong safeguarding culture within the school.
- Staff receive training for safeguarding during their induction into the school. This is followed up by regular updates for all staff. They have a good awareness of the statutory guidance for keeping pupils safe and an informed understanding of the local risks to pupils. Staff are vigilant. Pupils clearly describe how the care of staff positively enhances their well-being.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Staff feel motivated to improve their practice and they appreciate the opportunities that they have had to develop their teaching skills. For example, the training they have received on assessment has enabled them to shape learning activities to better meet the needs of pupils.
- In reading, teachers provide pupils with worthwhile opportunities to hone their skills. In key stage 2, pupils' books show an improved focus on developing inference skills before moving on to other aspects of comprehension. In Year 1, a more consistent approach to the teaching of phonics has ensured that pupils are confident in tackling unfamiliar words.
- Teachers provide pupils with ample opportunities to develop their writing skills for a range of different purposes. However, there is some variation in how well teachers develop pupils' spelling skills and use of grammar. As a result, some pupils struggle to use these key skills when they write.
- In mathematics, the work in pupils' books reflects the professional development that staff have received on sequencing the curriculum. Pupils use the calculation skills that they have learned previously to solve increasingly complex mathematical problems. Staff are adept at addressing misconceptions in pupils' understanding.

- Staff have developed cross-curricular links between subjects well. For example, there are links between PE and science, where pupils learn how to be healthy and about the effects of exercise on the body. Pupils have opportunities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in subjects across the curriculum.
- Teachers plan well-thought-out topics to promote pupils' learning across the curriculum. However, the activities that teachers provide for the most able pupils in geography and history sometimes lack sufficient challenge.
- Children who are looked after and those with SEND are supported well by teachers and teaching assistants. However, the targets that are set for these pupils are not clear and do not match their next steps in learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils work successfully with one another and on their own. They have an informed understanding of what it means to be a successful learner. They engage well in a wide range of activities at school. Pupils develop confidence in their own abilities to learn and to succeed.
- Pupils have a clear awareness of how to keep themselves safe from bullying. Although it is rare, they understand that this does happen in school and they know whom to talk to if they have any concerns.
- Leaders' commitment to supporting pupils' personal development ensures that pupils receive individual support to cope with difficult situations. The pupils with whom inspectors spoke were keen to share their views about the positive impact the school's nurture provision has had on their well-being. For example, pupils spoke of how this support has helped them to keep calm rather than react negatively to difficult situations.
- Pupils learn to understand differences between themselves and other people through their personal, social, health and economic education. In addition, the school has gained accreditation as a place of sanctuary for refugees and asylum seekers. This is evidence of leaders' ambitious vision for promoting equality and developing pupils' understanding of the needs of others.
- Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They understand the need to keep personal information safe and they are aware of the dangers that strangers can pose.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils focus well on their learning. Their thoughtful behaviour has a notably positive effect on the progress that they make. Pupils are attentive and say that disruption to lessons is rare.

- Pupils' conduct in and around the school is good. At playtimes, older pupils act as excellent role models for younger children by leading activities.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered. The parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, had no concerns about the behaviour of pupils.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have made concerted efforts to improve pupils' attendance at school. This work is given high priority and is made visible by frequent newsletters and updates on each classroom door. Although it remains below the national average, pupils' attendance is improving strongly.
- Pupils who receive help from the school's nurture provision are supported well to manage their own behaviour. Pupils say that staff deal well with infrequent instances of poor behaviour and that unacceptable behaviour is addressed at an early stage.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Over the last three years, there has been a dramatic increase in the proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. Over three times the number of pupils achieved this standard in 2018 compared with 2016. There have also been improvements in the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standard in reading and greater depth in writing.
- At the end of key stage 2 in 2018, pupils made broadly average progress in reading. The improvements that leaders have implemented have ensured that pupils are successful readers.
- The work in pupils' books shows that current pupils in key stage 2 are making good progress in writing and mathematics, often from low starting points.
- Pupils' attainment in the spelling, grammar and punctuation tests at the end of key stage 2 in 2018 was lower than the national average. Standards are similar in pupils' current written work.
- In mathematics, current pupils' work is starting to provide pupils with opportunities to use their reasoning skills to solve problems. However, the number of pupils attaining the higher standard in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 has been below average over the last three years.
- By the end of key stage 1, the attainment of pupils is below the national averages. However, pupils make good progress in their learning in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils with SEND, and those who are looked after, make similar progress to other pupils of the same ability. However, teachers' plans for these pupils do not give specific targets to challenge these pupils to make the progress of which they might otherwise be capable.
- In subjects such as geography and history, lower ability pupils are supported well to achieve outcomes that are similar to those of their peers. However, tasks set for some of the most able pupils lack the challenge that would enable them to make even better progress.

- The work in current pupils' books for writing, mathematics and other subjects across the curriculum shows that disadvantaged pupils progress well. They make the same good progress as other pupils in the school.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check has remained below the national average for the last three years. However, recent and marked improvements in the teaching of phonics are helping current pupils to read accurately and with fluency.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter Nursery Year and Reception Year with skills below those typical for their age. An increasing number enter with significant speech and language difficulties. Senior leaders and governors introduced provision for two-year-olds in September 2017 to support children's development from an earlier age. Although it is too early to measure the impact of this provision on the standards achieved at the end of Reception, these children are confident and inquisitive learners who engage well with staff.
- The early years leader is knowledgeable and ensures that funding for disadvantaged children is used wisely. Many children receive effective support to develop their speech and language. In Reception, effective phonics teaching is ensuring that children are becoming increasingly confident in their understanding of different letter sounds.
- Staff make full use of their assessments of two-year-olds to review children's learning in partnership with parents. Parents are positive about the support that they receive from the school. Staff in the provision for two-year-olds are skilled at using questions to reinforce children's language skills. This support continues throughout early years, where staff teach children through every available opportunity. For example, Reception children pay for their daily snack using different combinations of coins, so reinforcing their numeracy, speaking and listening skills.
- Staff have excellent relationships with children. They promote children's independence well. Children are confident to explore the many well-planned opportunities on offer. Staff have created a nurturing, secure learning environment. Children's behaviour shows that they feel safe to explore the classrooms and outdoor areas and to try new experiences.
- Children work well together. Their behaviour is good. They are motivated learners and their written work shows that they progress well from basic mark making in Nursery to writing simple phrases and full sentences in Reception. In their number work, children develop secure counting and number skills.
- Teaching is good and children make good progress. However, a lower than average proportion of children reach a good level of development by the end of Reception Year. This means that some children are not ready to meet the demands of the key stage 1 curriculum at the start of Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	105073
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10057916

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	245
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eleanor Allman
Headteacher	Kathryn Vernon
Telephone number	0151 638 3919
Website	www.stjosephs-wallasey.co.uk
Email address	schooloffice@stjosephs-wallasey.wirral.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 September 2016

Information about this school

- St Joseph's is an average-sized, Roman Catholic primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils identified with SEND is above average.
- In September 2017, governors extended the Nursery provision to cater for two-year-old children.
- The school's breakfast club provision is run on behalf of the governing body on the school site from 7.30am.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection for schools with a religious character took place in October 2015.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in each class, including joint observations with the headteacher. They examined a range of pupils' work in subjects across the curriculum.
- Inspectors listened to pupils from all year groups read, both individually and as part of classroom activities. They spoke with pupils formally in groups and informally around the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, at lunchtimes and when pupils were moving around the school.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 11 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. They also took account of responses from nine 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 targets for children who are looked after and those with SEND, the school's evaluation of its own performance and its areas for development. They also looked at attendance and behaviour records.
- Inspectors 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
Maggie Parker	Ofsted Inspector
Suzanne Blay	Ofsted Inspector

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