

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Wallasey

Wheatland Lane, Wallasey, Merseyside CH44 7ED

Inspection dates

13–14 September 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The progress that pupils are making in mathematics is not consistently good. Therefore, by the time they reach the end of Year 6, not all pupils are achieving standards of which they are capable.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in different contexts.
- Teaching continues to require improvement because there is some inconsistency, particularly at key stage 2, which impacts on the progress that pupils make.
- Teachers do not always use assessment information precisely enough to plan lessons that allow pupils to maximise their progress. This is particularly the case in mathematics.
- A small number of pupils are persistently absent and this is affecting their progress. The leadership team is working hard with these pupils' families and its efforts are beginning to have a positive impact.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders work closely with governors to continuously drive school improvement forward, particularly in teaching and learning. They show great determination to ensure that the school continues to improve.
- The children get off to a good start in their school life because they have good-quality experiences in the early years, which ensures good progress.
- The quality of teaching and learning in reading and writing has improved since the last inspection.
- Pupils enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum which is supported by high-quality additional activities. The teaching of physical education is a real strength which is helping all pupils to enjoy sporting activity and learn about healthy lifestyles.
- Pupils have significant opportunities to learn about moral issues, and other cultures and faiths. The school's Catholic ethos and values underpin pupils' development.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise the achievement of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, at key stage 2 in mathematics by:
 - ensuring that assessment information is accurate and used effectively to plan activities that will enable teachers to accelerate pupils' progress
 - providing challenging activities and ensuring that the pupils have the capacity to respond confidently and sustain concentration
 - checking pupils' progress in lessons and adapting what teachers ask pupils to do if they are finding the work too easy
 - providing pupils with experiences to practise and reinforce their mathematical understanding in different contexts.
- Reduce the rates of absence and, in particular, improve the attendance of a small number of pupils who have high rates of absenteeism.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- School leaders, including governors, are totally committed to the improvement of the school. The headteacher is providing good leadership. She is well supported by her assistant headteachers, staff and governors. They have a team approach in which all leaders show determination to ensure that the school continues to improve. Parents are supportive of the leadership and confident that they are doing the best for their children.
- There is a strong culture of caring and acceptance, where every child matters. All staff work to support and encourage pupils to do their best. They, in return, respond positively to the guidance from their teachers.
- Senior leaders and governors are driving improvements in teaching and learning forward through continuous support and training for staff and by robustly tackling weaknesses in teaching. They understand that there is some inconsistency in teaching and show determination to ensure that there is high-quality teaching across the school.
- The headteacher has strengthened systems for managing the performance of staff through regular checks on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning throughout the school. This is focused on raising the achievement of different groups of pupils, including the disadvantaged, most-able pupils and most-able disadvantaged pupils. Leaders' improvements have been effective in raising the achievement of all these groups, but there is still some inconsistency in the progress made by some pupils, particularly in mathematics. Staff have clear targets which are linked to their professional development. Staff are very appreciative of the development opportunities, which they say have contributed to improved performance.
- Leaders check the impact of all aspects of the school's work to develop pupils' learning, behaviour and well-being regularly. They have a realistic view of the school and use the information from monitoring well to set clear priorities for improvement.
- Subject leaders are working hard to ensure good teaching and learning in their subjects. They are developing their skills effectively and meet regularly to review pupils' achievement in their subjects. New assessment systems for reading, writing and mathematics are being developed in line with the raised national expectations.
- Pupils are very appreciative of the rich and varied curriculum. There is a strong emphasis on developing communication, language and literacy. Pupils are succeeding well in this area. Across the curriculum, pupils benefit from good-quality learning experiences. In science, for example, Year 5 pupils are gaining a good understanding of the properties of different objects. Good use is made of the primary school physical education (PE) and sport funding to provide specialist coaching. PE in the school is of a very high standard and the engagement of pupils in a whole range of additional activities is helping them to enjoy sport, keep fit and learn about healthy living. The curriculum is supplemented by a range of visits and visitors that enable and inspire the pupils in their learning. Staff and governors are proud of the pupils who represented the school on a trip to London, which included a visit to Downing Street.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils have good opportunities for reflection, as seen in class assemblies. For example, in a class assembly in which the pupils were asked to think about what to do to make themselves proud, one

pupil responded by saying, 'I can be a good role model by being kind.'

- Pupils learn right from wrong through the consistent implementation of the school's policy for behaviour. They work well together, share and take turns. The school strongly promotes British values throughout all aspects of the school, including special event days. The school celebrates a range of festivals, including those of other cultures from around Britain. They celebrate Christian festivals such as Harvest and learn about other religions from around the world, such as Hinduism, Islam and Judaism. These enrich pupils' understanding of Britain as a multicultural society.
- Leaders, including governors, are now making better use of funding for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders provide effective extra individual support to help them catch up so that they do as well as their classmates and other pupils nationally. As a result, at key stage 1 disadvantaged pupils are attaining the same as other pupils nationally. At key stage 2, the difference in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally is diminishing, but there is inconsistency across the key stage.
- Staff promote equality of opportunity well. They promote good relationships between all pupils and do not tolerate any form of discrimination. They also ensure that different groups of pupils make equally good progress from their different starting points.
- The school has good relationships with its neighbouring Catholic schools and engages in a range of joint work including subject leadership. Links with St Mary's College ensure that pupils move to high school confident and ready to continue their education.

Governance of the school

- Governance of the school is good.
- Governors challenge the work of the school and they support staff well. They regularly visit the school to look at the impact of its work on pupils' learning and behaviour and they carefully examine reports from school leaders. They have a good understanding of the school's new system for tracking the progress pupils are making and they use the outcomes of this well to form a realistic view of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning and progress.
- Their arrangements for managing the performance of the headteacher are robust. Objectives are linked to pupils' achievement and behaviour. They also focus on the priorities written in the school improvement plan. These well-chosen targets are monitored closely to hold the headteacher to account. Governors also make sure that good teaching is recognised and any weaknesses are tackled.
- They make sure that the additional spending of pupil premium and primary sport funding provides good value for money.
- They are effective in holding the school to account for the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including British values.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Governors promote safeguarding effectively by ensuring that training and school policies are up to date and all legal requirements are met. Leaders keep meticulous records of any concerns and contacts with parents and other agencies. Communication within the school

and with those outside is highly effective, so that everybody knows what is happening.

- The school's work to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism features in different subjects.
- Pupils say that they feel completely safe, and all parents agreed that their children are safe at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, the school has continued to focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. However, there is still some inconsistency. The school has recently reviewed the teaching of mathematics and leaders have implemented a new strategy which is focused on a more rapid recall of key number facts linked to problem solving and reasoning. There is, however, inconsistency in the impact of this new approach. Pupils, including some disadvantaged pupils, did not make sufficient progress because they were not sure what was expected of them. Also, pupils do not get the same opportunity as they do in reading and writing to practise key mathematical skills in different contexts.
- There is evidence of some good teaching across the school. Where teaching is most effective, there are good relationships between staff and pupils, clarity of expectations of pupils and stimulating resources. For example, Year 4 pupils benefited greatly and appreciated the stimulus of 'The Magic Finger' by Roald Dahl in developing key reading and writing skills.
- Reading has been prioritised by the school's leaders and is a strength. It is taught well and pupils gain a lot of pleasure from reading a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books. From a very early age, the children are supported in their early reading skills. They have a good grasp of phonics, which gives them confidence in reading new words. In 2016, pupils performed extremely well in the national phonics check, achieving as well as all other schools nationally. In key stages 1 and 2, teachers build on this work, providing the pupils with stimulating and relevant material. Teachers demonstrate a high quality of subject knowledge and this is enhancing the progress pupils are making in their key comprehension skills.
- Pupils enjoy writing and are provided with significant support from their teachers to help them with their grammar and punctuation. For example, Year 5 pupils learning about biographies were focused on developing simple and complex sentences. In addition, pupils have significant opportunities and understand the need to maintain the quality of their work when writing across a range of subjects.
- Assessment information is generally used well to target the progress of the most able pupils, including disadvantaged most-able pupils. These pupils are generally given work that they find stimulating and challenging and this helps them reach the high standards of which they are capable. However, on some occasions work set for these pupils means that they are engaging in tasks that they find easy and this lowers their motivation.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning in lessons, particularly for those who find learning difficult. They work well to support less-able pupils to keep up with the pace of lessons by using teaching resources and questioning effectively to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good and pupils say that they feel safe in school. Most have a good awareness of how to stay safe when accessing the internet. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe both in and out of school and in different situations, such as when on trips and visits, and when online using computers or mobile phones. They know that they should not give out personal information.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart of the school's work; their empathy for others and tolerance mean that they get on very well together. They listen attentively to one another in class and cooperate extremely well, with all groups mixing together, including boys and girls.
- Pupils are adamant that bullying rarely happens. They know that bullying can take different forms, including physical bullying, name-calling and cyber-bullying. They have strong relationships with adults in school and are confident that they can share any concerns with them. They say that there is no name-calling or unpleasantness in the school and everyone is friendly.
- The staff of the school are dedicated in the support that they provide to help the pupils develop self-confidence and become successful learners.
- Parents agree that the school keeps their children safe and that pupils are well looked after. They are very appreciative of the work that the early years staff do to support their children.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are rightly proud of their school. They all wear their uniform with pride, present their work well and try their best to please their teachers.
- Pupils are friendly, keen to talk about their learning and confident when speaking to visitors. They are courteous and sensitive to one another's needs. The play leaders carry out their role with great maturity and the younger children enjoy playing with them.
- The school environment is very attractive. Pupils work in orderly classrooms, where displays of high-quality work, often linked to the particular themes they are studying, inspire them and enhance their learning.
- On most occasions, pupils are keen to learn. They enjoy the wide range of subjects offered by the school, and overall concentrate well in lessons. Sometimes, when they want help to understand something more clearly or have finished their work, pupils lack confidence to let teachers know. On occasions, this results in pupils not being focused on the task and this slows their progress.
- Pupils say that they really enjoy coming to school and their parents agree. Attendance has improved since the last inspection. However, a few pupils are persistently absent. The steps that school leaders are taking are beginning to make a difference to ensure that these pupils come to school every day.
- The breakfast club is popular and this ensures that pupils get to school on time. They

benefit from socialising with their friends and joining in activities before school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because pupils' progress in mathematics from their starting points is not consistently good across all year groups or for all groups of pupils.
- The children make a good start to their school life and enter Year 1 with a good foundation in all the areas of learning. At key stage 1, pupils are confident and continue to progress in their learning. At the end of key stage 1, pupils are attaining broadly in line with expectations for their age in their reading, writing and mathematics.
- The progress of pupils at lower key stage 2 shows some variance, particularly in the proportions achieving age-related expectations in mathematics. Pupils do not always work to their potential and the work they produce is not consistently at the standard of which they are capable. As a result, achievement in mathematics by the end of Year 6 is not as good as it could be. While the data has not been validated and cannot be compared with that of other schools, it indicates that in 2016, around a quarter of pupils achieved the expected standard.
- Across the school, pupils achieve well in reading because the teaching of reading is of good quality.
- Pupils are confident in their reading skills. Most have a good knowledge of phonics and know how to 'break words down' when they are unsure about new vocabulary. In the key stage 1 phonics check, the percentage of pupils achieving this has increased year on year. In 2015, 82% of pupils achieved the national standard. Pupils have a wide range of books in school and enjoy opportunities to read widely. Teachers work well in partnership with parents to improve pupils' reading skills. The best readers are fluent and read with expression.
- Pupils enjoy writing and are proud of their work. Pupils always present their work well and try to ensure that grammar and punctuation are of the correct standard. Current assessment information and work in pupils' books show that the overwhelming majority of pupils make good progress in writing across all classes. This is due to the close monitoring of teachers' practice and pupils' progress. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to write extensively and enjoy the opportunities they have to write in their topic work. All pupils, including disadvantaged and most-able disadvantaged pupils, make good progress.
- The school works hard to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The work of the nurture group team helps a number of these pupils in their social and emotional development, which allows them to access their learning in their classes. In addition, there are some good-quality additional sessions which ensure that these pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- The school has worked hard to improve the performance of most-able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. Work in pupils' books shows that the majority of most-able pupils make good progress because they are motivated by the activities set by their teachers. However, this is not consistent in all key stage 2 classes in mathematics, where they are not always challenged to achieve the higher attainment of which they are capable.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has acted swiftly to reverse the trend in the

progress of disadvantaged pupils in comparison with that of other pupils nationally and this was evident in 2015. At key stage 1, disadvantaged pupils achieved the same standard as all other pupils nationally. At key stage 2, although the attainment of this group of pupils was still behind that of other pupils nationally, they made good progress from their different starting points. Current progress shows that, across the school, there is some variance in the progress of disadvantaged pupils, particularly the most able.

- Pupils enjoy their topic work, in which they develop key reading and writing skills. Opportunities to develop mathematical skills are not at the same standard. Progress across a range of subjects, including science, geography and history, is good.

Early years provision

Good

- The leadership of early years is good. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas to develop in the early years. Good leadership and management mean that all adults have high expectations of all children, which they link to an accurate understanding of the children's current knowledge and skills.
- The early years provision is ensuring that all children are making equally good progress in all areas of learning. Children enter Nursery with skills that are lower than those typical for three- and four-year-olds. By the end of Reception Year, a majority of the children have achieved a good level of development. In 2016, 63% of the children achieved a good level of development.
- Transition to Year 1 is a priority and children who have gaps in the different areas of learning when they leave early years are well supported by staff as they enter Year 1.
- The staff are totally committed to the children in their care; there is very much a team approach. The leader, alongside colleagues, carefully checks the impact learning activities have on children's progress. High-quality learning journeys are used to celebrate the children's progress and address weaknesses in both the provision and in children's learning.
- Children are keen to participate in learning activities. They show confidence in exploring learning with their friends in a rich and stimulating learning environment. Staff provide a rich variety of activities to stimulate children's learning. Children make good use of the outdoor and indoor learning environments to develop curiosity and imagination. They enjoy learning about different themes. For example, in learning about spiders, they were ably supported by their teachers to develop some good language skills, while at the same time making progress in their personal, social and emotional development.
- The children know how to play safely. They behave well and show maturity in their understanding of children from different backgrounds and cultures.
- All staff work hard to ensure that communication and links with parents and external agencies are productive. Home visits and regular meetings ensure that the parents are securely involved in their children's achievements. Work with external agencies is effective in protecting the interests and well-being of children. Support for children with specific needs is helping them feel secure, access learning and enjoy school.

School details

Unique reference number	105073
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10019793

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	257
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eleanor Allman
Headteacher	Kathryn Vernon
Telephone number	0151 6383919
Website	www.stjosephs-wallasey.co.uk
Email address	schooloffice@stjosephs-wallasey.wirral.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 September 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- St Joseph's is an average-sized primary school and most of its pupils are White British.
- Pupil premium is funding provided by the government to support pupils who are looked after by the local authority or those who are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils at St Joseph's supported by the pupil premium grant is over two thirds, which is more than double the national average.
- The percentage of pupils who receive special educational needs support (this used to be called School Action and School Action Plus) is around 19%, which is above the national average.
- The breakfast club is managed by the school.
- The school meets the national floor standards. (These are the minimum levels of attainment and progress expected by the government.)

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning and made a number of short visits to classrooms and watched sessions where pupils were taught in small groups.
- Meetings were held with staff and a representative from the local authority.
- A meeting was held with five governors.
- The inspectors talked to pupils informally in class and at breaks, and listened to pupils read.
- A number of documents were scrutinised, including the school's own information about pupils' learning and progress, planning and monitoring documents, minutes of governor meetings, the development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding information.
- The inspectors took account of the school's questionnaires for parents, as well as consulting informally with parents at the start of the school day. The inspectors also took account of the views of staff and pupils gained from formal and informal discussions. There were no responses to the staff and pupil online questionnaires.

Inspection team

Andrew Morley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ann Gill	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Bevin	Ofsted Inspector

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