

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Portland Road, Halifax, West Yorkshire, HX3 6LA

Inspection dates

27–28 June 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Strong leadership and governance have underpinned rapid improvements in the quality of teaching and improved outcomes over time.
- The headteacher leads with energy, vision and passion. Senior and middle leaders share this ambition.
- Governors provide high levels of both support and challenge to school leaders.
- Development plans are clear about what needs to be done to improve the school further. However, leaders do not always measure the impact of what they do to ensure that it is effective.
- The curriculum is strong generally but weaker in how it develops pupils' skills in history and geography.
- The caring ethos of the school shines through in pupils' superb attitudes. Consequently, pupils' personal development and welfare are first rate.
- Pupils' behaviour is exceptional throughout the school. Few sanctions are necessary, bullying is rare and the school is a harmonious, happy community.
- Teaching, learning and assessment have improved considerably. Pupils are generally challenged well in class, although the work set for the most able is sometimes too easy.
- Outcomes have improved over time and continue to do so. Pupils' skills in mathematics and English are strong. However, further improvements are needed to ensure pupils' reading skills improve at a faster rate.
- In the early years, strong leadership, teaching and a vibrant, well-equipped environment have combined to ensure that outcomes for children are good and improving.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes and the quality of teaching further so that they become outstanding by:
 - ensuring the most able pupils are challenged to achieve their best
 - raising achievement in reading in key stage 1 by giving more weight to how pupils show their comprehension of what they have read.

- Improve leadership and management further by:
 - ensuring that leaders at all levels sharply measure the impact of what they do
 - improving the curriculum so that pupils' skills in history and geography are as strong as they are in other subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, with good support from the local authority and governing body, has developed good performance management systems, tracking systems and policies over the past three years. This has resulted in sustained improvements in all key stages, including the early years.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and clear on what needs to be done to improve outcomes and the quality of teaching further. Middle leaders contribute well to school improvement work and have a good understanding of their subjects.
- Development plans are generally strong. Leaders have good plans on what they need to do to improve the school further. However, development plans are not so clear on how leaders will measure the impact of their actions to improve teaching and raise standards further.
- The curriculum in mathematics has improved strongly so that pupils are more confident using their mathematics skills to solve problems. The science work that pupils do is particularly strong. There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in challenging experiments. Pupils spoke to an inspector knowledgeably about evolution and the work of Charles Darwin. Pupils take part in numerous arts activities, both in class and with visiting teachers.
- In the humanities, pupils regularly do challenging work in religious education, where a range of religions and ethical topics are studied in detail. However, geography and history are not taught regularly and so pupils' skills in these subjects are not as strong as they are in others.
- There is a rich menu of extra-curricular activities, which enhance the curriculum considerably. These include numerous sports and music activities, all of which are well attended.
- The pupil premium is now having a positive impact on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, who in some cases are now making some of the fastest progress of all groups of pupils in the school.
- Additional funding for special educational needs is used effectively to support pupils, mainly in class rather than withdrawing them into smaller teaching groups. This ensures that they receive good support from well trained teachers and support assistants. Consequently, their progress across all subjects is good.
- Funding that is provided through the physical education (PE) and sports premium is used well. A greater proportion of pupils are now involved in sports and staff receive good quality training on how to teach sport.

Governance of the school

- Governors have an impressive understanding of the school data and self evaluation. Rather than dwelling on the unquestionable improvements that have been made over time, they are relentless in their pursuit of excellence.

- Governors are able to assess how well different groups of pupils are progressing across different subjects. They keep a watchful eye on past areas of weakness, such as mathematics, and on how effective the pupil premium is on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Performance management has been strengthened considerably and this is overseen well by the governing body. This has been instrumental in the school's rapid improvement over the three years since the headteacher took up her post.
- Safeguarding and pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development are regularly discussed and evaluated for effectiveness by governors. This ensures that these aspects of the school are key strengths.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. All staff take their responsibility to keep pupils safe very seriously. Keeping safe from 'stranger danger', when using the internet, or when using the roads are all topics regularly discussed in class.
- Records, which are all computerised, are kept securely, but all staff can add any concerns or worries they may have to pupil records. This ensures that leaders can be proactive rather than reactive in their approach to safeguarding pupils.
- Appropriate checks are made on staff when appointed. Training for staff is regular and detailed. Policies are kept up to date with current government requirements.
- At the time of the inspection, an administrative error was found in how attendance registers were maintained. This was immediately rectified by the headteacher.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- A notable feature of lessons in this school is how well pupils support their own and each other's learning. This gives the teacher more time to support those who really need help. Moreover, pupils become confident, independent learners and this prepares them well for the next stage in their education.
- Teachers use their assessment information well to make sure pupils are challenged well. However, the most able do not always receive work which is sufficiently difficult. This means that the most able have the potential to make faster progress.
- Teaching assistants support pupils well. They know how much support to give pupils while also encouraging them to become confident and independent in finding out answers for themselves.
- Teachers mark pupils' work according to the school policy. This ensures that they are given clear next steps in learning.
- Teachers ask challenging questions of pupils, who then use full sentences in their response. This ensures that they practise their speaking and listening skills when answering and become articulate and confident young people.

- Reading and phonics are generally taught well in key stage 1. While there is a good emphasis on phonics and reading aloud, pupils' comprehension of what they have read is a weaker aspect of teaching.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils make a significant contribution to the school in helping to make key decisions, for example through being a member of the junior leadership team.
- Pupils show a great deal of understanding and compassion for those less fortunate than themselves. For example, they sent letters to children who had been affected in the recent Grenfell Tower fire in London.
- Their understanding of how to stay safe online is impressive. Pupils spoke to an inspector about the importance of security settings when using social media and what to do if they received an unwelcome message on their mobile phones.
- Pupils say bullying is very rare and almost unheard of in the school. School records confirm this is the case.
- In class, pupils frequently support each other. In one case, a pupil who has ambitions of becoming a teacher supported another with learning phonics.
- Pupils' preparation for living in a modern, democratic Britain is strong. They are remarkably well informed about British and world politics, the workings of government and of democracy.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is exemplary. Their manners are nothing short of impeccable.
- From Reception, children are taught to make the right choices, to help one another and to appreciate each other's differences and similarities. This means that their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are key strengths. One pupil said that the school was a 'big happy family'.
- Very rarely do teachers or lunchtime supervisors have to remind pupils how to behave. Pupils regulate their own behaviour and so relationships are harmonious in the school.
- In lessons, pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. Teachers do not need to coax pupils into doing work since they do so willingly. Inspectors saw no pupils wasting time in lessons. Behaviour logs indicate good behaviour is normal in the school on a day-to-day basis.
- Parents feel behaviour is a key strength in the school.

- Attendance is slightly above average overall. The school works well with parents and outside agencies to improve attendance further.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In the 2016 tests, outcomes in key stage 2 mathematics were weak. This was unexpected and has been analysed carefully by school leaders. They found that a small minority of pupils marginally missed the expected standard in the test by just one mark.
- This was investigated in detail by inspectors, who found that pupils' mathematics skills are strong, particularly in key stage 2. Pupils now are able to use mathematics well to solve problems.
- Each year a larger proportion of Year 1 pupils in the school meet the required standard in the phonics screening test than the proportion nationally. However, in 2016, this proportion was average.
- Pupils continue to make good progress with their reading, but pupils then struggle to explain what they have read when writing about it. Leaders are aware of this and have made changes to how reading is taught so that there is more of a link to pupils' writing skills.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and the most able disadvantaged have improved considerably. This is because of a sharper, more effective use of the pupil premium. Pupils now reach similar standards to others nationally and make good progress.
- The most able in 2016 made similar progress to other ability groups in the school. However, inspection evidence indicates that in some classes, the most able are capable of making faster progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in all subjects. This is because teachers ensure that they have the right equipment and support to enable them to thrive. Moreover, the progress of these pupils is closely monitored by senior leaders.

Early years provision

Good

- Children make good progress across all areas of learning. Over time, standards have been rising in the early years, including for disadvantaged children and the most able.
- Adults make sure that developing children's reading, writing and mathematics skills is at the heart of all activities, both indoors and outdoors. Children write shopping lists to then play shop, they hunt for hidden numbers outside and practise their letter writing. Many progress to confidently writing sentences. This prepares them well for the demands of Year 1.
- The early years is well led and managed. Development plans are constantly updated to make sure best practice, both locally and nationally, is adopted here. Any weaknesses are quickly identified and addressed. For example, lower achievement in mathematics

was addressed by giving children more opportunities to practise their mathematics skills indoors and outdoors.

- Assessment is high quality; it is accurate and ensures that adults who work with children know precisely what their next steps in learning are.
- Self-evaluation is honest and accurate. Leaders are aware that challenge for the most able children could be better and are taking steps to stretch them so that they make even faster progress.
- Leaders have been working to improve how well parents are involved in their children's education. Parents have regular opportunities to stay and play with children and to talk to staff about their child's learning.
- Children's behaviour is exemplary. Rules and routines are established and modelled well by staff. Children are co-operative when playing and are polite to each other and to adults. They understand how to keep themselves safe when playing with water, sand and in the construction area.
- Safeguarding is afforded the highest importance by all staff. Equipment is regularly checked to ensure that it is safe and the premises are safe and secure.

School details

Unique reference number	107544
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10008212

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	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	194
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Justine Turner
Headteacher	Helena Angstmann
Telephone number	01422360646
Website	www.st-josephs.calderdale.sch.uk
Email address	head@st-josephs.calderdale.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 November 2008

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the pupil premium strategy on its website.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is broadly average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and so the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language or who are from minority ethnic groups is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- On the first day of inspection, the school was inspected under Section 8, no formal designation monitoring of outstanding schools by one lead inspector. For the second day, the inspection converted to a full section 5 inspection and the lead inspector was joined by two colleagues.
- Inspectors visited lessons, listened to some pupils reading and looked at the work in pupils' books to evaluate their progress over time. They spoke to pupils, staff, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised various documents, including the summary of self evaluation, school development plans, governance documents, safeguarding information, and the tracking of pupils' progress.
- The 35 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered by inspectors.

Inspection team

Robert Jones, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lynne Selkirk	Ofsted Inspector
Melanie Williams	Ofsted Inspector

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