

St Joachim's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102772
Local Authority	Newham
Inspection number	308116
Inspection date	28 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Terence Flynn
Headteacher	Mr James Allen
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2003
School address	Shipman Road Custom House London E16 3DT
Telephone number	020 7476 1658
Fax number	020 7511 4209

Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues -achievement and standards, personal development and well-being, teaching and learning, leadership and management and care, guidance and support - gathering evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and documents. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, a governor and staff, also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This popular average-sized school serves an inner city area that has high levels of social deprivation. The head teacher took up his post in April 2007. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is high. Over nine tenths of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly Black African. Four fifths of pupils come from homes where English is not spoken as a first language. Just over a quarter of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities, which is above average. The school works in partnership with other local schools to raise achievement through the creative arts. It receives funding and support from the South West Newham Education Action Zone. It has awards for promoting physical education and healthy lifestyles. All pupils, including children in the Nursery, receive weekly French lessons.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This inspirational school is outstanding in every area of its work. Pupils benefit enormously from teaching of the highest quality, which harnesses their natural exuberance and fosters a love of learning. Standards have been high over several years. Pupils make outstanding progress in relation to their starting points. They enter the Nursery with skills and abilities that are well below those normally expected. The excellent Foundation Stage gives children a head start by providing an exciting mix of adult-led and child selected activities matched precisely to their needs. They achieve extremely well, especially in their personal, social and emotional development. The many children who are learning English as an additional language do not attain the expected levels in language and literacy by Year 1, but standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2, and reflects substantial success in the progress they have made. Pupils continue to make outstanding progress in Years 3 to 6, with a particular boost in Years 5 and 6 because of additional teaching groups. This means that they reach standards that are very high by the time they leave the school, especially at the higher levels in English and science. The assessments of the more able pupils when they are in Year 4 do not sufficiently take account of this accelerated rate of progress, with the result that they overshoot considerably the targets set for them by the end of Year 6.

Parents are overwhelmingly in favour of the school's work. Speaking for many, a parent commented, 'The teachers make the children feel special individually.' The school has a strong Catholic ethos that celebrates diversity and puts others first. This is seen in the excellent personal development and well-being of pupils, who respect one another deeply and commit wholeheartedly to their lessons and the school's values. One pupil said, 'We are a very hard-working school.' Pupils have particularly positive attitudes to learning because they find their lessons so enjoyable and get on so well with the staff. Teaching is planned meticulously to really interest pupils and to involve them fully. Teachers employ a wide variety of methods to keep pupils on their toes. In one lively history lesson, the teacher played pupils a sea-shanty to set the scene and pretended to be a sailor from King Henry VIII's flagship, the Mary Rose, answering pupils' questions about life on board. Pupils are kept busy and active, making use of the school's excellent resources. For example, every pupil in Years 5 and 6 has their own laptop computer, which gives them a wealth of opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills through information and communication technology (ICT).

Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy. School councillors run a 'fruitilicious' snack bar at playtime that stocks 'really exotic fruit from different countries'. The school council has successfully lobbied for more after-school clubs, many of which promote exercise such as skipping, badminton and tennis. Pupils feel safe at school and free from bullying and harassment. Behaviour is excellent. A parent said, 'I think the introduction of 'houses' in the school is a very positive thing to encourage good behaviour and hard work among the pupils.' Pupils take responsibility as house captains and also help anybody with worries in the playground. Pupils are active in their local community through the Parish, fund-raising for charity, and taking part in special arts projects with other schools, such as the highly successful 'Festival of Voices'. High attendance confirms that pupils enjoy school greatly. Their enjoyment is boosted by an outstanding curriculum that is adapted especially well for their needs, and encourages them to become independent learners. The development of writing through the creative arts has been particularly successful in raising standards and achievement. The curriculum is enriched extremely well by a programme of visits and visitors and special events

such as 'Book Character Day'. Pupils are prepared exceptionally well for secondary school, leaving as well-rounded confident individuals who have a particularly strong set of basic skills.

The new headteacher has won the respect of all those connected with the school for his clear vision that champions the right of all children to fulfil their potential within a harmonious Catholic community. One parent noted that he 'listens to comments given and understands the needs of children and parents in the school'. This approachability was one of the strengths of the school cited by many parents, who feel welcome and well-informed. The head teacher is supported very ably by the deputy head and together they have developed a particularly strong team of middle managers who assist in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance. Their systematic and rigorous approach ensures that they form an especially accurate view of how well the school is doing and where it needs to improve. The modelling of outstanding teaching by senior teachers supports less experienced colleagues, and has led to rapid improvements in the teaching of ICT.

The impact of the school's excellent leadership is not only seen in pupils' outstanding achievement and high standards, but also in the high quality of care, guidance and support that pupils receive. All safeguarding arrangements are in place and provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is outstanding. They are supported especially well by the learning mentor and teaching assistants, enabling them to make rapid progress towards their individual targets. Highly effective links with outside agencies ensure pupils receive the additional support and guidance they need. There are extremely effective procedures in place to ensure pupils know what they need to do next to improve and these are applied consistently across the school. Portfolios of writing from when they were in the Nursery all the way through their school career reveal dramatically the extraordinary progress that pupils make and inspire them to do even better. Attractive displays celebrate pupils' work, especially in art and craft. For example, a steel bench in the entrance hall was made with a local blacksmith and used driftwood for the seat salvaged from the nearby River Thames.

Governors provide outstanding support for the school and hold leaders to account extremely well. They join staff on 'Retreat Days' to consider whole school issues for future development. The school has come on in leaps and bounds since its last inspection, and is especially well placed under its new leadership team to continue to make outstanding progress in the future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The outstanding provision in the Nursery and Reception classes results from extremely effective planning and purposeful high-quality activities that challenge and delight the children. Children were taking particular pleasure in their role-play when stamping passports and issuing boarding passes for a flight on 'Reception Airways'. Excellent assessment means staff know exactly how well children are progressing and what next steps they need to take in their learning. The Foundation Stage is led and managed extremely well and parents are fully involved in its work. Children settle quickly and are reluctant to go home, so absorbed do they become in their work and play.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure statutory targets for the more able pupils are sufficiently challenging and ambitious, and reflect the outstanding progress that they make in Years 5 and 6.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

10 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joachim's Catholic Primary School, London, E16 3DT

Thank you very much for making me so welcome at your school. Yours is an outstanding school and you have every right to be proud of it. Everybody works very hard to make it such a success. Here are some of the things that are particularly special about it.

- You make excellent progress in your work.
- You reach very high standards by the end of Year 6.
- The teaching is of a very high quality, so that lessons are exciting and fun.
- You keep active and healthy and know all about staying safe.
- Your behaviour is outstanding and you look after one another really well.
- The school cares for you extremely effectively.
- There is excellent leadership from the headteacher and his team.

I know that the school tells you how well you are doing and expects you to do your best. I have asked the teachers to make sure that the targets they set for the Year 6 pupils take into account all the progress they are going to make in their last two years of school, so that they are more accurate.

It was fun meeting you. I know your school is going to go from strength to strength.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Mr N Butt

Lead Inspector