

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101651
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	343739
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Robin Gaff

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Joan McConnell
Headteacher	Mrs Sharon Grange
Date of previous school inspection	30 June 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons, observing all eight teachers present in the school during the inspection at least once. Inspectors held meetings with staff, pupils, members of the governing body, and parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at planning and evaluation documents. They scrutinised the school's own analysis of pupils' attainment and progress. A total of 87 questionnaires completed by parents and carers were received and analysed, as were questionnaires completed by pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. Inspectors looked in detail at the following.

The effectiveness of measures taken by the school to improve pupils' progress, particularly that of boys and of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The extent of the school's success in improving the quality of assessment and the level of challenge in lessons for all groups of pupils.

The extent to which leaders and managers at all levels are successfully contributing to the drive for improvement.

The progress made by the governing body in ensuring that all statutory requirements are met.

Information about the school

St Joseph's is smaller than the average primary school. Children start this school in the Early Years Foundation Stage Reception class. Pupils are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, with the largest group being those of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language is smaller than that found nationally. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. These cover a range of additional needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. At its last inspection, in July 2009, the school was given a notice to improve since it was performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary is a good and rapidly improving school. Under the dedicated and determined leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by her deputy headteacher and other senior staff, the school has successfully addressed the weaknesses identified by the last inspection. Subject coordinators have helped to drive the improvement that has taken place in the curriculum and teachers' use of assessment. The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has continued to improve, so that children now make a good start to their education. The school has reversed the trend of declining attainment in Years 3 to 6. Pupils throughout the school, including boys as well as those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. This is because teachers now have a clear understanding of how well their pupils are doing, and plan activities which correspond to pupils' different levels of attainment, building on what they have already learned. Pupils' learning in mathematics and science is enhanced by a good range of practical activities in lessons. Most teachers' marking includes detailed comments which enable pupils to know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work. Occasionally, teachers do not check pupils' learning sufficiently during the course of lessons or give them enough opportunities to assess their own and each other's work.

Many parents and carers praise the school's caring, inclusive and welcoming ethos. One parent, whose comment was typical of many, said, 'St Joseph's provides a secure, caring learning environment which has nurtured a strong sense of self-assurance and a joy of learning in both our children.' Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are polite and welcoming towards visitors and considerate and helpful to one another. Older pupils show real care and concern for younger children when they join the Reception class, which, as many parents and carers testify, helps them to settle quickly and comfortably into school routines. Pupils from different backgrounds relate very well to one another. They report that they feel safe around the school because, as one pupil said, 'Everyone mixes well together and teachers are friendly and help us.' They have very few concerns about bullying. Pupils show they know what constitutes a healthy lifestyle through their participation in extra-curricular sport and their choice of wholesome options at lunchtime. They make a good contribution to the school community, for example as house captains or school council members, and to the wider community by raising money for local, national and international charities. Pupils' good achievement in English and mathematics, as well as the opportunities they have to develop group working and problem-solving skills, means they are well equipped for the next stage of their education and for future employment.

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The school has worked effectively with the local authority to monitor carefully and improve the quality of teaching. School leaders recognize that teachers would benefit from more opportunities to observe the outstanding practice in teaching and assessment that already exists within the school. The governing body has ensured that the school now meets all statutory requirements, including the duty to promote community cohesion. The school has strengthened its links with the local community and ensures that pupils learn about what life is like in other parts of the United Kingdom as well as the wider world. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is nurtured by the school's strong Catholic ethos. Opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding and appreciation of other faiths and traditions are more limited. Leaders have accurately evaluated the school's strengths, as well as what needs to be done for it to improve still further. This, together with the rapid strides the school has made in improving outcomes for its pupils, shows the school's good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the overall quality of teaching from good to outstanding by ensuring that all teachers:
 - give pupils more chances to assess their own and one another's work during lessons
 - check more regularly pupils' learning and progress during the course of lessons
 - benefit from observing examples of outstanding practice within the school.
 - Provide pupils with more opportunities to learn about the range of different faiths and traditions found in the United Kingdom and elsewhere in the world.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' attainment, as represented by their performance in national tests at the end of Year 6, has been broadly average but had declined in recent years. Provisional results of the tests held in 2010 show that attainment in English, mathematics and science rose substantially and confirm that pupils made good progress from their starting points. The school now assesses pupils' progress on a regular basis. It identifies potential underperformance early and provides additional support where appropriate. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as those who are learning English as an additional language, make good progress because they receive well-tailored support in lessons and in small group or one-to-one sessions. Pupils show very positive attitudes in the classroom. They listen to and learn from one another and respond quickly to teachers' requests and instructions. This means that most lessons proceed at a good pace and little time is wasted. Pupils particularly enjoy taking part in practical learning activities. For example, Year 2 pupils behaved very responsibly and developed their mathematical skills well when they identified and measured the shapes of different objects around the school. Pupils learn and progress more slowly in the few lessons when they do not have enough opportunities to demonstrate and to assess for themselves what they have learned.

Pupils' understanding of the need for and benefits of regular exercise is exemplified by the pride they take in gaining monthly awards for walking to school. They enjoy taking part in a range of games, such as skipping, in the playground where they play safely and sociably together despite the very limited space that is available. Pupils make a good contribution

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to the community beyond the school by, for example, taking part in concerts at local care centres, as well as raising money to support a school in Tanzania. They learn about life in that country by exchanging information with pupils there. They demonstrate their outstanding moral development through the way they embrace wholeheartedly the school's caring ethos and its 'Good to be Green' behaviour policy, which celebrates and rewards good behaviour.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teachers relate well to their pupils and have high expectations of them in terms of work and behaviour. They plan their lessons carefully to include a range of activities, including individual, paired and group work. Teachers use resources, such as interactive whiteboards well to enhance the visual impact of activities and the pace of lessons. In an outstanding literacy lesson, the teacher used the whiteboard effectively to model examples of good writing. She listened to and welcomed pupils' responses, using them to modify tasks as the lesson proceeded, enabling all groups of pupils to make excellent progress. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and make detailed comments which help them to understand what they need to do to improve.

The school's adoption of a more thematic approach to learning contributes to pupils' enjoyment and accelerating progress. For example, Year 5 pupils developed their problem-solving and negotiating as well as creative, numerical and descriptive skills, as they

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worked on commercial presentations for their own rock bands. The school organises successful enterprise-related events with a local sixth-form college. Cooperation with other local schools enables pupils to benefit from additional sporting activities, including fencing. Pupils enjoy taking part in a good range of after-school clubs, although they say they would like to have more opportunities to participate in competitive sporting events.

Systems for ensuring that transitions to, within and from the school are effective. Teachers liaise closely with one another when pupils move up to the next year group, and with early years providers and secondary schools when pupils are preparing to join or leave the school. Parents and carers are kept closely involved in the process through, for example 'Welcome' meetings, which enable them to meet their children's new teachers early in the autumn term. The school works effectively with a range of outside agencies to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, especially those with complex additional needs, receive appropriate support. It has now begun to evaluate in detail the impact which this support is having on pupils' progress and well-being.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders at all levels are united in their common purpose to improve provision and outcomes for pupils. Staff morale is high. One teaching assistant said, 'The staff are very team orientated and we all work together extremely well. I feel that my opinion is always valued.' This comment was typical of those made by teachers as well as support staff. The governing body has undergone major changes in recent years, which have enhanced its ability to set the school's strategic direction, monitor its performance and hold the leadership team to account. It has ensured that all required policies are in place and has been proactive in developing partnerships in the community, including with local businesses. This has resulted in more resources being made available to the school. The school strongly promotes equality of opportunity, emphasizing how each individual is equally valued. It has fully implemented policies aimed at tackling discrimination, for example with regard to provision for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has robust procedures for safeguarding children. It ensures that all staff receive appropriate child-protection training and carry out risk assessments, for example when taking pupils on trips and visits. Leaders have improved the security of the school premises. The school's promotion of community cohesion is much more effective than at the time of the last inspection. The governing body has carried out a full audit of the school's context and has implemented plans which address the needs that have been identified. Links have been established with schools in different parts of the United Kingdom, which enables pupils to appreciate the diversity of ways of life in this country.

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School leaders acknowledge the need to ensure that pupils have more first-hand opportunities to increase their understanding of different faiths and traditions.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Parents and carers say their children settle quickly into the Reception class and are eager to come to school. Children enjoy taking part in a good range of indoor and outdoor activities, including well-supervised visits to the local park and library. Staff carefully observe their progress and use their observations to plan activities which meet individual learning needs. Children make good progress in both learning and development from their starting points, which have risen to above age-related expectations. By the end of Reception in 2009, children's attainment was above average in all areas of learning. This represents considerable improvement since the school was given a notice to improve, but has not yet had time to have had a marked impact on pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6. Nevertheless it provides a strong basis for future development. Children learn to link sounds to letters and practise their emergent reading and writing skills by recognizing the names of familiar objects and signing their own 'self-portraits'. They begin to understand the importance of regularly drinking water and eating fruit. Children behave very well and play safely and cooperatively on wheeled toys in the restricted outdoor space. They enjoy good opportunities for messy and creative play, for example, painting with coloured bubbles. Staff provide children with good quality resources for imaginative play, including dressing-up costumes. These are well maintained but do not reflect a wide range of different cultures. Leaders show they understand the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They work well with parents and carers, as well as with pre-school playgroups, to ensure that children's individual needs are identified and well catered for.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire was broadly in line with that found nationally. Most are satisfied with their children's rate of progress, and with how the school meets their particular needs, although a few disagree. Many parents and carers commented positively on the way the school cares for and supports their children. A very small minority of the questionnaires received included critical comments, for example concerning the way the school responds to suggestions and concerns. Inspectors, where appropriate, followed these up with the headteacher. A very large majority of parents and carers are happy with their children's experience of the school and with most if not all aspects of its performance.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 87 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 213 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	70	26	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	61	70	24	28	2	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	38	44	42	48	4	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	43	44	51	3	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	40	46	45	52	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	40	46	41	47	5	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	46	53	34	39	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	39	45	34	39	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	47	32	37	7	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	53	30	34	6	7	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	44	34	39	4	5	5	6
The school is led and managed effectively	47	54	34	39	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	53	61	27	31	2	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



11 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Bromley BR1 3JQ

Thank you very much for welcoming the inspectors when we visited your school. We all enjoyed meeting you and listening to what you had to say.

You enjoy school and you make good progress from your starting points. You learn well, especially when you are given the chance to assess your own and each other's work. We think you would do even better if some teachers checked your learning more during lessons. You behave extremely well both in lessons and around the school. You say you feel safe there and that you are not worried about bullying. You understand about healthy lifestyles. Many of you contribute to the school by taking on posts such as house captains, or by helping younger children as Guardians. You gain good problem-solving and other skills which will help you in later life. You make a good contribution to the wider community, for example, by raising money for children in Africa. You learn a lot about the Catholic faith and about different lifestyles in Britain and around the world, but we think you should have more opportunities to learn about other religions and traditions.

The school is developing interesting ways for you to learn by giving you practical activities in lessons, and organising special events with secondary schools. Teachers and other staff help you to settle in well when you join the school. They take good care of you and you know who to go to if you need help.

The headteacher, her senior team, all the staff and the governing body work hard to help everyone to do well. We have asked them to make the school even better by:

'helping you to make even faster progress by checking more often on your learning in class and giving you more chances to do the same.'

'giving you more opportunities to learn about different religions and traditions.'

We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Robin Gaff

Lead inspector

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