

St John's Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100841
Local Authority	Southwark
Inspection number	354905
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Sarah McDermott

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 of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kim Insley
Headteacher	Janice Babb
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The team observed 12 lessons taught by 9 teachers. The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They scrutinised pupils' work and looked at the data the school had collected on pupils' academic progress and attendance. They also looked at the school development plan, investigated procedures for keeping pupils safe and analysed the responses to questionnaires from pupils, staff and 78 parents and carers.

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 different groups of pupils such as Black African pupils and pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as others.
- The consistency of the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- The success of the school in tackling below-average attendance rates.
- The effectiveness of middle managers and subject leaders in tracking the progress of different groups of pupils and successfully addressing any underachievement.

Information about the school

St John's Roman Catholic Primary is smaller than most primary schools. Most pupils are of the Catholic faith. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Over half of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, with the largest group from Black African heritage. About a quarter of the pupils speak English as an additional language, but few are at early stages of learning the language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. These pupils have a variety of needs, mostly relating to speech, language and communication needs.

The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery class and a Reception class. Amongst other awards, the school has an award from the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom and also the Healthy Schools award. The governing body manages a breakfast club and an after-school club.

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 John's Roman Catholic Primary is a good school which provides pupils with a wealth of experiences to improve their learning and personal skills. Pupils make a significant contribution to the life of the local community. The headteacher actively encourages pupils to take part in school and community events, building up pupils' affection for their neighbourhood and setting them up as responsible citizens for the future. Pupils talk with animation about trips and visitors that often give them experiences they might not otherwise have. Parents and carers are unanimous in agreeing that their children like going to school and know they look forward to an interesting range of activities. One parent commented, 'My son is very happy at school and likes to participate in everything that is going on' and another added, 'The school has good moral standards and some fantastic initiatives.' Staff are welcoming and friendly, with high expectations of behaviour. Not surprisingly, pupils' behaviour is outstanding, so learning is hardly ever disrupted. Pupils feel extremely safe not only because they know adults will always look after them, but also because they have a very well-developed sense of looking after each other.

Pupils make good progress from their starting points and leave at the end of Year 6 with attainment above national averages in English and mathematics as a result of good teaching. Those pupils who do not speak English at home and arrive with limited language skills also make good progress. With thorough and patient support from staff, they are soon conversing easily with their classmates. Very good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants provides a very strong foundation for supporting pupils with special educational needs. Consequently, they make good progress and grow in confidence in their abilities. Teachers match work well to the needs of different pupils and inspire pupils to find out more by sparking ideas off each other. Marking is upbeat and thorough, but teachers do not find enough time to allow pupils to follow up suggestions to improve their work. Pupils are clear about what they need to learn by the end of a lesson. However, teachers are not consistent in identifying the date when longer term targets are met and replacing them with more challenging ones.

The headteacher leads an enthusiastic and committed team of teachers. She is held in high esteem by pupils and parents and carers alike. The senior leadership team has an accurate view of the school's performance and knows what needs improving. Much thought is put into setting challenging targets for different groups of pupils. Middle managers collect useful information about pupils' progress from observing in lessons and scrutinising work. However, they are not all yet confident in making the most of data to improve the attainment and achievement of pupils. The governing body is supportive and growing in its ability to challenge the headteacher about pupils' performance. The school has successfully tackled the key issues raised at the last inspection and has moved its overall effectiveness from satisfactory to good. Improvement in pupils' attainment and

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achievement over recent years, particularly in writing, demonstrates that the school has good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in their learning by:
 - checking that pupils' targets are dated when they are met and regularly updated for further challenge
 - ensuring pupils follow up useful comments and tasks given by teachers when marking work.
- Improve the accountability of all middle managers and governors for pupils' learning by making the best use of monitoring information to identify how attainment and achievement can be improved.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils, whatever their ethnic background, make good progress from their broadly average starting points at the beginning of Year 1. Attainment at the end of Year 6 has been above the national average in English and mathematics for the last three years. The school is quick to identify the learning needs of pupils who arrive mid-term lacking confidence and with little English ♦ soon they are making just as good progress as others. Staff who speak the home languages of these new pupils provide reassurance and support. Black African pupils make similarly good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make equally good progress because staff know their precise needs and adapt teaching methods carefully to help them achieve well.

In lessons, pupils get down to productive work very quickly. They are attentive and keen to find out more. They listen carefully to what they should be learning, so lessons run smoothly without interruption. Presentation in exercise books is nearly always neat and tidy. Pupils collaborate particularly well together in pairs to discuss their learning and evaluate each other's work. In an English lesson on a scene from 'The Highwayman', pupils responded very well to the challenge of imagining what might happen next by bouncing ideas off their fellow pupils.

Pupils arrive in the morning with a spring in their step. They look forward to meeting their teachers and their friends because they know school is a safe and comforting place. Pupils are polite, courteous and a pleasure to meet. Invariably they hold doors open for visitors and show interest in adults' views. They move around the school very sensibly and play particularly well together at break times. Most pupils eat healthily, although a few too readily throw away uneaten vegetables at lunchtime. A good number participate in sports and active clubs. Pupils thoroughly enjoy taking on jobs and the school councillors are excellent ambassadors for St John's. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a well-developed sense of looking after each other and their environment. They are especially proud to have won the school's prize for Southwark in Bloom two years running. Pupils are beginning to build up their knowledge of faiths other than Christianity. Attendance rates are broadly average. They are improving for the vast majority of pupils with poor attendance confined to a few pupils. With their good levels of

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maturity and responsibility, together with their outstanding behaviour, they are well prepared for moving on to secondary school.

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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2

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?

Teachers prepare well for lessons, ensuring all resources are to hand to make a speedy start to learning. They work very well with teaching assistants to give seamless support to pupils, both at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. In particular, pupils with special educational needs make good and, on occasion, outstanding progress because work and activities are very carefully matched to their needs, both in class and in small group sessions elsewhere. Teachers make good use of assessment data to ensure pupils have personal support if they need to catch up. They keep pupils on their toes, by varying the activities and ways to learn. In a good English lesson, pupils greatly enjoyed 'hot-seating' each other in the role of Boudicca to collect information for their diary writing. Year 6 pupils learnt about travelling around London by using tube maps in geography and testing each other on the best routes to the Olympic site. Pupils appreciate praise and encouragement in the teachers' marking, but are not given enough opportunities to make corrections and learn from their mistakes. On the whole, pupils know what they need to do to progress well, but targets for English and mathematics are often too general and are not consistently ticked off with a date to show pupils how fast they are making progress.

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Lessons are lively and interesting, with much thought put into finding different ways to promote learning. Subjects, beyond the core ones of English, mathematics and science, are given equal importance in the timetable. Often they are cleverly entwined with literacy or numeracy to promote a broad range of skills. In a Year 2 English lesson, pupils had collected information leaflets on a local walk to incorporate into letters and emails to send to pupils in a rural Kent school. The school places a great emphasis on learning about the environment, preparing the pupils especially well to be responsible adults who do not waste the world's resources. The pupils themselves are well involved in devising projects too. As one parent commented, 'The school council has a strong voice in the school and organises activities, fund raising events and multicultural events.'

Good care and attention are paid to each pupil, whatever their background or needs. The school is especially conscientious in supporting vulnerable pupils and their families. One mother rightly said staff are 'great, supportive, caring and approachable'. The school is working successfully with a few parents and carers to raise the profile of the need for daily attendance to give their children the best chances to make good progress. The breakfast club is well run, providing a safe and stimulating place where pupils of different ages can mix positively before school starts.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is ambitious for the school and its pupils. She and her senior leadership team regularly monitor the quality of teaching and learning, ensuring teachers and teaching assistants are well trained and confident in their roles. Careful analysis of the capabilities of different year groups translates into aspirational goals for their performance by the end of Year 6. The school development plan is a useful working document, pulling on feedback from pupils, parents and carers and staff. Already the school is thinking of ways to improve marking and individual target setting. Middle managers plan interesting activities and trips for the subjects they lead, but not all are yet taking full responsibility for attainment and achievement across all year groups.

The governing body is chaired by a knowledgeable governor. Other governors are supportive and are starting to question how the school's range of pupils is performing against national trends. Good links with parents, carers and the Rotherhithe locality build a solid foundation for a cohesive community. Interesting links are beginning to be made with schools in other parts of the United Kingdom and abroad. Senior leaders maintain a close eye on how different groups of pupils are achieving and keep one step ahead of changes in the context of the school population. Pupils from different cultures and ethnic

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backgrounds get on very well together. They are starting to be given opportunities to extend their knowledge of other faiths via visitors and visits to different places of worship. The school links well with the local authority for expert advice and with other schools for sport and curriculum initiatives. The promotion of equal opportunities is good and results in all pupils making equally good progress in their learning. The school is attentive in making sure no pupil is discriminated against or misses out on any activity or outing they want to participate in. Safeguarding is a high priority and ensures all pupils are safe and sound while in the school's care.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding 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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Nursery with skills generally below expectations for their age, representing a mix of a few articulate and self-assured children, but also a significant number who are behind in language or personal development. They make good progress in all areas of early learning because of good quality teaching and personal support. Plenty of conversation, introducing new vocabulary and correcting simple grammar, helps both English-speaking children and those with limited English to make good progress in their language skills. Teachers plan an interesting and varied range of activities. The level of challenge has increased well since the last inspection. However, the learning environment is not as sparkling in the Nursery class as in Reception. During the inspection, Reception children were captivated by the 'Three Little Pigs' theme, proudly showing off the houses and story books they had made. On occasion, some adults over-direct the children and fail to let them have a go at designing, sticking and gluing, however untidy the end result. Since the last inspection, children are more independent in choosing to explore inside or out because of the addition of an external awning. They move about very sensibly and behave well.

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While the school waits to appoint a substantive leader, the Early Years Foundation Stage is ably led by a team comprising the deputy headteacher and local authority professionals. They are working to set up systems to ensure the collection of data in Nursery and Reception follows the same format to enable accurate monitoring of pupils as they progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The level of response to the questionnaire was broadly average for a school of its kind. All parents and carers agree that their children are happy at school. Justifiably, parents and carers believe the school is helping their children to make good progress and is looking after them well. The highest concern, and even that is small, was with the information parents and carers receive from school on their children's progress. The inspection team judges that the school provides very regular and helpful updates on pupils' progress, as well as giving parents and carers plenty of encouragement to become involved in their children's learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St John's Roman Catholic Primary 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 78 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 212 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	62	30	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	64	25	32	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	37	47	33	42	6	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	45	42	54	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	41	53	34	44	3	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	46	38	49	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	44	39	50	3	4	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)	26	33	45	58	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	35	46	59	4	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	47	33	42	3	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	32	44	56	4	5	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	36	46	39	50	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	56	30	39	3	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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.



14 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's Roman Catholic Primary School, London SE16 6SD

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school. St John's is a good school. You make good progress in English and mathematics. Teaching is good because lessons are well organised, teachers make sure you know what you should learn and they give you work that is just right most of the time. You have very exciting activities and interesting trips arranged for you. Miss Babb and her team of senior teachers lead the school well and they know what needs improving.

You behave extremely well and certainly know how to look after each other and keep yourselves extremely safe. We particularly like the way you are very responsible members of the school community and appreciate being part of the local neighbourhood. We are impressed with your well-developed awareness of how to look after the planet. Your attendance is average.

To make your education better, we have asked your school to do the following.

- Encourage you to follow up corrections and suggestions made by your teachers when they mark your work and make sure you have new targets as soon as you meet the old ones.
- Ask your senior teachers to use the information they collect from checking your learning to find ways to help you make even better progress.

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your school. We know that your teachers make your school a very special place for you. You can do your bit by continuing to do your best in your learning and attend regularly, except when you are ill, and to enjoy your time at St John's Roman Catholic Primary School.

Yours sincerely

Sarah McDermott

Lead inspector

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