

St Elphege's RC Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102996
Local Authority	Sutton
Inspection number	355297
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Jane Chesterfield

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 of pupils on the school roll	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tom Tamplin
Headteacher	Frances Hawkes
Date of previous school inspection	10 January 2008
School address	Mollison Drive Surrey Surrey SM6 9HY
Telephone number	020 8669 6306
Fax number	020 8773 9789
Email address	stelphegesjuniors@suttonlea.org

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited nine lessons taught by eight teachers. They held meetings with pupils, staff, parents and carers and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school policies and documentation, safeguarding records, pupils' work, assessment data, monitoring records, strategic planning and governing body minutes. Questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and 115 parents and carers were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The extent to which pupils are currently making good progress and attaining at above-average levels throughout the school.
- How effectively the school is tackling the performance of different groups.
- How well teachers challenge and support pupils of all abilities in their classes.
- Whether pupils have sufficient opportunity to use their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.
- The impact of leaders at all levels on continuing improvement in the school.

Information about the school

St Elphege's Juniors is an average-sized school situated in an area of social housing in south London. An above-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is high compared with the national picture, and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is above average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. These needs include mainly moderate learning difficulties, and speech and language difficulties. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is in line with the national average. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status. Since 2006 the school has been federated with the adjoining infant school, and shares the same headteacher, leadership team and governing body. The headteacher was previously head of the infant school.

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

St Elphege's Juniors is a good school which has improved considerably since its last inspection. Pupils make good progress and achieve well throughout the school. The school is at the heart of its local community and is very highly regarded by parents and carers, who rightly value the exceptional support it offers to pupils and their families. One parent said, 'The school recognises each child as an individual and bases work accordingly.' Another commented, 'The school is a family, supporting everyone equally and helping them to become rounded young people, with the dedication of the staff, parents and church.' Outstanding partnerships with other organisations give pupils access to new opportunities which they may not otherwise have experienced, particularly in music and sport.

The excellent quality of the school's systems for care, guidance and support means that children of all abilities are known as individuals and given the help they need to develop academically and personally. Throughout the school, pupils have a very clear understanding of right and wrong and a deep respect for the views, beliefs and cultures of others. Pupils from many different backgrounds relate exceptionally well to one another and are supportive of others. They are very keen to take on responsibility and take pride in what they do. One member of the school council, for example, said, 'We listen to everyone and take in everyone's opinion.' Pupils have an excellent knowledge of how to live a healthy lifestyle, reflected in the Healthy Schools status, and are very actively involved in sport.

There has been a rapidly improving picture of progress since the last inspection and pupils reach above-average standards in English and high standards in mathematics by the time they leave the school. The school has been especially successful in raising attainment in mathematics and reading, thanks to a relentless focus on developing pupils' skills and an insistence on a consistency of approach in teaching. The school has rightly identified that attainment and progress in writing for pupils of all abilities have been relatively weaker. This is because pupils sometimes lack a secure command of accurate sentence structures, or do not have a wide enough vocabulary to express their ideas convincingly. Some pupils have not had a wide enough range of experiences in their lives to write about at length. The school has introduced more links across the curriculum to give pupils inspiration to write on different topics.

The headteacher and senior staff give the school good direction. They have very successfully introduced the systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and tracking pupils' progress which have already worked very effectively in the infant school. This has been the key to the school's improvement. There is now a much greater consistency in the quality of teaching, which is almost uniformly good. Teachers in all classes know exactly how well pupils of all abilities are doing, and are giving them the support they need to

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help them reach their targets. Consistency in the classroom is not currently mirrored in the quality of teachers' marking. Although there is some very strong practice in the school, not all marking helps pupils to understand what they need to do next to improve their work and so make even more rapid progress.

Senior leaders and the governing body have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, thanks to effective systems for school self-evaluation. School development planning focuses on the most important priorities for the future. The school has made good progress since the last inspection, tackling the issues highlighted then and raising achievement and the quality of provision. It has a good capacity for further continuous improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all pupils achieve the levels of which they are capable in writing by:
 - building on work already underway to improve pupils' vocabulary and sentence structure
 - developing pupils' ideas and experiences for writing across the curriculum.
- Improve the consistency of teachers' marking, so that the best practice is spread across the school and pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The work seen in lessons and in pupils' books confirms that attainment is above average or better, and that pupils are now achieving well from generally above-average starting points. Those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who are learning English as an additional language, make similarly good progress to their classmates, thanks to the quality of the support they receive. Pupils are keen to learn and eager to show that they have understood what is being taught. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, for example, pupils raced to show on their small whiteboards the answers to the problems they were set, so that the teacher could check their understanding. They showed a confidence in their skills which is helping them to attain highly. Pupils work well together and value the contributions of others. In a Year 5 English lesson where pupils were working in pairs to sequence the events of the poem *The Highwayman* to create a storyboard for animation, they divided up the tasks between them amicably and discussed thoughtfully how to capture the key elements of the action. There is some inconsistency in the pace at which pupils are developing their writing skills, and consequently the school is focusing on improving this. In a Year 3 English lesson where pupils were asked to use adjectives and adverbs to turn ordinary sentences into exciting ones, most understood what was required and used relevant words, accurately constructed, to achieve this. However, a few pupils did not grasp what was required or could not construct their sentences correctly and so required extra help from staff.

Pupils behave well in class and around the school, and most are thoughtful and considerate of others in the playground. However, some of those playing football get carried away with their games and forget to be aware of others around them. Otherwise, pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. Pupils enjoy school and most attend regularly. Pupils from all backgrounds participate

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wholeheartedly in the life of the school and feel it is important that they make a contribution. They are well prepared for moving on to secondary school and for later life.

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	2
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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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?

The school has been particularly successful in tackling the issues related to teaching from the last inspection. Work is now well matched to the different needs of pupils in all classes, thanks to the accuracy of the tracking systems and to teachers' good use of assessment in lessons to target pupils for extra attention. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to illustrate the points they are making, particularly in mathematics, and to engage pupils' interest. They constantly check pupils' understanding so that any misapprehensions can be quickly eradicated. Lessons have a lively pace and offer pupils plenty of challenge. Additional adults are well deployed to support pupils of all abilities, for example by taking groups aside to do different tasks if they need to work at a quicker or slower pace than the class teacher and the rest of the class. All pupils have targets for improvement and know the levels they are expected to reach at the end of each year. However, the comments made in pupils' books are not always helpful in enabling them to reach their targets. While some point to next steps in pupils' learning, others only praise good work or sometimes give a daunting list of improvements for tasks which have not been done well. In addition, there is not always an expectation that pupils will respond to teachers' comments, for example by doing corrections.

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The school offers its pupils a good curriculum with a secure grounding in literacy and numeracy and thorough coverage of other subjects. More links have been introduced across the curriculum in response to the last inspection report, so that pupils have increased opportunities to use their skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology in different contexts. In Year 6, in particular, this has led to some excellent opportunities for writing in history, where pupils have produced high quality work. Lower down the school, pupils are still to develop these skills fully. Pupils greatly value the excellent opportunities they have to take part in music and sport. When asked what they liked best about the school, one pupil replied, 'We have loads of clubs,' and went on to list all the different opportunities for, among others, athletics, dance, netball and football, choir competitions and learning the violin. The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding, because of the way in which all aspects of each pupil's development are tracked and monitored. Staff knowledge of pupils and attention to their individual needs is evident in every class in the school. Very close liaison with families and support services means that pupils' particular needs can be met in the most appropriate way. Children whose circumstances have made them vulnerable are very carefully nurtured so that they can achieve to the best of their abilities and play their part in the life of the school.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has done an excellent job in unifying the two schools in the federation and gaining the support and confidence of staff. Morale at the school is high, and both long-established and more recently appointed staff share a determination to improve the school even further. New leadership structures are working well, allowing the school's deputy headteachers more time to concentrate on their areas of responsibility. Subject leaders are able to demonstrate the impact they have had on achievement, and the benefit that has been gained from leading their subjects across the infant and junior schools, ensuring continuity and consistency in approach. The governing body fulfils its role well. It has a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and holds the school firmly to account over its actions. The school works well to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination. Pupils are tracked thoroughly by gender and by ethnic group, and any variations in performance are quickly identified and addressed. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are outstanding. The school is a leading practitioner in its arrangements for training and has introduced some innovative practice, for example involving pupils in risk assessments for trips. Required checks are carried out on adults

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who come into contact with pupils, and risk assessments are of a high quality. Procedures for child protection are stringent and staff training is extensive.

The school has excellent relationships with parents and carers, making every effort to draw in groups whose circumstances make them hard to reach, and communicating with parents and carers in the ways in which they feel most comfortable. The school provides extensive support and facilities for families and members of the local community. Courses and activities run during the day and in the evenings, thanks to the excellent partnerships the school has developed with other providers. The school makes an outstanding contribution to community cohesion. It is a highly cohesive community, where pupils and staff of different faiths and backgrounds work, play and worship harmoniously together, and it plays an important role in the local community. There are strong links with schools in Africa and with a Sikh school in Greater London, helping pupils to understand how children of other nationalities and faiths live and learn.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding an 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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire was well above the national average, and their satisfaction with the school was high. Almost all felt that their child enjoyed school, that the school kept their child safe, that the school helped their child to have a healthy lifestyle and that the school was well led and managed. A few felt that the school did not take account of their suggestions and concerns, did not meet their child's particular needs, did not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour or that their child was not making enough progress. Inspectors investigated these concerns, but found that during the inspection behaviour was good and consistently well managed by staff. The school has effective channels for listening to parents' and carers' views and always tries to resolve their concerns, though it is not always able to act on their

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suggestions. The school meets the needs of individual pupils exceptionally well, and pupils' progress has improved considerably since the last inspection as a result.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Elphege's Junior 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 115 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 237 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	90	78	23	20	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	88	77	25	22	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	73	63	38	33	4	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	59	51	46	40	6	5	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	65	57	44	38	5	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	66	57	43	37	4	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	68	59	44	38	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)	63	55	43	37	4	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	55	48	48	42	7	6	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	63	55	37	32	5	4	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	57	50	41	36	9	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	81	70	27	23	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	81	70	28	24	5	4	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



28 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Elphege's Junior School, Wallington SM6 9HY

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently, and for helping us with the inspection. We really enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and sharing your lessons.

We found that St Elphege's is doing well and giving you a good start to your education. These are just some of the things we discovered about your school.

- You are happy at school and exceptionally well cared for.
- You are making good progress in your lessons, because you are well taught.
- You behave well in lessons, though some of you are a bit too lively in the playground.
- You have excellent relationships with one another and with your teachers, and show exceptional respect for the different backgrounds of others.
- You make an excellent contribution to the daily life and running of the school.
- You enjoy outstanding opportunities for sport and music.
- You have a very good understanding of how to be healthy.
- The senior leaders are doing a good job and know how to make the school even better.

To help the school improve further, this is what we have asked the staff to do.

- Make sure that you all do as well as you can in your writing.
- Make it clear to you what you need to do to improve your work.

You can help by trying hard not to make mistakes in your written work and by using the best words you can think of to make your work interesting. You can also let your teachers know if you do not understand their comments in your books.

Yours sincerely

Jane Chesterfield

Lead inspector

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