

St Joseph's Catholic Academy

Mill Lane, Hebburn, Tyne and Wear NE31 2ET

Inspection dates

30–31 January 2019

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
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- In recent years, considerable staffing disruption has had a negative effect on the school's effectiveness. By the end of Year 11, too few pupils have reached the standards of which they are capable.
- While many improvements are now underway, progress remains variable for pupils in key stages 3 and 4.
- On too many occasions, learning activities are not well matched to pupils' abilities. The work set by teachers for some pupils lacks challenge and does not stretch their thinking. Some pupils do not receive the support they need to achieve well.
- Although the majority of pupils behave well, a minority do not display positive attitudes to learning. The behaviour of these pupils can disrupt the learning of others.
- Leaders do not ensure that concerns raised by parents, carers and pupils about behaviour are dealt with promptly and consistently.
- Although improving, leaders have not fully addressed variability in the quality of teaching, particularly in key stages 3 and 4. Leaders have not ensured that examples of good practice are shared widely with staff.
- Some disadvantaged pupils do not attend school regularly.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, including governors, work systematically and with determination. They lead a committed and motivated staff who are beginning to improve the school.
- Leaders' checks on pupils' progress have helped to strengthen the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, pupils' achievement has improved in some areas, such as English at key stage 3.
- Most pupils show respect for each other and adults in school. The majority of pupils are keen to do their best.
- Leadership of the sixth form is strong. Effective teaching helps students to make good progress. Students acquire the personal skills and dispositions that they need to flourish. They are well prepared for the next steps in their education and training.
- Effective leadership and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) help them to make good progress.
- The school's arrangements to safeguard pupils are fit for purpose. Pupils indicate that they feel safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in key stages 3 and 4 so that pupils make consistently good progress by:
 - ensuring that the work set by teachers is more accurately matched to pupils' needs and builds on their prior learning
 - making sure that teachers swiftly identify when pupils are ready to move on in their learning and take prompt action to provide suitably challenging work
 - making sure that pupils are given more opportunities to use and apply their mathematics knowledge across the curriculum.
- Develop the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - making sure that the strongest teaching practice in school is shared with other staff so that the quality of teaching is more consistent
 - communicating effectively with pupils and families to address concerns over behaviour
 - ensuring that all pupils comply with the expectations of their behaviour set out in the school policy
 - working with families and agencies to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Over recent years, the school has experienced considerable instability in staffing and in leadership. This has affected the ability of the school to maintain a good quality of education. However, both staffing and leadership are now more secure and this is making a positive difference to pupils' experience of school. The executive headteacher, leadership team and staff are working with determination to effect change. The school is now improving. Despite this, leaders have not eradicated variability in the quality of teaching to enable all pupils to make good progress across key stages 3 and 4.
- The newly formed senior leadership team shares a common goal to do the best it can for all pupils. Leaders have set about establishing a calm and orderly environment where pupils are looked after and can achieve well. As a consequence, staff feel well supported and valued. Instances of serious misbehaviour and bullying have decreased rapidly in recent months. Some pupils, particularly in key stage 4, have not yet adjusted to the high expectations of behaviour that have been set. However, most pupils are positive about the changes that have been made.
- The effect of middle leaders' work is uneven. They do not ensure that the strong quality of teaching seen in some areas of the school is consistent across all subjects and year groups. Middle leaders are developing better skills to support and challenge teachers in their teams to improve their practice. These leaders are beginning to analyse pupils' learning and progress in greater detail so that they can take action to address gaps in pupils' learning. As a result, pupils are now beginning to make better progress than in recent years. However, many pupils, especially in key stage 4, still have more to do to make up lost ground.
- Leaders and governors have reviewed the way additional funding is used for disadvantaged pupils and those who need additional support in English and mathematics. This is beginning to improve learning for these pupils.
- Sharper monitoring of pupils' progress is helping to identify where pupils are falling behind and need additional support. These actions led to a rapid improvement in pupils' progress across the summer term in 2018 but progress overall at the end of Year 11 remained well below average. Similar approaches this year are supporting current pupils to address gaps in their learning.
- Leaders' strong focus on attendance is paying dividends. Attendance rates have improved and are in line with the national average. This contributes to pupils' safety. A small number of pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, still do not attend regularly enough.
- The school's personal, health, social and economic programme is well thought out. It provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to learn about people from different backgrounds. It ensures that pupils have ample opportunity to learn how to lead healthy lives and keep well emotionally. Pupils learn about democracy and their rights and responsibilities towards others. The wide range of extra-curricular activities

contribute to pupils' personal development effectively. Pupils are well prepared for life as young adults in modern Britain.

- The work of the school to meet the needs of pupils with SEND is effective. Pupils with SEND make good progress.
- Leaders have taken well-considered steps to refine the curriculum. They have ensured that the curriculum supports the increasingly large numbers who follow English Baccalaureate subjects. Programmes of study have been revised to ensure that progression in learning is planned. However, remaining variability in the quality of teaching and learning limits pupils' progress. The curriculum in the sixth form has been successfully adapted to better meet the needs and aspirations of students.
- The external support for the school provided through the diocesan education services and a local secondary school has brought about significant change. The governing body has been reformed. An executive headteacher and seconded head of school have been appointed, alongside a new senior management team. In order to stabilise staffing, a number of experienced teachers have been seconded to the school. These appointments have helped to accelerate the programme of improvement. As a result, leadership and management are strengthening but there is more to do to secure the step change in achievement needed to secure strong outcomes for pupils.

Governance of the school

- Previously, governors did not challenge leaders effectively. They did not address the decline in the quality of teaching that led to pupils making weaker progress. The new board of directors is providing much more effective support and challenge. There are early signs of improvement in pupils' attitudes and their learning. However, at this stage, improvement is not fast enough to compensate for the legacy of variable teaching and learning.
- Directors now focus more effectively upon pupils' personal development, safety and achievement. They have a more accurate picture of the school's performance, which they use to provide effective support and challenge. They work with external partners to gain objective insights into current standards. Governors' work with school leaders has ensured that policies are up to date and reflect the school's Catholic ethos.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Checks to make sure that only suitable adults work with pupils are carried out and recorded in a single central register. Directors make judicious use of external consultants to review and refine how the school works with others to keep pupils safe.
- Specialist safeguarding staff are well trained and ensure that all members of staff are kept up to date with information about safeguarding. Staff are vigilant for any signs of abuse or neglect. They know how to report any concerns they may have so that early help can be given where it is needed. Pupils say they feel safe.

- Safeguarding leaders are meticulous in following up any concerns that are raised. They work closely with a range of agencies and teams, such as social services, to keep pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan learning that largely engages and interests pupils. However, they do not consistently plan activities that stretch and deepen pupils' thinking. Sometimes, tasks are too easy and, at other times, too difficult. As a consequence, pupils' progress, although improving, remains uneven.
- Teachers make use of information about pupils' previous achievement to inform their lesson planning. However, they do not consistently offer well-targeted additional explanations to address pupils' misconceptions. At times, adults do not recognise when pupils are ready to be moved on to more challenging work.
- The strong practice evident in subjects such as English and physical education is not replicated elsewhere. The quality of teaching is variable.
- Periodic checks on pupils' progress are used to identify where pupils need extra support. This additional support helped pupils who were falling behind to make much better progress in 2018 by the end of key stage 4 compared to the previous year.
- Teachers in a range of subjects contribute to improving pupils' literacy and use of language. Pupils who read for inspectors showed that they could use phonics and comprehension strategies to make sense of texts and read fluently. Carefully chosen questions in citizenship ensured that pupils had an accurate understanding of key terminology. In the sixth form, discussion about the potential impact of pressure groups ensured that students could evaluate how governments make decisions. This helps pupils to prepare more effectively to answer examination-style questions.
- New schemes of learning are bringing a sharper focus on pupils' progress, including in mathematics. While there are clear signs of improving progress, pupils' books showed that this is not consistent enough across different year groups. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is less well developed than that of literacy and requires further improvement.
- Most teachers have high expectations of pupils' conduct during lessons and have established classroom routines in line with the whole-school policy. As a result, many pupils are ready learners who want to do well. However, a minority of pupils do not comply with these high expectations.
- Inspectors did not encounter examples of derogatory language during the inspection. The school's records show that teachers challenge any instances of stereotyping or misuse of language. Observations in lessons and around the school confirm that staff model the school values that promote respect for others.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Although the majority of pupils show respect for each other and the adults they work with in school, a minority do not.
- Some pupils do not apply themselves well enough to their learning. They do not respond consistently positively to staff's expectations of their conduct. Most pupils, however, grow in confidence and will attempt to complete tasks set for them. They contribute effectively to the orderly, calm environment witnessed by inspectors.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They are well supervised and staff are on hand to help them. Pupils' learning about the risks to their well-being, such as the misuse of drugs and alcohol and of digital technologies, helps keep them safe.
- Instances of bullying have decreased markedly but some persist. There has been a small number of bullying incidents over the recent months. The school gives clear messages about acceptable behaviour. These have been rigorously pursued and acted upon. A small proportion of pupils and some parents, however, are not convinced that the school acts promptly on their concerns. Records show that staff have resolved some long-standing parental concerns but also that responses to new parental queries are not addressed swiftly enough.
- Most pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. For instance, they know that bullying and discriminatory behaviour are unacceptable. Pupils know about the importance of respecting others who have different backgrounds from their own. They have frequent opportunities to learn about different religious beliefs and traditions.
- Pupils learn how to be healthy, both physically and emotionally, and their learning about healthy relationships helps keep them safe. The school's work to engage other appropriate teams, such as health and social teams, supports pupils' mental health well. Pupils support the wider community through their work for a number of charities.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- A minority of pupils occasionally display behaviours that disrupt others. While many pupils say attitudes to learning have much improved in recent months, they are not consistently strong, particularly among some older pupils.
- Records show that incidents of poor behaviour are reducing quickly, term by term, as the school's high expectations become the norm. However, there remain some instances of unacceptable behaviour which the school is addressing with pupils and parents. During the inspection, pupils' behaviour around the school at break and lunchtimes was positive. Most pupils enjoy their time together.
- Overall, far fewer pupils are regularly absent than was the case in recent years and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is below the national average. Most pupils attend very well. The school has worked effectively with pupils and families to

improve the overall attendance of pupils. It is currently slightly better than the national average. However, too many pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds do not attend school regularly enough.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In recent years, pupils' progress in English, mathematics and a wide range of subjects has been below average. Although there are signs of improvement, they are not secure, as the quality of teaching and learning remains variable.
- Performance information shows that pupils in Year 11 in 2018 made better progress through key stage 4 than those in Year 11 in 2017. Even so, pupils' progress was still not good. The rate of progress of current pupils in key stages 3 and 4 is beginning to improve. In some subjects, pupils' progress is good. In key stage 3 in English, for example, progress is increasingly strong.
- The additional support provided, particularly in Year 11, is helping pupils to close the gaps in their learning. Recent checks on pupils' progress show that a higher proportion of pupils are on track to achieve well than in recent years.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils overall is beginning to improve. However, their progress remains below that of other pupils nationally.
- When the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are given appropriately challenging work, their progress is strong across a range of subjects. However, in some areas of the curriculum and some year groups, teaching and learning are not strong enough to secure consistently good progress.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to practise and re-apply their mathematical skills and knowledge across the wider curriculum.
- Pupils with SEND are well supported. Staff plan learning that takes account of their needs. Leaders ensure that staff are aware of the support pupils need. Pupils make strong progress from their starting points.
- Most pupils develop effective reading skills. They read with fluency and intonation and are able to decode unknown words. The use of subject-specific vocabulary supports them well in reading effectively in a wider range of subjects. As a result, pupils are able to access subject content that supports their learning in other subjects.
- Pupils leave key stage 4 ready to begin their pathways for further education and training. Almost all pupils follow planned routes into the sixth form or further education at appropriate levels.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The sixth form is well led. Recent changes in leadership have brought a sharper focus to this part of the school's work. Leaders have high expectations of what students can and should achieve. They ensure that all the requirements of sixth-form provision are met and that the minimum standards for achievement are reached and exceeded.

- Leaders ensure that they work closely with the school's safeguarding team to ensure that students are kept safe.
- Leaders scrutinise and review the effectiveness of the curriculum to meet the needs and aspirations of students. They introduce new courses and remove those which are not suitable to ensure that students make good progress in their chosen subject areas.
- By ensuring strong teaching, for example in politics, leaders have secured significant improvement in outcomes for students. Progress is good overall and sustains the gains made in the previous academic year. Where progress was historically weaker, changes to courses and how they are delivered have been made promptly and are leading to stronger progress for current students.
- Students who need to improve their attainment in English and mathematics are well supported. Current students are making good progress.
- Leaders have rapidly improved the range and quality of careers guidance, ensuring that it is impartial and that it provides students with insight into the range of options that they have for further education, training and employment. Leaders also ensure that pupils who are in Year 11 receive appropriate guidance about the routes available to them. Almost all students leave the sixth form with firm routes for further study or training.

School details

Unique reference number	139878
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	10059093

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,133
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	143
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Geraldine Kilgour
Executive headteacher	Brendan Tapping
Telephone number	0191 428 2700
Website	www.stjosephs.uk.net
Email address	office@stjosephs.uk.net
Date of previous inspection	12–13 May 2015

Information about this school

- The school is a Roman Catholic academy. The school is currently the only member of St Joseph's Catholic Education Trust. The last section 48 inspection was conducted in May 2014.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is slightly below the national average. The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who come from White British backgrounds is above the national average.
- Since the previous inspection, an executive headteacher has been appointed to lead the school, together with a seconded head of school and a newly formed senior leadership team.

- A new board of directors took up the governance of the school in September 2017.
- A number of middle leaders, including for mathematics and English, have taken up post since the last inspection.
- The school is formally supported by a local secondary school and through the education services of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.
- The school does not make use of any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons. A range of pupils' work was scrutinised. This sample included the work of pupils of different abilities and from different year groups. Inspectors listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors talked with groups of pupils, both in meetings and informally around the site, including at break and lunchtime.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the head of school and senior leaders, those responsible for governance of the school, middle leaders, non-teaching staff and teachers who are at various stages in their career.
- Telephone discussions were held with the school's education development partner and a representative of the diocesan education service.
- The lead inspector received and considered one email from a parent alongside the 223 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors took into account responses from staff to Ofsted's inspection questionnaire.
- Inspectors considered a number of documents. These included the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching, other quality assurance records and minutes of governors' meetings. Inspectors scrutinised the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils.

Inspection team

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Joanne Owens	Ofsted Inspector
Catherine Garton	Ofsted Inspector
Shelley Heseltine	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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