

St Joseph's Catholic Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100853
Local Authority	Southwark
Inspection number	276406
Inspection dates	27–28 September 2006
Reporting inspector	Ian Wilson

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Sean Smith
Headteacher	Mr Joseph Shevlin
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 1999
School address	Pitman Street Camberwell London SE5 0TS
Telephone number	02077033455
Fax number	02072771353

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized school that serves a diverse and disadvantaged area. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is very high, the largest group being Black African, and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is above average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with very significant strengths. It has a strong family and Catholic ethos, in which relationships and the behaviour of pupils are excellent. Pupils are happy, enjoy learning and develop confidence and self-esteem. This ethos is a real strength of the school and develops pupils very well socially, emotionally and spiritually. Parents are overwhelmingly pleased with the school.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory which reflects the progress they make from the time they start in the school to when they leave in Year 6. Where the most additional support and intervention is provided, as in Year 6, progress is good. Pupils with learning disabilities or difficulties as well as pupils with low levels of competency in English are well supported and make good progress. By the time pupils leave the school standards are broadly average but with pupils generally achieving better in English than in mathematics and science.

Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but there is quite a high proportion of good teaching as well. Teachers are very good at motivating pupils and managing their classes. Lessons are well planned but activities sometimes lack challenge for the more able. Appropriate emphasis is placed on helping pupils understanding of language, for example in terms and words used in mathematics and this has had a beneficial effect on their progress. The progress of some pupils in mathematics is inhibited by their lack of understanding of basic skills, such as mathematical tables, and these need to be taught more rigorously.

The quality of care, guidance and support provided by the school is good. Pupils feel safe and free from bullying. Those who are at risk are supported very effectively, with good use being made of outside specialists. Similarly, pupils' emotional needs are dealt with sensitively enabling them to concentrate on their learning. Pupils' academic progress is monitored but not sufficiently well yet to ensure that no pupil falls behind in their learning. Targets set are not always sufficiently challenging. The school premises are well maintained and provide a pleasant working environment for pupils. Together with a good and interesting curriculum, they contribute to making learning enjoyable for pupils.

Overall leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership and has a clear vision for the development of the school. Middle leaders have a good understanding of the main strengths and weaknesses of the school, but have not had sufficient involvement in monitoring standards and pupils' progress in their subjects. All the issues raised in the last inspection have been dealt with effectively, action taken to improve standards during the last twelve months has been successful and the school has a good capacity to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- * Ensure that teachers consistently challenge more able pupils in order to accelerate progress and raise standards, especially in mathematics and science.
- * Ensure that pupils' progress is monitored rigorously in order to set sufficiently challenging targets.
- * Develop the role of subject leaders in monitoring standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' arrive at the school with average standards in English, mathematics and science. Their achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average by the time they move on to secondary school. Pupils' attainment dropped to below average in 2005 in mathematics and science but careful analysis of test results enabled the school to identify areas of weakness and take effective action leading to an improvement in 2006. As a result, pupils generally meet their targets and make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Attendance is satisfactory and the school has good systems to maintain and try to improve attendance. All pupils enjoy being at school and value their education. 'This school is the best school in the world' was a comment made by one pupil. The strong family and Catholic ethos in the school provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, personal and cultural development and reflects in the behaviour of pupils, which is outstanding.

Pupils have good opportunities to develop responsibility, including, being monitors or being members of the school council. Members play an important role in the school and have helped bring about a range of improvements, such as starting a system of playground 'buddies' and a bar to sell fresh fruit at break times. Pupils know about the importance of healthy lifestyles and being safe. They develop satisfactory skills in literacy and numeracy and are competent users of information and communications technology (ICT). This, together with their good learning habits, their self confidence and interpersonal skills prepares them well for secondary school and beyond.

Pupils make a very positive contribution to the community. Food and produce from the harvest festival are provided for homeless people and the school raises funds for several charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but there is quite a high proportion of good teaching too. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons, work hard and try to do their best. They maintain concentration well, listening carefully when the teacher is talking to the whole class and getting on with tasks, when they are working individually or in groups. Their behaviour in lessons is excellent.

All classes have pupils with a wide range of attainment and levels of language competency. Teachers are good at using a variety of approaches to help all pupils understand what is taught, taking into account the varied language needs of pupils. They provide activities that are suitable for most pupils but these sometimes lack challenge for the more able, particularly in maths and science. All classes benefit from some extra help from teaching assistants and they make a valuable contribution to supporting pupils who find learning difficult or lack understanding.

Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Some marking gives pupils guidance on how to improve and indicates how pupils got on with tasks but sometimes it is mainly an acknowledgement of work done.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provided by the school is good. It is broad and balanced and generally meets the needs of pupils. Many pupils require help with language development and the curriculum provides well for this and these pupils achieve well. The teaching of French in years 5 and 6, supported by visits to France, also helps develop language skills. Skills in ICT are developed well through the teaching of keyboard skills to younger pupils and regular use of ICT by all pupils. There are good links between subjects, for example, English and ICT and this leads to good reinforcement of skills in both areas. The school identified correctly the need to provide more help for pupils in mathematics and science in areas such as problem solving and investigations and changes to the curriculum are leading to improvements in pupils' knowledge and understanding in these subjects.

The curriculum helps promote healthy lifestyles through its provision for physical education and sport and through the personal, social and health education programme. Pupils' personal development is also enhanced through regular visits including residential trips. It helps develop wider interests through its very strong provision for music. The curriculum is enhanced well by the many extra curricular activities including drama, dance, gardening and ICT clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good and a strength of the school. It contributes very effectively to pupils' positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils settle in well when they transfer from the infant school and throughout the school they feel safe and free from bullying. Pupils who are at risk are identified and very well supported by school staff and by outside specialists where necessary. 'Our teachers help us and look after us' was a very typical view of pupils. The school works very well with parents. Arrangements for child protection, carrying out risk assessments and vetting staff are secure. Arrangements for the administration of medicines, dealing with injuries and recording accidents are good. Arrangements to monitor pupils' academic progress and set targets are developing, but are not yet sufficiently rigorous. The school supports pupils well in making the transition to secondary school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership and is well supported by his recently appointed deputy. This has helped create a team of staff that is highly motivated and enjoys its work and this strongly underpins the good ethos in the school. Daily routines are well established and the school runs very smoothly. Curriculum leaders have not been sufficiently involved in monitoring pupils' attainment and progress in their subjects.

There are sound procedures for the monitoring and performance management of all teachers, but these do not yet link well enough into setting challenging targets for pupils. Staff are well deployed to ensure that each is working to his or her strengths whilst developing further

professional skills. A strength of the leadership and management is the way that it helps all pupils to access the curriculum regardless of differences in age, ability, gender, ethnicity and learning difficulties or disabilities. Access is facilitated also by the good resources and well kept accommodation.

The issues raised in the last inspection have been dealt with and the effective implementation of priorities in the school improvement plan has also led to improvements. The school has a good capacity to continue to improve.

Governors are committed to the school. They ensure that the school meets statutory requirements and manages its resources effectively. They are kept well informed and are aware of the school's main strengths and weaknesses.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

You may remember that two inspectors recently came to visit your school. We really enjoyed our visit and meeting you, your teachers and other people who work in the school. We are writing to let you know what we found out.

Firstly, we would like to say that it is, very clearly a happy school and we were very impressed with the way everyone gets on well together and with your behaviour, which we thought was excellent. We think that the school is very good at developing you as a person, which is really important for later life, and this reflects strongly the Catholic traditions in the school.

You work hard and learn well. You do best in English and your results in mathematics and science are getting better. It is clear that your teachers help you to all make satisfactory progress but your progress in mathematics is sometimes held back because you need to understand and learn some of the basic things better such as your times tables. We think that more of you could be aiming a bit higher and one of our suggestions for improvement is for the school to help you do even better, especially in mathematics and science.

Finally, we think that your school is well run by your headteacher and that you are very well looked after by your teachers and other staff. We think that those of you who need extra help or have extra needs are given the support and help you need. The school does check on how well you are doing, but we have suggested that the school needs to do this more frequently and set higher targets to aim for.

Yours sincerely

Ian Wilson

Lead inspector