

# St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Garburn Place, Newton Aycliffe, County Durham DL5 7DE

## Inspection dates

12–13 July 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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment, although improving, are inconsistent across the school. Pupils' progress is insufficient to ensure that enough of those that could progress quickly do so.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils are not always high enough. Teaching does not always move learning in lessons on quickly enough, especially for the most able. It does not always provide enough challenge to pupils to help them work neatly and more accurately.
- Assessment information is not secure enough to show how well pupils are achieving over time in some subjects, especially in art and modern foreign languages.
- Attendance, although improving, does not match that seen nationally.
- Pupils can become bored and disengaged in lessons where teachers do not provide enough challenge to keep them interested.
- Middle leadership roles are underdeveloped and, although improving, their monitoring does not provide enough information to fully support the school's evaluation of what is working well and what is not.
- Early years leaders do not ensure that enough opportunities are provided for children to apply their basic skills in mathematics and English in a range of activities.
- Adults in the early years do not have consistently high expectations of what children can achieve or clarity about promoting behaviour that will help children to speed up their learning.

### The school has the following strengths

- The drive of the new headteacher and governors has ensured that the school has improved rapidly since the last inspection. This has resulted in better outcomes for pupils, especially in mathematics, because of improved teaching.
- Pupils who need to catch up quickly now begin to do so. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils behave well in classrooms and at playtimes. They increasingly enjoy their learning and react well to advice and support from adults.
- Parents are highly encouraged by and supportive of the school and recent improvements. They have confidence in the leadership of the school and the support their children receive.

## Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of the early years so that children make faster progress, by:
  - ensuring that children have a clear understanding about what is required of them and that expectations are suitably challenging
  - providing more opportunities for children to apply their reading and writing skills in a wider range of activities
  - further embedding attitudes and behaviour that help children be more effective learners.
- Improve the quality of teaching to ensure that all pupils, especially the most able, make faster progress by ensuring that:
  - in lessons, pupils are moved on rapidly to work which develops their thinking and deepens their understanding
  - teachers raise their expectations of what pupils, especially the most able, should achieve and deliver teaching that enables pupils to make rapid progress
  - teachers continue to embed high standards regarding the the accuracy and presentation of pupils' work.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management at all levels by ensuring that:
  - senior and middle leaders continue to refine their roles and embed current practice to ensure that recent improvements are secured and built on
  - improvements in outcomes in all subjects, especially modern foreign languages and art, keep pace with those currently seen in English and mathematics.
- Continue to improve attendance so that it at least matches that seen nationally.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Led by the drive, vision and commitment of the recently appointed headteacher and refreshed governing body, the school is rapidly improving. They are clear about what needs to improve further and the steps they need to take to achieve this. The role of other senior leaders and middle leaders, although developing quickly, is not embedded.
- Middle leaders, including subject leaders, have set up systems for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning for which they are responsible. They track the application of writing and mathematical skills in their subject area, analyse emerging assessment information, look in pupils' books, visit classrooms, and talk with teachers. However, some of this information lacks a sufficient focus on the impact teaching has on learning over time.
- Senior leaders working alongside staff are successful in recognising the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They provide effective support so that these pupils make faster progress and begin to catch up with others.
- School leaders, at all levels, demonstrate a strong commitment to providing support for pupils' emotional needs and well-being. For example, pupils arriving in the school who speak English as an additional language have comprehensive transition arrangements in place which are reviewed by other pupils who act as 'ambassadors' on their behalf.
- School leaders ensure that pupils receive a wide and balanced curriculum. However, they recognise that more work is needed to ensure outcomes in some aspects, especially in art and modern foreign languages, match those now seen in English and mathematics. Pupils are assessed on a regular basis in all subjects, which informs the teachers' planning of next steps in lessons. This information is not always pulled together effectively to inform school leaders on how well pupils are achieving in one subject compared to in others.
- School leaders ensure that pupils access clear, sensitive support and guidance in exploring their spiritual, moral and cultural understanding. British values are threaded through many aspects of the curriculum, including many opportunities for engaging with the democratic process and understanding the importance of tolerance and respect.
- Physical education (PE) and sports funding for primary schools is used well to provide opportunities for pupils and staff to access specialist coaching. It also supports wider opportunities for pupils to compete and test themselves against pupils from other schools.
- Senior leaders and governors manage the performance of teachers well. Well-established and rigorous systems and expectations are in place. This enables leaders to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching. Where performance begins to slip, leaders provide support to improve teaching and do not shy away from making difficult decisions when required to do so. Consequently, teachers feel well supported but continually challenged to improve their teaching.
- The school makes sure that government funding for disadvantaged pupils is making a positive difference to the progress these pupils make. School leaders track the progress of these pupils closely and provide support where it is required. Governors have acted on recommendations from a recent review of pupil premium funding and provide a sharp focus on this provision when making decisions.
- The diocese and local authority have worked highly effectively alongside school leaders to stabilise staffing and to secure the necessary improvements in teaching and learning. They have continually monitored and evaluated developments in the school, offered advice and intervened where needed.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors have taken steps to ensure that they have kept pace with developments in the school. They have taken tough decisions with a keen focus on improving the school's outcomes for pupils. They have carried out reviews of their own effectiveness and practice.
  - Governors seek information from a variety of sources including staff, parents and pupils themselves. They regularly review information about the progress pupils and key groups of pupils are making, factoring in attendance and behaviour statistics. Consequently, governors know the school well.
  - Governors understand the challenges the school has and are realistic about the steps the school needs to take to improve further. They challenge leaders to improve the quality of information they receive, including a sharper focus on pupils' progress in a range of curriculum areas, especially art and modern foreign languages.

- Governors challenge senior leaders about results in national tests and the ongoing progress pupils make across key stages. Governors are knowledgeable about the difference planned improvements make, reviewing and evaluating rigorously the actions that school leaders have taken.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Systems to safeguard children and families are continually reviewed and improving. Information on the school website is user friendly with a clear focus on ease of access to key information for vulnerable adults and children. Staff are well informed and their training is up to date and comprehensive. Staff are knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities and do not shy away from taking action when necessary. Actions to improve attendance are reviewed as part of the safeguarding focus by school leaders.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving but aspects are inconsistent across the school and do not result in consistently good outcomes for pupils.
- Teachers do not always provide tasks that offer sufficient challenge, especially for the most able pupils. In lessons, pupils are not given enough opportunities to apply previous learning and move quickly on to new learning. As a consequence, pupils' learning time is restricted because they are covering old ground.
- The planned learning opportunities for pupils are improving rapidly in mathematics. However, the provision is still too inconsistent in reading and writing across the school to ensure that all pupils, especially the most able, make quicker and sustained progress.
- Teachers use effective questioning and feedback to check pupils' understanding. The school's policy on feedback is consistently applied.
- The teaching of phonics (linking letters to the sounds they represent), including in early years, has improved. Phonics teaching is systematic and accurate. Pupils' mistakes are picked up and corrected rigorously. As a result, they are increasingly confident about their reading and writing but sometimes lack opportunities to apply these skills when working by themselves.
- Teaching is most effective in lessons where tasks are matched well to pupils' current needs and interests. In addition, pupils have opportunities to think hard, apply reasoning and develop skills and understanding in a variety of new situations.
- The school has successfully developed approaches to improve pupils' skills, attitudes and attributes in mathematics. Opportunities to use and apply mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills are available in a range of subjects and contexts. Consequently, the rate of progress in mathematics has improved across the school. Teaching in English, especially writing, has also improved but is less consistent across the school.
- Teaching assistants support learners well. They have appropriate subject knowledge to help learners unpick misconceptions and use well-targeted questions to help pupils move their understanding forward.
- The current assessments made by the school to track pupils' progress are increasingly accurate in mathematics, English and science. In other subjects, assessment information provides teachers with current information about the skills and abilities of pupils and informs daily planning to meet pupils' needs. However, it does not always provide a clear picture about gaps in their learning resulting from previously inadequate teaching.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement**

#### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in and outside school, including when using the internet. They are aware of different forms of bullying but talk less confidently about homophobic bullying. Pupils say they feel safe in school.
- A culture of mutual respect and high-quality relationships between pupils and adults characterise the school. Building on work undertaken as a 'rights respecting' school, pupils have a significant voice in shaping the provision in the school and reflecting on what difference important changes have made. Various school councils and student leadership groups are supplemented by systematic random sampling of pupils' views by school leaders.

- Pupils are proud of their achievements and celebrate their own and others' successes. However, this is not always reflected in the accuracy or presentation of their work.
- Pupils talk confidently about cultural and religious similarities and differences. They reflect on how this helps to promote good relationships in school and beyond.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about healthy lifestyles and can talk confidently about healthy eating and fitness.
- Parents who spoke with the inspector, and those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree overwhelmingly that the school has improved and that their children are kept safe and any concerns are responded to quickly and sensitively. They confirm that bullying is rare and recognise the open, caring and supportive ethos of the school.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils are courteous and polite and they have a good understanding of the behaviour expected of them. Consequently, an atmosphere conducive to learning is evident in classrooms.
- Pupils concentrate well and have positive attitudes to their work. On the occasions where the teaching is mundane or tasks are too easy, pupils can become disengaged and their attention lost. As a result, pupils have not fully developed a resilience and perseverance in tackling their work.
- Pupils play well together at playtimes and move around school in an orderly manner. As a result, they arrive at lessons promptly and ready to learn. In the early years, children have a good understanding of routines and what is expected of them.
- Pupils are knowledgeable and thoughtful when talking about unacceptable behaviour. They confirm that bullying rarely happens and when it does occur, they are aware of the steps they need to take. Pupils and parents are confident that issues with bullying will be resolved quickly by staff.
- Attendance is improving but is still below that seen nationally. The school continually tracks pupils' attendance and absences are followed up immediately. Where attendance issues become apparent, advice, support and challenge are given. School leaders recognise the need to improve attendance further and have identified it as a key priority.

### Outcomes for pupils

### require improvement

- The progress of pupils across subjects and year groups, including in the early years, is improving but is too inconsistent to ensure that enough pupils make rapid progress and that achievement is securely good.
- The vast majority of pupils leave the school equipped with the necessary skills, attitudes and understanding to access the next steps in their education, especially in mathematics. Standards in some subjects, especially art and modern foreign languages, do not yet match those seen in English and mathematics.
- Children in the early years make steady progress and the number achieving the early learning goals is improving and now matches that seen nationally in most aspects.
- The proportion of Year 1 pupils who meet the expected standard in phonics is improving and is above the national figure. By the end of Year 2, as the result of effective intervention and support, those who needed to catch up have done so.
- Pupils in key stage 1 make steady progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion achieving expected standards by the end of the Year 2 is improving. The vast majority of pupils are working at or beyond expectations in reading, writing and mathematics and are well prepared to access the demands of the key stage 2 curriculum.
- The progress of pupils across key stage 2 in reading and writing has improved. The vast majority of pupils make the progress expected of them, but the number making faster progress is not secure. Evidence seen in books and lessons indicates that, although there is some improvement, progress is still inconsistent across some year groups and subjects.
- The rate of progress made by pupils in mathematics in key stage 2 has improved and the proportion making and exceeding expected progress is strengthening. This reflects improved and consistent teaching in mathematics and increased opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills.
- Provisional results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2016 were broadly in line with national averages in reading, spelling punctuation and grammar. The number achieving the expected levels for their age in writing was above that seen nationally. In mathematics, every pupil achieved at least the expected outcomes.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive a range of interventions and flexible support. The deployment of adults and additional resources ensure that this group of pupils makes increasingly rapid progress and begin to catch up with their peers.
- The most able pupils make expected progress but sometimes have few chances to develop their thought processes and build quickly on previous learning. In some instances, teachers are too rigid in their planned learning to allow the most able pupils to move on quickly in lessons in order to tackle harder activities.
- Pupils for whom English is an additional language, especially those new to English, make rapid progress. This is because staff work hard to settle new pupils into the school quickly, identify their needs and act promptly to address any gaps in their learning.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils is secure and improving across the school and increasingly helps prepare them for their next steps in education. Where gaps do persist, school leaders are quick to identify them and direct resources to help meet the needs of pupils. As a consequence, the majority of disadvantaged pupils leave the school having achieved close to, or exceeding, the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

### Early years provision

### requires improvement

- Most children enter the early years with skills, language and knowledge broadly typical for their age. By the time they leave the early years they have made expected progress and the great majority of children are well prepared for the transition into key stage 1.
- The tasks that children undertake sometimes lack the challenge to make them think a bit harder and apply their skills more widely. Adults do not always make the most of opportunities for children to write, read or talk at length. Consequently, the number of children making faster progress by the end of the early years, while improving, is still not good.
- The number of children reaching a good level of development is growing over time and the current group of children are set to continue this trend. The vast majority make expected progress, and there is no difference in the progress of children who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities compared with the progress of other children.
- Teaching in the early years is improving but there is some variability in the quality of activities that promote reading and writing beyond the directly taught elements. Activities are mostly engaging, with interesting resources available. Staff use good-quality questioning to engage children and develop their thinking.
- Staff know the children well and care for them – meeting and anticipating their emotional needs and helping them to refine their social skills. Children settle quickly into established routines and staff make their expectations of them clear. However, adults do not consistently insist on useful behaviour such as taking turns or making children listen and respond to each other.
- Staff assessments of what children can and cannot do are accurate and this helps staff to plan the next steps and support. This information is shared with parents on a regular basis and parents' views increasingly help inform assessments.
- The teaching of phonics is delivered through a highly structured programme which ensures that children develop secure knowledge about letters and the sounds they make. This helps children to use their reading and writing skills in different activities when the opportunities are available.
- Welfare requirements are fully understood and met. Children are encouraged to play safely and staff are responsive to each individual's emotional and well-being needs. Records are kept and maintained to ensure that the welfare of children is reviewed on a regular basis.
- Children behave well. They are eager to learn and readily join in with activities. They play well alongside and with their friends, increasingly working together to solve problems or tasks set by adults. On occasions, a small number of children were observed not taking due care of equipment.
- The early years leader has promoted collaborative working arrangements between staff well, sharing ideas and helping each other improve their practice. This has helped to secure an increasingly cohesive understanding of what is expected of adults and children.
- Parents value the recent improvements in the early years. They recognise the work of staff to build stronger relationships with parents and provide more detailed information about what their child can and cannot do.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114266
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham County Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	10013042

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	151
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mary Wood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mathew Atkinson
<b>Telephone number</b>	01325 300337
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://stjosephsrcprimaryschool.net">stjosephsrcprimaryschool.net</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:stjosephsnewtonaycliffe@durhamlearning.net">stjosephsnewtonaycliffe@durhamlearning.net</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	18–19 March 2015

## Information about this school

- St Joseph’s Roman Catholic Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is in line with the national average.
- The school meets the government’s floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils’ attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities broadly matches the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is in line with the national average. Pupil premium funding is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or are looked after by the local authority.
- Children in the school’s Reception classes attend full time. Those that attend Nursery classes attend part time.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- Discussions were held with school leaders and staff to establish how well the school is operating.
- The inspector also held discussions with governors, the headteacher, senior leaders and some subject leaders.
- The inspector observed learning in all classrooms. Four joint observations were carried out with the headteacher.
- The inspector evaluated pupils' work, had discussions with pupils and listened to some read.
- The inspector observed pupils' relationships around the school and behaviour in lessons and at playtimes.
- The inspector met with some parents at the start of the school day and scrutinised the 35 responses to Parent View, the online Ofsted questionnaire for parents.
- The inspector also examined a wide range of school documentation, including evidence of the school's self-evaluation, reports to the governing body, information about the management of teachers and pupils' performance, plus information on the curriculum, safeguarding and other key policies.

## Inspection team

Jonathan Brown, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector



Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2016

