

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Woodchurch Road, Prenton, Merseyside CH43 5UT

Inspection dates

19–20 April 2016

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Arrangements for safeguarding are inadequate. Leaders and governors have not ensured that safeguarding policies and procedures are sufficiently thorough.
- The systems and practices in place do not ensure that all staff have appropriate knowledge of child protection issues to keep pupils safe.
- Leaders and governors do not ensure that there are detailed records of how safeguarding concerns are addressed and concluded.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare, and the provision for early years, are inadequate because safeguarding is not effective.
- Leaders and governors do not make sure that pupils develop a knowledge and understanding of different cultures.
- Pupils' awareness of homophobic bullying is underdeveloped.
- Teaching does not consistently ensure that pupils, including the most able, are challenged to extend their learning.

The school has the following strengths

- School leaders have worked effectively to bring about improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, most pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Pupils behave well. They are polite and engage well in their learning.
- Children in the early years make good progress from their starting points and their outcomes are good.

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve safeguarding by:
 - ensuring that clear procedures are in place to ensure that all staff have training in child protection so that they are sensitive to signs that may indicate possible safeguarding concerns
 - establishing systems to ensure that policies and procedures are thorough and regularly reviewed to ensure that they comply with current legislation
 - ensuring that the progress of safeguarding concerns is meticulously and systematically recorded.
- Develop the curriculum to include more opportunity for pupils to gain an understanding of other cultures.
- Ensure that pupils develop an understanding of homophobic bullying.
- Ensure that teaching consistently provides challenge for pupils, particularly the most able.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. Leaders and the governing body have not made sure that procedures are in place to ensure that all staff have training in child protection. Some staff members caring for pupils over the lunchtime period, who have been in post since the autumn term, have not been provided with appropriate training. They are not equipped sufficiently well to know and understand the indicators that may suggest that a child is suffering or is at risk of abuse, neglect or harm.
- The governing body has not been vigilant in ensuring that the school's safeguarding policy reflects up-to-date legislation. Information and guidance for staff relating to a broad range of safeguarding issues, such as child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation, are absent from the policy. Therefore, the policy does not provide effective guidance for staff, including those who have not yet received relevant training.
- Leaders do not ensure that records relating to safeguarding concerns are systematically maintained. The quality of recording is variable. This means that, at times, records lack detail and it is unclear how issues have been followed up or a concern tracked to its conclusion. Therefore leaders are unable to track effectively whether procedures are followed vigilantly or relevant information is recorded appropriately.
- Leaders do not ensure that pupils' understanding of other faiths and beliefs is developed positively. Pupils develop a strong understanding of the Christian faith, and they learn to have compassion and respect for others. However, their knowledge of other cultures is too limited. This means that pupils are not prepared effectively for life in modern Britain.
- Since the last inspection, the headteacher, ably supported by his skilled and enthusiastic deputy headteacher and two assistant headteachers, has brought about improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. Thorough systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and promote the professional development of staff have been implemented well. As a result, the quality of teaching is now good.
- The school has been well supported by the local authority to improve teaching and learning. Links with a training school are also having a positive impact by enabling teachers to share ideas and improve their practice further.
- The curriculum provides a broad range of interesting and varied activities through which pupils' learning is developed effectively. Pupils' learning is enhanced further through a range of after-school activities such as cross-country, dance and gymnastics. The curriculum is less effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as it provides too few opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of different cultures.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to enhance the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Individual pupils receive extra help to improve their reading, writing and mathematical skills. This has led to an improvement in the attainment of this group of pupils; the gap between their achievement and that of other pupils nationally is narrowing.
- Leaders and governors use the sports premium funding effectively. Pupils benefit from the opportunity to represent the school in a range of competitions such as football, cricket and netball. Pupils' physical skills have been developed through weekly visits from a member of staff from a local sports college.
- The majority of parents shared positive views of the school via Parent View, parent text or through speaking with inspectors. A minority of parents expressed concern about how well the school is led and how well their concerns and incidents of bullying are dealt with. Inspectors did not find evidence that parental concerns were not addressed or that incidents of bullying were not dealt with appropriately.
- The school's website provides helpful information to parents and meets requirements.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance is not effective as governors have not been rigorous in their evaluation of the safeguarding systems and procedures that should be in place in the school. Consequently, systems for safeguarding are not effective.
 - The impact of the governors' work in other areas of the school is far more positive. The governing body has a good awareness of the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. Governors provide a good level of support and ask challenging questions to ensure that senior leaders are held to account.
 - Governors manage school finances well. They have a clear understanding of how teachers' performance is managed and ensure that the pupil premium and sports funding are used effectively.
- The school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching is good because staff provide interesting activities, which engage pupils' interest and enable them to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Since the last inspection, teachers have responded in a positive way to increased chances to further their teaching skills and knowledge. For example, skills in the teaching of writing have developed well through further training. A whole-school approach to teaching writing has been effective in ensuring that pupils' writing skills are positively promoted. Interesting prompts for writing, such as an 'alien' visit to school, engage pupils' interest and aid their progress.
- Pupils' reading and writing skills are developed well through other subjects. For example, Year 2 pupils excitedly read information from different sources about what living in a castle might have been like, and were keen to write about their findings.
- Staff have developed their use of marking and feedback and this is now effective in ensuring that pupils know how well they have done and what they may need to do to improve.
- Staff generally use what they know about pupils' skills and capabilities to plan activities that are well matched to their stage of development. At times, however, the tasks provided or the questions that staff ask do not provide sufficient challenge for pupils. On these occasions pupils, including the most able, do not make the progress of which they are capable. For example, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, pupils were asked to identify shapes that they were already familiar with and to count low numbers of shapes inside a Venn diagram.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well to support small groups and individuals so they make good progress in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate because safeguarding arrangements are not effective in ensuring that all adults working with children are sufficiently knowledgeable about how to identify safeguarding concerns.
- Pupils show a good awareness of some types of bullying and know how to protect themselves from internet bullying. They have insufficient awareness of homophobic bullying.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and most parents agree that their children are safe in school. However, the work of the school with regard to safeguarding is not rigorous enough.
- The school provides a warm and caring environment, where pupils benefit from positive relationships with staff and with each other.
- Pupils learn to care for others and to be respectful of each other's views. Older pupils are proud of their roles as 'special friends' to younger pupils in school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and welcoming and behave well in lessons and around school. The school is an orderly environment.
- Pupils know and understand the school rules and confidently stick to them. Pupils feel that they are listened to and any incidents that occur can be talked about with an adult and they will be dealt with.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to their learning. These make a strong contribution to their learning. They concentrate well in lessons. Very occasionally, where learning is not meeting their needs fully, some pupils lose interest and do not work as hard as they should.
- Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their good level of attendance and low levels of persistent absence.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Since the last inspection, pupils' outcomes have improved. From starting points which are below those typical for their age, pupils across almost all year groups make good progress.

- In 2015, pupils left Year 6 with standards that were broadly in line with national averages. This represented good progress in key stage 2 from starting points at the end of key stage 1 which were significantly below average. Evidence from pupils' books and the school's own assessment shows that currently pupils are working at least in line with the expectations for their age. Many are working at levels above this.
- Pupils make good progress in key stage 1 to reach standards that are in line with expectations for their age. Due to improvements in teaching, some pupils are now working at levels above expectation.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is effective, and is helping pupils to read with confidence and develop a love for reading. In 2015, most pupils achieved the expected level in the Year 1 phonics screening check. The school's records show that current pupils are achieving well, and the improvement in the development of their phonics skills is being sustained.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points, and the gaps between their achievement and that of their peers both nationally and in school are closing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are well supported, and most make good progress, in line with their peers.
- The most-able pupils generally make good progress, but where expectations are not high enough or where questioning does not effectively extend learning, their progress slows.
- Pupils' good progress and achievement helps to prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

Early years provision

is inadequate

- The provision for early years is inadequate because the school's safeguarding arrangements are not effective. The statutory welfare requirement that all staff must have training which enables them to identify the signs of possible abuse or neglect at the earliest opportunity is not met.
- Children make good progress in Nursery and Reception classes. From starting points which are below those typical for their age, the majority achieve a good level of development by the end of Reception year. Children are well prepared to start Year 1.
- Children thrive in the stimulating indoor environment provided. For example, Reception class children demonstrated a good level of concentration and motivation as they observed frogspawn and discussed how it becomes frogs, using a non-fiction book to help them.
- Outdoors, Nursery children excitedly built a 'robot' from plastic tubing, cooperating well together to do so. The outdoor area for Reception class does not provide a sufficiently stimulating environment for children, which means that learning is not always developed as well as it could be. Leaders are aware of this and have plans in place for improvement.
- Children behave well, and are secure in the routines of their class. They show care and consideration for each other as they offer to fill up each other's containers with water during water play.
- Children's interest in number and shape is developed effectively. Children showed a keen interest in number as they ordered numbered toy cars to 20. They understood that one number was missing. They happily recorded the number and names of shapes they had found in the outdoor area on a tally chart.
- Staff know children's capabilities well and provide a broad range of activities linked to their interests and understanding. They interact well with children to develop their learning, although at times they do not make the most of chances to extend children's learning further through questioning.
- The early years leader ensures that children's learning is closely monitored to identify gaps and ensure that all groups of children make good progress.
- Staff establish positive relationships with children, which promotes their self-esteem and confidence. Children show a strong sense of security and learn to use play equipment safely.
- Parents are well informed about their children's progress and are encouraged to contribute their own observations. Records of children's activities and progress are shared with them at parents evening and 'stay and play' sessions. This positive communication with parents contributes to children's good progress in learning.

School details

Unique reference number	105092
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10012092

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	446
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Annette Roberts
Headteacher	Paul Davenport
Telephone number	0151 6526781
Website	www.stjosephscatholicprimarybirkenhead.co.uk
Email address	schooloffice@stjosephs-birkenhead.wirral.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 January 2014

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average. Pupil premium is the additional government funding used to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals or who are looked after.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or a disability is below average.
- In 2015, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the last inspection, a new deputy headteacher and two assistant headteachers have been appointed.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning throughout the school. Three observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors scrutinised pupils' workbooks and listened to them read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the chair of the governing body and two other governors, the headteacher and other senior leaders. The inspectors also held a meeting with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information produced by the school, including information on pupils' progress and attainment, behaviour and attendance, procedures for safeguarding and the school's own evaluation of its work. They considered reports to the governing body, minutes of their meetings and the school's plans for further improvement.
- Inspectors considered the 68 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 21 parents who expressed their views via text messages to Ofsted.
- There were no responses to the online staff or pupil questionnaires to consider.

Inspection team

Elaine White, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Maureen Hints	Ofsted Inspector
Robert Lakin	Ofsted Inspector

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Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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