

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Rosebank, West Street, Epsom, KT18 7RT

Inspection dates 3–4 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well in English with some outstanding progress made in reading and speaking and listening. The recent dip seen in achievement in mathematics is virtually eradicated and standards are rising rapidly.
- Teaching throughout the school is consistently good and some is outstanding.
- The headteacher's high expectations are shared by staff. Governors know the school well and hold it fully to account for its performance.
- There is overwhelming support from parents and carers for all aspects of school life.
- Pupils are very happy at the school, they feel safe and their attendance is well above average.
- The excellent quality of teaching and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage supports children's rapid progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are exceptionally keen to learn and they are unreservedly polite and caring of one another.
- Excellent personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpin all of the school's strengths.
- The wide variety of exciting themes and activities provided by the school, including after-school clubs and visits, ensure that pupils develop skills in a broad range of subjects and are well prepared for the next stage of education.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Following a decline in pupils' achievement in mathematics in 2012, most pupils are currently making good progress, but not enough pupils are making accelerated progress.
- Middle leaders are not playing a strong enough role in accelerating pupils' achievement, especially in mathematics.
- In some lessons, the tasks do not always accelerate pupils' learning fast enough, particularly for the most-able pupils.
- Except in English, marking in books does not consistently tell pupils their next steps and there are missed opportunities for pupils to act on their teachers' advice and make the necessary improvements.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 17 lessons, four of which were jointly observed lessons carried out with the headteacher and the senior leading teacher. Inspectors also carried out a series of short visits to other lessons across the school, talked with pupils and listened to them read.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, members of staff and the leadership team. A phone call discussion was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 170 responses to the online Parent View survey, as well as the four letters received and the views of the parents and carers they met. Inspectors also considered the 40 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, safeguarding policies, and records and documents relating to the management of staff performance.

Inspection team

Lesley Leak, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sheila Rowan

Additional Inspector

Heather Barraclough

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average school with two forms of entry in Reception, Years 1, 2 and 3 and with one and a half forms of entry at Key Stage 2 in Years 4 to 6.
- The proportion of children who are eligible for the pupil premium is well-below average. Pupil premium is additional funding for the children in the care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than the national average. The largest group is White British.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high compared with the national average. A small number of these pupils speak little or no English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is low compared to the national average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress , particularly in mathematics, so that more pupils achieve highly by:
 - making sure that teachers always set work that is well matched to pupils' different abilities, especially the most able
 - ensuring that all pupils know their next steps and are systematically given opportunities to respond to their teachers' marking.
- Increase the impact of middle leadership on raising pupils' achievement across the school by:
 - enabling the leaders of learning to evaluate the effectiveness of their subjects more accurately and to take effective action where there is underperformance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills at age-expected levels. As a result of very strong teaching and excellent indoor and outdoor provision, children make rapid progress. By the time they leave Reception, children are very well prepared for their start in Year 1.
- Pupils achieve well in English at all key stages, including those who are at an early stage of learning to speak English, because of the school's well-tailored support. The strong emphasis placed on teaching letters and sounds (phonics), combined with the school's fervent promotion of reading for pleasure, means that pupils' progress in reading is accelerating in most year groups.
- Many pupils continue to exceed expected progress in writing throughout the school because teachers carefully ensure that pupils' learning goals are well matched to their needs and they set high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are exceptionally strong because of the many opportunities provided to extend their vocabulary and to talk with their peers. Pupils are highly confident at speaking to an audience because of the many chances to perform in assemblies, liturgies, poetry competitions, musical recitals and Shakespearean productions.
- By the end of Key Stage 2 in 2012, pupils' progress in mathematics had dipped significantly. However evidence of the school's current performance shows that pupils' progress in this subject is improving throughout the school and they are now making good progress, in most year groups, because teachers are better trained to teach mathematics.
- The school actively promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination by ensuring pupils who are not making sufficient progress are given extra help to achieve well. Careful checks on pupils' progress mean that anyone who needs extra support is quickly identified and provided with specific support. Consequently, most pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language make good and sometimes outstanding progress, especially in reading.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make sufficient gains in progress to secure attainment which is above the national average in English and mathematics. In 2012, these pupils were 12 months behind their peers in English and mathematics. Evidence of the school's current performance shows that the gap in achievement is closing because the funding has been well spent on meeting the needs of identified pupils through well-targeted one-to-one support and small-group teaching outside of lessons.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching in most subjects, including English and mathematics, is usually good, with many examples of outstanding practice. Teachers have high expectations, plan thoroughly and motivate pupils to learn successfully.
- Teachers and other adults create a highly positive learning environment which fosters good relationships and pupils' excellent attitudes to learning. This is reflected in the exciting range of activities provided that stimulate pupils' thinking and creativity. For example in a mixed-age class in upper Key Stage 2, pupils were given a challenging, practical mathematical investigation that related to their trip to the beach the previous day. Pupils were successfully calculating the rate of erosion at the coast, comparing the mode, median and mean, to decide which of these gave the most accurate prediction.
- Where teaching is exceptional, teachers inspire pupils to learn and challenging tasks are set to stretch pupils' reasoning and evaluative skills. In an outstanding Year 6 mathematics lesson, the more-able pupils were encouraged to think strategically in order to solve a real-life problem.

Using percentages they worked out the actual cost of buying one's own home and calculated the monthly cost of a mortgage over 25 years.

- However in less effective lessons teachers do not always model how to approach a task clearly enough and time is lost in providing pupils with further explanations from the teacher. Sometimes the pace of challenge is too slow for the most able, who could have been given more difficult work earlier on in the lesson.
- Most pupils enjoy writing at length because they are given stimulating subject matter. Writing is well developed across the curriculum, especially in religious education (RE), and as a result, pupils are confident at tackling a variety of writing styles. This has ensured that pupils' progress in writing is rising and their achievement is consistently good.
- Adults who provide one-to-one tuition for pupils in need of extra help, including pupils who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are well briefed and effective in the role. They make a strong contribution to pupils' good and sometimes exceptional progress.
- While marking is regular and often gives credit for effort, it does not always provide advice on how to improve and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to reflect on their teachers' guidance, attempt further challenges or to correct their mistakes. The school's marking policy currently supports pupils' good progress in writing but it is not yet consistently applied in other subjects, especially mathematics.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. Pupils say that 'Teachers see your talents and help to develop them further.' Pupils are unreservedly polite and helpful to each other, staff and visitors and there is a strong community feeling to the school. 'Everyone fits in', said one pupil.
- Most pupils are ready to learn on arrival at school and are highly motivated. They demonstrate outstanding social skills, working well together in pairs and small groups. They respond well to teachers' high expectations and seize opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning, and consequently learn well. In one highly successful Year 5 information and communication technology (ICT) lesson, teams of pupils, each with a fictional budget and task – as in the TV programme, *The Apprentice* – eagerly competed with each other to find the cheapest products from websites on particular themes. Each team entered and totalled the costs on a spreadsheet using a formula. Working well in their teams, pupils were highly motivated to come up with the best solutions themselves.
- All staff are skilled and highly consistent in their approaches to behaviour, which contributes to the pupils' good academic achievement.
- The school rigorously follows up any behaviour incidents and thereby ensures that bullying is extremely rare. Pupils are confident in the school's ability to deal with instances of bullying or any off-task behaviour swiftly and effectively. Pupils and parents and carers say that pupils feel safe in school and that they care well for one another.
- Pupils value the many opportunities to take on aspects of responsibility, such as: the school council representative, house captain, eco-warrior, friendship buddy and librarian. Inspectors noted how much children in Reception enjoy the playtime support they receive from Year 6 pupils.
- Attendance is outstanding for all groups of pupils. They are very happy at school and this is confirmed in the exceptionally positive staff questionnaires and in the results of the online survey for parents and carers.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's high expectations for improving the school are communicated effectively to the leaders in charge of subject areas, who are well trained and supported to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards in their areas of responsibility. The headteacher is fully aware that middle leaders need time to evaluate the effectiveness of their subject areas in order to provide staff with additional subject-specific support, where necessary.
 - Central to the current picture of improvement, and to demonstrate the capacity for further improvement, is the headteacher's astute investment in high-quality training and professional development for staff at all levels. Training sessions focusing on a whole-school approach to writing have been particularly successful in drawing staff's attention to teaching approaches to support bilingual learners, and this is having a strong impact on rising attainment across a range of subjects.
 - The school's systems for managing staff performance are effective because a wide base of evidence is used to evaluate the quality of teaching and almost all teaching is consistently good with much that is outstanding. There is a comprehensive package of training and support provided for newly qualified teachers which they value highly and as a result, their teaching is of a good quality.
 - Senior leaders have developed improved pupil progress tracking systems so that they can identify pupils who are falling behind more quickly and ensure that they are given the right support to catch up quickly.
 - Parents and carers are very happy with the school and feel they are provided with excellent support to help their children's learning at home. They are especially appreciative of the school's vibrant and relevant curriculum which supports children's enjoyment of learning. The curriculum is successfully broadened by a variety of enrichment activities including extra booster classes, Spanish lessons, residential and day trips and other exciting sports clubs and authors' visits. For example, during the inspection, all of the Year 6 pupils were rehearsing for an imaginative production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
 - There are a significant number of opportunities for pupils across the school to participate in activities that promote their moral and spiritual reflection, especially in assemblies and RE lessons. Cultural aspects of school life are well promoted through drama and the arts. For example, pupils in Year 3 were enjoying painting delicate still life pictures of vases of flowers and by mixing their own palettes from primary colours, they were learning much about the use of colour.
 - The local authority has not felt it necessary to provide the school with more than light touch support because of its confidence in its capacity to be a good school.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is effective in its ability to challenge and support the school. Its members receive regular evaluations of the school's performance, know what the school is doing well and where it could do better because they are involved in the school's self-evaluation activities. Governors are kept informed of the effectiveness of the school's use of the additional funding through the pupil premium, to narrow the gap in attainment. They pay close attention to the school's evaluation of teaching and its management of staff performance in relation to pay progression. They encourage parents and carers to engage with the school and have been active in fund raising for the school's new buildings. They ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and that equal opportunity is promoted well. The governing body holds the school to account for the management of its finances.
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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	125205
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	412513

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	377
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally Nestor
Headteacher	Theresa Kenefick
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2008
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