

St Joseph's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100496
Local Authority	Kensington and Chelsea
Inspection number	307406
Inspection dates	22–23 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Sue Rogers

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Claudia Childs
Headteacher	Mrs Anne J Spragg
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2003
School address	Cadogan Street London SW3 2QT
Telephone number	020 7589 2438
Fax number	020 7581 9489

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St. Joseph's is an average sized primary school. All the pupils are members of the Roman Catholic faith. The school serves an urban area of above average prosperity that contains significant pockets of deprivation. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average and the number of pupils who need extra support with their English is high. Recruitment of staff is difficult in this area. The school has achieved Healthy School status, the Activemark and the Basic Skills Quality Mark. An extensive rebuilding project is currently underway.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils achieve above average standards in their work and do exceptionally well in their personal development. The strong catholic ethos and excellent relationships underpin all that the school does. As a result, parents and pupils are very positive about their experiences. One parent exemplified this by saying, 'St. Joseph's is a wonderful school where the children seem happy and well adjusted'. Pupils are very keen to come to school because they feel well cared for and enjoy their lessons. Both parents and pupils also value the strong leadership of the headteacher. They say that they are happy because she is kind and recognise that she is firmly focused on improving pupils' progress.

Pupils enter the school in the Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are weaker than would normally be expected of children at this age. Their English skills are especially poor because a large proportion of pupils come from backgrounds where English is not the first language. They do well because of good, lively provision that has a strong emphasis on speaking and they enter Year 1 working at levels that are generally in line with expectations in most areas of learning. However, they are still a little below expectations in aspects of English and mathematics. Progress across Key Stage 1 is consistently good, reflecting teaching that is excellent at times. Progress in Key Stage 2 has been less even, because teaching has been more variable, but this is now improving. Ensuring that work is always well matched to pupils' abilities is rightly a focus for improvement. Very strong teaching in Year 6 ensures that pupils' achievement is good overall by the time they leave the school. The curriculum is well-planned and interesting.

Excellent care and participation in assemblies that are reflective and moving, contribute to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Behaviour is good throughout the school and pupils are very good at looking after each other. Attendance remains average compared with similar schools because parents continue to remove their children for holidays in term time, even though the school discourages this practice. Pupils make outstanding progress in learning about health and safety and make a good positive contribution to the community through their charity work in the parish. Their good basic skills are useful preparation for the next stages in their education.

The headteacher has worked hard over recent years to recruit more staff and she is well supported by a very capable senior leadership team. Between them school leaders have excellent knowledge of individual pupils through assessment tracking and of each member of staff through observation and discussion. They are, therefore, effective in providing support for development at all levels. However, the team do not analyse the information they hold in sufficient depth, or monitor with a sharp enough focus, to ensure that provision is of a consistently high standard. The work of the governing body has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. The governors are supportive and understand the schools strengths and weaknesses but they do not yet track school improvement systematically enough to be able to challenge as effectively as they should.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Pupils now get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage, as there has been good improvement of provision in the reception and nursery classes since the last inspection. The Foundation

Stage leader is working very effectively with a member of the senior leadership team to improve resources further, especially in the outdoor areas. Assessment is good and the information gathered is used to make sure that children are making good progress through well-planned opportunities to talk in realistic settings such as the role-play 'office'. Children behave exceptionally well and enjoy their activities so they concentrate hard. At times, however, there are missed opportunities to consolidate learning, by asking children working independently to talk about what they are doing. Parents appreciate the schools' efforts to encourage them to come into school and more are taking the opportunity to work with their children on school projects, such as participating in reading groups.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that work is always well matched to pupils' abilities.
- Raise the quality of provision to the highest standard through more rigorous monitoring and evaluation by all leaders and the governing body.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Test results at the end of Year 2 have shown a gradual improvement over recent years and in 2007 they were above average. Results for Year 6 dipped from above average to average in 2007. The school carried out a detailed analysis, which showed that a few boys had underachieved, despite extra support. They therefore began a new, more coordinated inclusion initiative, which is now providing earlier targeted assistance where need is identified. Currently pupils in Year 6 are making good progress and standards are on course to return to above average. All groups of pupils now make good progress as they move through the school, but until recently progress has been uneven in Key Stage 2. The school has investigated the reasons for this and has focused on aspects of writing and mathematics. The impact of their work is now visible, as observations show that pupils are making good progress in more lessons this year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Parents recognise that pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils are very happy at school, inquisitive and extremely enthusiastic. They feel very safe and say that bullying is rare. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The schools' external awards confirm pupils' excellent knowledge of how to keep healthy including understanding healthy eating and the need to keep active.

Pupils develop a good awareness of their future economic well-being through fund raising, good group work and Information Communication Technology (ICT) skills. Confident members of the school council make important decisions about the school community and they have a good understanding of democracy and appreciate the responsibility they have been given.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good overall. As a pupil explained, 'Teachers are very clever and helpful, they teach you great things. It's so exciting'. Teachers have excellent relationships with the pupils and make their expectations for both learning and behaviour clear at the beginning of lessons. Lessons are generally well-planned, and the school has recognised that there are occasions where the work set for the pupils is not matched well enough to their abilities. Teachers question pupils well and engage them with exciting techniques such as 'hot seating' and role-play, which help them to explore their views and make learning relevant. Assessment is often used well to inform future teaching plans, but this practice is not entirely consistent. Marking, whilst frequently good, is also variable in offering advice on how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good because it is broad and balanced and uses innovative ideas to ensure challenge and excitement in learning. For example, Year 6 children described what they called a thrilling experience with a circus workshop, which developed new skills and the confidence to perform. Work for vulnerable pupils and those who find learning hard, is well-planned and is successfully overseen by the inclusion manager. Inclusion programmes seamlessly draw together the skills of the school staff in tandem with the many experts and agencies that support the school.

Curriculum issues identified in the previous report have been effectively addressed. Geography is now well planned, ICT provision has improved significantly and design and technology has been linked closely to ICT to give pupils real life design situations. The school effectively uses a national scheme to promote life skills, which links closely to personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship. The school has been concentrating recently on developing cross-curricular skills. For example, more and more opportunities are taken to introduce new vocabulary and to use mathematics in the wider curriculum to secure pupils' understanding of their future economic well-being. However, similar links are less developed in other subjects.

A few parents are concerned that the new building development work restricts exercise facilities at present. The school recognises this and the use of alternative spaces is being negotiated with local schools.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The commitment and teamwork of the whole staff has created a safe place for learning, enabling all pupils to flourish and parents to feel well supported. Care of pupils is excellent and they are happy to approach adults in the school to help solve problems. At present, peer-mediators appointed by the school council are beginning to train to give additional support to pupils around the school. Academic guidance is good in some classes but inconsistencies in feedback, marking and individual target setting mean that some pupils in the school are better informed than others about what they need to do to improve. A new system used by class teachers and supported by the inclusion manager ensures that pupils at risk are closely monitored. Regular meetings with parents support the progress of these pupils and boost their confidence.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good. As a result, there have been improvements in the work of the governing body, the management of the Foundation Stage, the teaching of ICT and the planning of the curriculum, since the last inspection. The school's capacity to improve still further is consequently good.

Improvements in the use of assessment have been especially noteworthy, although there are still minor inconsistencies in teaching and assessing because monitoring is not always sharply focused. Consequently, there is a tendency to work with individuals, when it would be more efficient to work with the whole staff. Leaders work very well together and are well informed, but there is not enough incisive analysis of pupil information to enable the school to spot trends in progress at an early stage. The headteacher has worked very hard to build her team and move the school forward in the face of staff mobility.

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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	2
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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

05 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's RC Primary School, London, SW3 2QT

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school this week. You were very helpful and polite and we very much enjoyed talking to you. You were all very good ambassadors for your school.

We were especially pleased to see how much you all enjoy school and how well you do in your lessons. We believe you go to a good school and that all your teachers and other staff do a good job. We agree with you that your lessons are exciting and interesting. Because of this, you make good progress and usually have above average test results when you leave in Year 6. Your social skills are excellent and your behaviour is good. We especially like the way the staff look after you and you all look after each other. Your spiritual education is outstanding. Your health and safety education is excellent and the school council are effective in carrying out their role.

Although all the teachers work hard, we think that a few of the lessons in some classes are not quite as good as other lessons that are taught in the school. Therefore, we have asked the school to try to make sure that all lessons are equally good. Your headteacher does a very good job and so do all the teachers that help to manage the school. However, we think that sometimes they and the governors could make changes happen a little more quickly. We have asked them to look at ways of doing this. Some of you take holidays in term time. When you do it is often difficult to catch up the work you have missed.

We think that tackling these things will help your school to be even more successful.

Many thanks again for your help.

Best wishes

Sue Rogers

Lead Inspector