

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101651
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	307767
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Wendy Simmons

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	207
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Joan McConnell
Headteacher	Mrs Sharon Grange
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Plaistow Lane Bromley BR1 3JQ
Telephone number	020 8460 1976

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2009
Inspection number	307767

Fax number

020 8466 7508

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is average in size and educates pupils who are almost all from the Catholic faith. Within this, their cultural backgrounds are wide-ranging. The largest groups are those from White British heritages and other White backgrounds. The next largest groups are from Black African, mixed race or Asian heritages. Very few pupils are at the early stage of learning English. Most of these pupils are confidently speaking English when they join the school. Few pupils receive free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average but is increasing as the school has become better at identifying those who need extra support. Where pupils do have difficulties, these relate to a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils join the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage Reception class.

The school has had a significant number of recent staffing difficulties. The local authority appointed an executive headteacher between January and July 2008. A new deputy headteacher joined the school in April 2008 and shortly after, in September 2008, the current headteacher was appointed.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' achievement.

St Joseph's is a welcoming and happy school that has been through a very difficult time since it was last inspected in May 2005. The school is beginning to emerge well from a period when things were not as good as they should have been but there is still more to do.

By the end of Year 2, standards of work are above average and have been at this level for several years and continue to be high. By the end of Year 6, standards were also securely above average between 2006 and 2008. However, the proportion of pupils attaining the nationally expected Level 4 this year has dropped and is close to the national figure for 2008. This partly reflects the fact that there is a higher than average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties in this year group. Since 2007 there has been a considerable amount of underachievement in Key Stage 2. Pupils have not been doing well enough in writing, mathematics and science. They are beginning to catch up as the quality of teaching and learning has improved. For example, a greater proportion of pupils is likely to attain the higher levels in English and mathematics in Year 6 this year. Nonetheless, in Key Stage 2 overall, too many pupils are still underachieving due to the legacy of very slow progress in the past. In English, mathematics and science the school did not meet its targets in 2009.

Staff are caring and very committed to their pupils. Leadership is satisfactory and focused clearly on improving pupils' progress and learning, so that they are better prepared for their future economic well-being. The very dedicated headteacher is leading improvements well. She is effectively supported by the deputy headteacher and governors. Accurate self-evaluation ensures that the improvement plan is focused on what needs to be done to move forward. There is a satisfactory capacity to continue improving. In addition to the points already noted, the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching and learning and the care of pupils have all improved and are satisfactory. There are more clubs and activities for pupils to enjoy. The school has maintained the often good progress at Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. Parents have confidence in the school and they value the new leadership team, saying such things as, 'Things have really settled down with greater leadership'. A few parents would like the school to listen to their views and suggestions more, but they confirm that the school is improving.

Teaching, learning and the curriculum are satisfactory. Some teachers give good lessons which are challenging and lively, and occasionally there is some outstanding practice. However, there is not enough of this to accelerate progress even further. Relationships are good. The academic guidance given to pupils is satisfactory but not all teachers are secure in assessing pupils' skills and levels of attainment and thus the progress data is not always accurate.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Within this, their spiritual awareness is strong. Pupils gain important social skills and successfully adopt safe and healthy lifestyles. They mostly behave well but a few are not as kind to others as they might be. Pupils make a positive and increasing contribution to the local community. Governors are working to improve community cohesion, but they have not yet evaluated their work on this well enough, as it has not been a

main priority. Although this needs improving, the school is moving in the right direction and is very clear about the next steps of their journey to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The school and the local authority judged the provision to be inadequate in September 2008. Since then, as a result of satisfactory leadership, teaching has improved and it is now satisfactory. Parents commented that 'there is visible improvement'. The organisation of the learning environment allows children greater independence and there is a suitable balance between learning activities indoors and out. Children have fun and often make decisions for themselves, as was evident when four children worked cooperatively, showing great perseverance, when making their own flags. A suitable range of options enables children to understand what they are learning about. For example, they used a range of resources to develop their counting skills. Children enjoyed looking at the hatching butterflies and they have written their own diaries about the butterflies' life cycle. They enjoy stories, listen attentively and show very well-developed speaking skills. They are learning about the world and found out about life in Jamaica through such things as the story of Anansi, making music in the style of Bob Marley and by finding out about carnival.

Children are well cared for and happy at school. Standards by the end of their Reception Year have improved in the last year and are higher than expected for their age. Considering children's starting points, this shows satisfactory progress. The teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) shows a marked improvement. Children speak very confidently and generally read well. They write for a range of purposes and can do some simple calculations, but although the activities are adequate, they sometimes lack challenge to extend the most-able children. Also, there is room for more children to widen their knowledge and understanding of the world, so that more reach the very highest levels in this aspect of their learning. As there is a high proportion of inquisitive and able children, these aspects are important areas for further development. A specialist Foundation Stage leader has been appointed to start from September 2009.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement between Years 3 and 6, especially in writing, mathematics and science.
- Ensure that more teaching is at least good in the school as a whole.
- Make sure that all teachers are equally skilled at assessing pupils' skills, level of work and their progress.
- Ensure that governors and leaders audit and evaluate the quality of their work on community cohesion, so that they can plan developments for the future.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards are higher than average by the end of Year 2. Pupils do especially well in Year 1, where expectations are very high and work is well organised and challenging; this helps pupils to learn new things very quickly. They make further secure progress in Year 2, although higher-attaining pupils could be doing better in writing and science. A significant number reach the higher levels in their reading and a good proportion reach this level in mathematics.

Standards between 2006 and 2008 were above average in English and mathematics and average in science. However, even though standards were above average by the end of Year 6 in 2008,

pupils of different abilities, especially those of higher ability and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, had made uneven progress as they moved through Key Stage 2; there was considerable underachievement. This year, as a result of satisfactory teaching and better support, pupils are beginning to catch up and some have made good progress, but there is still too much underachievement because of very slow progress in the past. The most-able pupils are not always reaching high enough levels in mathematics, science and writing. In science, the lack of helpful assessment information and limited challenge slows their progress. Although pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are beginning to do better, their progress could be better still. The unvalidated national test results for 2009 show that the proportion of pupils reaching average levels has fallen compared with past years; this partly reflects the higher number of pupils with learning difficulties in this year group. However, overall too many pupils are not yet reaching their targets at the end of Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy school, as was evident in their good attendance and comments such as, 'Everyone knows each other in this small school and it's nice'. They like their teachers and enjoy the extra activities, which contribute to their growing self-esteem, their skills and adoption of healthy lifestyles. Pupils take part in a wide range of sports including lacrosse, tennis and tag rugby. They are very clear about how to make healthy packed lunches and know about the importance of drinking water and 'five a day'. Pupils enjoy musical activities and are enthusiastically working on a production of *The Lion King*. In particular, pupils develop a strong spiritual awareness through interesting assembly themes, prayers and musical productions. They explained that, 'We explore different people's ways of believing'. They spoke sensitively about their recent First Holy Communion ceremony. Pupils sing with confidence and regularly share their talents with the community. Their lively singing of 'We Shall Go Out with Joy' was very moving. Pupils raise funds for a school in Tanzania. Most pupils behave well and they commented that 'everyone is usually kind'. However, there has been some bullying, which pupils find upsetting. There have also been a few racial incidents which the school has taken seriously. Pupils develop well socially and are confident in their communication skills and ability to work with others. However, some pupils are not yet achieving well enough to assure their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

When the headteacher arrived, she worked with the local authority to assess the quality of teaching and learning; they found too much that was inadequate. This has improved well as a result of better planning, higher expectations and effective training. Although teaching and learning are now satisfactory, there is not enough good teaching and learning to lift progress more rapidly. Nonetheless, there is some good teaching and an occasional outstanding lesson. Pupils like their teachers and value the work that they do for them. They say that lessons are interesting. Teachers use electronic technology, such as whiteboards, effectively to liven up and engage pupils during lessons. Interesting workshops make learning fun. For example, pupils learn much about the Vikings by dressing up, weaving and looking at artefacts. Pupils work together effectively to discuss ideas and enjoy helping each other to evaluate their work. A Year 1 pupil reflected on her partner's work and said, 'I thought it was good when he used different adjectives each time.' Pupils particularly enjoy lessons that are practical such as in

mathematics, science, geography and history, but work in these lessons is not always sufficiently challenging for the most-able pupils. In the best lessons teachers set very clear challenges for pupils' wide-ranging needs and capabilities. Opportunities for extended writing are increasing, but teachers miss the chance to modify their planning to help pupils build on work from day to day, so that they edit and improve their work within lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum and this is enriched by a growing range of visits. The have recently visited London Zoo and enjoyed a camping trip in Downe. Work is planned so that pupils have fun and learn about how to be safe and healthy. For example, they know about the dangers of drugs. Science is taught in all year groups every half term but pupils do not record enough of their science work so that they demonstrate how they are gaining new skills and knowledge. Pupils enjoy geography but this subject is not taught regularly enough to ensure pupils gain a secure understanding of the subject. Senior leaders recognise that some classes do not do enough science work and pupils are not doing sufficient real-life problem-solving in mathematics. The school is widening pupils' understanding of different cultures, as was evident in their Japanese day. The range of out-of-school clubs and activities is extensive. These include a variety of sports and French as well as art and dance. Over 130 pupils attend at least one club. Good opportunities are provided to help pupils develop into well-rounded citizens.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Under the new headteacher, safeguarding requirements have improved greatly and are now robust. There are suitable procedures for dealing with pupils who feel unwell and useful policies and new procedures to help them follow the behaviour rules. Mostly, pupils are happy about these, although some feel that the playtime detention system is unfair. Staff listen to pupils about their worries and the playtime detention system will be reviewed shortly. Anti-bullying and racism policies are all now in place, but procedures for dealing with any incidents are not sufficiently clear to ensure consistency. Until Easter 2008, many pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities had not been identified or sufficiently supported. As a result of a thorough review, this has improved well and appropriate programmes of support have been put into place. These programmes are reviewed verbally among staff and parents, but the findings are not always recorded formally. The school makes good links within the local authority and health services to help and support pupils as necessary. Targets are set for pupils in literacy, numeracy and science; they are mostly suitably challenging, except in science.

Improved assessment procedures ensure that pupils who have underachieved are identified, so that support can be provided. The tracking of pupils' progress is developing well, but a few teachers are not yet accurate enough in their assessments of pupils' levels and skills. Occasionally this makes some data about progress inaccurate. Teaching assistants provide good support. Some teachers mark pupils' work well, although this is not consistent enough to ensure pupils know how to improve. Work in books is sometimes very neat but in others it is poorly presented.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

There is a strong sense of purpose about the leadership of the school and teamwork is very good. Governors noted that this is the first time for some years that the school has had a cohesive management team. The headteacher has a very positive and calm nature and shows a strong 'can do' approach. Leaders are focused on helping pupils to have the best chances for their future economic well-being. They know that for some pupils this is not yet good enough; this is why the school is not yet giving satisfactory value for money. The deputy headteacher works well with the headteacher so that responsibilities are shared. Since the last inspection, there have been many changes in staff and the leadership team, including several headteachers. This slowed the rate of improvement, but this is now picking up well. Middle managers, including those who are new to their posts, are developing their roles. The evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff are given clear pointers about how to improve. Leaders evaluate pupils' progress and standards. Plans are in place to improve teaching in the drive to lift achievement. The school sets ambitious targets, but as yet, it is not reaching them frequently enough.

Governors are well informed. Under the strong leadership of the chair of governors, they are now clearer about their roles. Consequently, their decisions and questions are now more directly focused on the needs of pupils. The school has recovered from having a significant deficit budget.

The school has close links with the church and there are developing links with local organisations. For example, they work closely with students from a local independent school. Social events, such as dinner dances, are popular with parents. Work on different faiths is developing. There is growing multicultural work, but leaders are not clear enough about the requirement to evaluate local needs and the impact of the provision in all aspects of faith, culture and social cohesion; plans are underway to develop this.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	4

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

The quality of provision

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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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?	Yes

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

14 September 2009

Dear Pupils

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

You may remember that two inspectors came to your school recently. Thank you for being so friendly. I am writing to let you know what we found.

Your school is a happy and welcoming place. We agree with you that you are cared for; you enjoy learning and like your teachers. All of the adults are keen to make the school better for you and they are well on the way with this. This is important, as it is not yet as good as it should be. We have asked them to make some very important improvements for you as some of you could be making better progress.

Your teachers make learning interesting and well done to you for working hard. In particular, we like the improvements in reading and we are delighted that you are having more visits, extra clubs and good opportunities to learn how to be fit, healthy and safe. We are impressed by your interesting assembly themes, prayers and singing. You spoke very sensitively about your recent First Holy Communion ceremony. Your singing of 'We Shall Go Out with Joy' was great. Most of you behave very well and are polite and respectful of others, but a few of you find this harder. Please remember that racist comments are very unkind and hurtful. Your teachers make sure that if there has been any bullying, it is dealt with, and you agree they do this. Your headteacher and the School Council are going to do their yearly review of the playtime detention system. This will be useful as some of you do not feel that it is fair enough. We have asked your headteacher and all of the adults in your school to do the following things:

- help you to make faster progress in writing, mathematics and science between Years 3 and 6
- make more lessons good so that you always have challenging things to do
- make sure that all of you teachers know exactly what levels you are at in English, mathematics and science. This will help them to check your progress and help you to move on as quickly as possible
- check how well everyone is working to make the community work together as well as possible.

Good luck with your production of The Lion King - it sounds fantastic!

Yours faithfully

Wendy Simmons

Lead Inspector