

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Hillcrest Road, Dudley, DY2 7PW

Inspection dates 14–15 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Early years provision	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Children get an exceptionally good start to their education in the early years classes where they develop skills especially well. Excellent use is made of both the inside and outdoor learning areas to enthuse and excite children about their learning.
- Pupils make extremely rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics as they move through the school. Many pupils start in school with skills weaker than is typical for their age, but they reach above average standards by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Teachers' excellent subject knowledge enables them to move pupils forward quickly in their learning. They ask searching questions to check pupils' understanding and develop deeper knowledge.
- Teachers are clear what each pupil needs to do next and communicate this clearly. As a result, pupils who are ready to move on rapidly do so, while others receive the guidance they need to make the best progress they can.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around school is exemplary. They are extremely enthusiastic about their learning and proud of their school. This is reflected in the care they take in their work and the way they treat school resources, equipment and each other.
- Pupils feel very safe in the caring and nurturing environment provided by the school. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in different situations outside school, such as on the roads and when using the internet.
- Under the calm, purposeful leadership and drive of the headteacher, the school has continued to improve over recent years. He, the deputy headteacher and other leaders ensure that teaching is consistently of a high standard.
- The academy committee rigorously checks how well the school is doing. Committee members ask senior leaders challenging questions and visit regularly to see for themselves. They share the headteacher's and deputy headteacher's high aspirations for continual improvement.
- The headteacher and a few other leaders provide effective support to other schools. Not all leaders have honed their skills sufficiently to be in a position to do this.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is especially strong. Pupils of all backgrounds and faiths embrace the values of the school and see themselves as a 'family'.
- Pupils talk confidently about their own religions and the need to respect each other's different views and beliefs. They all feel highly valued and appreciate that the diversity in the school is celebrated.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 20 lessons, eight of which were seen together with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other staff, two groups of pupils, three members of the academy committee, and a representative of the academy board of directors.
- Informal discussions were held with parents and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of the 26 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, the school's own parental and pupil questionnaires, and the 29 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and reviewed a range of documentation, including: the school's checks on its performance; its analysis and tracking of pupils' progress; records of behaviour and safety; school improvement plans; records relating to classroom observations and the management of staff performance; safeguarding arrangements; and records of meetings of the academy committee.
- The inspectors also looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read and checked information on attendance.

Inspection team

Susan Hughes, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Michael Onyon	Additional Inspector
Susan Calvert	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2013. When its predecessor school, also known as St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of the St John Bosco Catholic Academy which includes two other local catholic schools. It is led by the principal and vice-principal, who are known in the school as the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- The school is governed by the academy committee which comprises members of the St John Bosco Catholic Academy board of directors, parents, members of staff and representatives of the church and local community.
- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- Children in the early years start in a part-time Nursery class when they are three years old. Children move to the full-time Reception class at the beginning of the year in which they are five. Approximately two thirds of the children in the Reception class have previously attended the school's Nursery.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils (those supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority) is above average.
- The school has been recognised by the local authority as a 'centre for developing mathematics'. Senior leaders and some subject leaders support other schools in developing their leadership and teaching skills.
- The school exceeds 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop all subject leaders' skills to sustain continuous high levels of improvement in their areas of responsibility and to equip them to support leaders in other schools.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher's drive and commitment to providing the best possible opportunities for all pupils are evident throughout the school. Signs highlighting the school values greet visitors as they arrive. The exceptionally well-equipped play areas, inspirational messages in classrooms and along corridors, and the attentive attitudes of all staff give pupils the clear message that they are valued and worthy of the best.
- The headteacher ensures that teaching is of an exceptionally high quality. He and the deputy headteacher rigorously check how well all pupils are doing. They make sure that no groups of pupils are falling behind, and any in danger of doing so are speedily helped to keep up. The appraisal system, which rewards teachers whose pupils achieve well, is used extremely effectively in providing challenging targets for staff as well as opportunities to develop their skills and expertise.
- Other leaders ensure that their subjects, or pupils for whom they are responsible, are being taught well. They use school progress data, check teachers' planning and look at pupils' books to make sure that pupils are making the progress of which they are capable. When needed, leaders work alongside colleagues to help them improve their teaching skills even further.
- The pupil premium is used extremely effectively to provide well-trained and skilled additional adults who support disadvantaged pupils. Adults work alongside pupils in lessons or in small groups and individually. Progress is checked on a weekly basis to make sure that help given is effective. The well-focused use of the pupil premium has been highly successful in ensuring that disadvantaged pupils achieve at least as well as other pupils.
- The primary physical education and sports premium has enhanced pupils' physical education opportunities. Specialist teachers are employed to work alongside class teachers to demonstrate high-quality physical education teaching. This provides excellent learning experiences for pupils while helping teachers improve their own teaching techniques. As a result, pupils' sporting skills are improving and they are becoming more successful in competitions.
- The school works closely and effectively with other schools in the academy. Staff share expertise and training. They make sure that transition arrangements to the secondary school are efficient and that pupils' move to the next stage of their education is smooth.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher support leaders in other local school and advise on school improvement. Some subject leaders, such as the mathematics leader, have also worked with colleagues in other schools where their expertise and experience have been usefully shared. Not all subject leaders, however, have honed their skills to such a high level.
- The planning and teaching of the subjects pupils learn make them interesting and exciting. They cover a broad range of topics, including plenty of musical and artistic activities. All pupils in Key Stage 2 learn to play a musical instrument and, during the inspection, pupils in Year 6 made good progress playing single line tunes and rhythms on the guitar. Pupils share their learning with parents at the end of every topic studied.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a particular strength of the school. Its faith base gives an especially strong spiritual message to all pupils, regardless of their own faith or culture. Pupils of different religions and backgrounds wholeheartedly embrace the five key values of the school (kindness, forgiveness, equality, truth and respect) and join in acts of worship which celebrate diversity and respect for others. The school 'houses' are named after the five values, and pupils told inspectors that this is a good idea because it helps them remember, and try to abide by, them.
- Visitors to the school, such as during multi-faith week or vocations week, support pupils' learning about different ways of life in modern Britain. The 'It's Brilliant to be in Britain' celebration held recently included

visits from the local member of parliament who spoke about democracy, a high court judge who spoke about the rule of law and different faith leaders who talked about living harmoniously in a multi-faith society. Pupils at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School are exceptionally well prepared for life in modern Britain.

- Leaders ensure that equality of opportunity enables all groups of pupils to achieve equally well. Teachers tackle discrimination effectively by employing a consistent approach to respect and consideration throughout the school.
- Safeguarding arrangements in school are extremely rigorous and effective. Policies and procedures are used consistently well. Leaders ensure that the school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and that all staff are well trained on safeguarding issues. The school works very closely with external agencies to support vulnerable pupils and their families.
- Although only recently formed, the St John Bosco Catholic Academy has supported the school well. The academy takes care of financial and personnel management, which has given the senior leaders in the school time to focus more directly on pupils' progress and standards.

■ The governance of the school:

- The academy committee has an excellent understanding of the school's many strengths but, nevertheless, has aspirations to be even better. Accurate use of school data, regular visits to the school and frequent discussion with leaders equip the committee members to ask searching and challenging questions to make sure that the school is continuing to improve.
- Finances are managed well. The academy committee checks that the pupil premium is used effectively. Members are extremely knowledgeable about the impact the spending is having on disadvantaged pupils' excellent achievement. Academy committee members are equally rigorous in checking how the sports funding is improving pupils' physical education opportunities and skills.
- Committee members fully understand how the appraisal system is supporting and maintaining high-quality teaching. They ensure that the system not only sets high expectations for teachers, but also provides continuing opportunities for them to develop their expertise. The committee makes sure that teachers are only rewarded with a pay rise when their pupils achieve well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are proud of their behaviour and told inspectors that the excellent behaviour observed during the inspection was typical of everyday life in the school. All parents who responded to Parent View and all staff who completed the questionnaire agree that behaviour in the school is of a consistently high calibre.
- Pupils follow the excellent role models of adults in the school in their attitudes to each other by being considerate and courteous. Pupils told inspectors that they would automatically help someone who is hurt or upset, this being one of their school values and expectations.
- Pupils from Years 5 and 6 act as peer supporters. They help to sort out any minor problems which may occur at playtimes, and other pupils hold them in high regard. One pupil commented, 'A peer supporter is there to help other people if they are upset. Peer supporters try to make someone happier.'
- Playtimes are lively, and pupils take full advantage of the wide range of play equipment and sporting opportunities. They are mindful of each other and ensure that they do not impinge on each other's games. When playtime ends, they respond immediately to the teacher's whistle and return to lessons calmly and ready to learn.
- Pupils are attentive in class and extremely enthusiastic about their learning. They respond appropriately to teachers' high expectations of behaviour and work diligently, whether in a group or individually. Consistent use of rewards and encouragement by all staff means that pupils are very clear of what is expected of them, and they say that the system is fair and works well.

- Pupils' enthusiasm to help others extends beyond the school. They are eager supporters of local, national and international charities and regularly collect tins of food for the local food bank. The latest 'poppy appeal' collection in school was so successful that the school has received a commendation for being one of the schools that raised the highest amount of money in Dudley.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Rigorous safety systems are in place, and pupils told inspectors that they feel extremely safe. Parents agree that the school is a safe, happy place to be.
- Pupils are very clear about what bullying is and the different forms it can take, including cyber and racist bullying. They told inspectors that it hardly ever happens. Any rare incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively, and pupils all felt they could go to someone if they had a problem. Pupils said the worry boxes are always there if needed but, generally, they would go to a teacher or other adult in school.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in different situations outside school. For example, they appreciate why they must not share personal details when using the internet and understand what to do to if they have any concerns. Older pupils learn about first aid and resuscitation.
- All pupils learn about road safety, from crossing the road with an adult in the early years to safe cycling in Years 3 and 5. Pupils in Year 6 plan safe routes to their secondary school once they leave St Joseph's. Pupils also learn about fire safety and told inspectors that if they caught fire they must 'stop, drop and roll'.
- Anti-bullying and ant-racism weeks are held twice a year. During these, pupils consolidate their learning about the use of inappropriate language and how to ensure there is no bullying or racism in their school. Some pupils attend assertiveness training, accompanied by their parents, to give them confidence in dealing with challenging situations outside school.
- Leaders work very closely with parents to ensure they feel well informed about what is happening in school. The school liaises closely with parents and other professionals to support families in difficulties. This, in turn, helps ensure that pupils attend well and are punctual to school. As a result, attendance is above average.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Their excellent subject knowledge enables them to identify exactly what each pupil needs to do to move on to the next step in their learning. For example, skilled questioning by teachers helps them probe pupils' understanding and deepen their knowledge by encouraging clear explanations from pupils about how they completed a task or solved a problem.
- Teaching in all areas of the school, including in the early years, builds extremely effectively on what pupils already know. Teachers encourage pupils to draw on previous learning to help them develop their skills. For example, during the inspection pupils in Year 6 reading a simple story drew parallels with Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet*. An interesting discussion around different versions of the play developed into how the book they were reading gave a balanced argument about the two families involved. One pupil accurately described the section they were reading as a 'moral dilemma'.
- Reading is taught very well throughout the school. Phonics (the sounds letters represent in words) are taught from the Nursery class and through Key Stage 1. Pupils are encouraged to use these skills to read unfamiliar words. Results in the most recent national check on how well pupils in Year 1 understand phonics were above average. The school has changed the way it teaches reading to older pupils by giving them more opportunity to read a complete text, rather than extracts, during lessons. This is developing a greater love of books and pupils spoke enthusiastically about the books they were reading at the time of the inspection.

- The teaching of writing is of equally high quality. Teachers harness the pupils' enthusiasm for the topics they study to practise and extend the literacy skills learnt in English lessons. For example, pupils in Year 1 practised writing instructions for making a green salad while studying plants in science, and pupils in Year 3 honed their report-writing skills when looking at the history of who first lived in Britain. Pupils in Year 4 confidently used subordinate clauses in their writing after identifying how effectively they were used in a poem studied by the class.
- Mathematics is taught exceptionally well and the high level of teaching has been a particular strength of the school for the past few years. This is because teachers' subject knowledge is excellent and staff are extremely enthusiastic about the subject. Pupils are taught mathematical skills in lessons and given real-life problems to solve using their knowledge and skills. For example, during the inspection pupils worked out how many intersections of roads would be most beneficial to a building planner through investigating patterns and variables.
- Additional adults in the classroom work very effectively alongside class teachers. They are meticulously briefed as to the learning that is to take place. They follow the class teachers' lead in the way they draw pupils to an understanding through questioning rather than always providing the answer. This is particularly helpful for pupils who speak English as an additional language as it extends their use of vocabulary.
- The excellent team working between class teachers and additional helpers means that their time is used extremely effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. While disadvantaged pupils are sometimes supported individually or in small groups by additional adults, on other occasions they learn with the class teacher while the additional adult oversees other pupils' work.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs are equally well supported. Their needs are identified quickly and accurately and appropriate help is put in place, either within the classroom or in a separate study room as appropriate. The class teacher and special educational needs coordinator rigorously check how effective the support is, so that pupils progress well and achieve as well as their classmates.
- The most able pupils also make exceptionally good progress. Teachers ensure that the work is challenging and develops pupils' knowledge and understanding from the onset of the lessons. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning mean that the most able pupils are keen to excel and reach high levels of attainment.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children start in the early years with skills weaker than those typical for their age, especially in reading, writing and communication. They make excellent progress in developing these skills and start in Key Stage 1 with skills much closer to those typical for their age. Continued rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics means that pupils are working at broadly average standards, which are rising, by the end of the key stage.
- Pupils continue to make exceptionally good progress throughout Key Stage 2. In 2014, standards overall were above average, and were particularly high in mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils do especially well as they move through the school. In 2014, by the end of Key Stage 2, disadvantaged pupils were less than a term behind other pupils in the school in mathematics and reading and nearly two terms behind in writing. In relation to all pupils nationally, however, they were two and a half terms ahead in mathematics, just under half a term ahead in reading and just over a term behind in writing. Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are doing even better in relation to their classmates. As a result of high-quality support, they are making more progress than other pupils and, consequently, are working at, or above, the level of their peers in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are doing equally well. Although, on occasions, they are working at a lower level than other pupils, the progress they make is exceptionally good from their starting points.

- Similarly, pupils who speak English as an additional language are achieving exceptionally well. Once they have acquired the basic language skills, teachers ensure that their vocabulary develops quickly and they make rapid progress in reading and writing and mathematics.
- The most able pupils achieve outstandingly well throughout the school. The proportion of pupils attaining the highest levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 is growing. An even greater proportion is on track to achieve these high levels in the current Year 6 than in the previous year.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- The early years classes provide safe, vibrant places for children to start their school life. Exciting opportunities to develop their skills, both inside and outdoors, capture their imagination and they soon learn to concentrate for extended period on tasks and activities. This results in excellent skills development and a very effective introduction to good learning habits.
- The outstanding teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes ensures that children quickly learn key skills while working with adults. They then have a wealth of opportunities to practise them in their play and exploration. Activities are planned around children's enthusiasm and previous experiences, so that they enjoy their learning and thrive. As a result, behaviour is excellent and children show care and consideration for each other. For example, during the inspection a Reception pupil automatically helped a younger Nursery child put his fireman's hat away before joining his group activity.
- The early years classes are led exceptionally well. All staff are well trained, and the leader ensures that ongoing training and support continually strengthen her team's expertise. Children's accomplishments are rigorously recorded, and assessments of progress inform future planning to ensure that activities build on previous learning. Disabled children and those who have special educational needs are quickly identified, and appropriate support is put in place to help them achieve as well as they can.
- The proportion of children who achieved a good level of development in 2014 was slightly below average. The proportion of children on track to achieve this level of development in the current year is higher again and shows a consistently improving picture.
- The excellent progress that children make, and the highly positive attitudes to learning that are fostered so effectively in the early years classes, prepare them extremely well for their move to Key Stage 1.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	140147
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	450355

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	264
Appropriate authority	The academy committee
Chair	Andrew Bant
Principal	Mark Hinton
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01384 818925
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