

St Joseph's RC Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101795
Local Authority	Croydon
Inspection number	363661
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Kathryn Taylor

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	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elaine Jones
Headteacher	Giulia de Rosa
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 11 teachers and support staff. They held meetings with pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including those related to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, attendance data, pupils' work, local authority reports on the school, curricular documents and safeguarding information. They analysed questionnaires received from 77 parents and carers as well as those completed by pupils and staff.

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

- How well the school tracks pupils' progress and attainment in order to address any underperformance and narrow the gaps between groups.
- The extent to which teaching and targeted interventions enable pupils to make good progress.
- The improvements to provision in information and communication technology (ICT) since the last inspection.
- How well leaders and governors evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in the school's work and plan precisely for improvement.

Information about the school

Pupils in this average-sized school are drawn from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. An above-average proportion are from homes where English is not the first language, though a much smaller number are at the very early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The school has gained a number of awards which include Healthy Schools and Activemark awards. The school has recently experienced some uncertainty resulting from the current headteacher's impending retirement and the governors' recent decision to enter into a federation with St Joseph's Infant School from September 2011.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

St Joseph's Junior School is a satisfactory school. The school has strengths, which include providing a very broad curriculum, a warm welcome for pupils and families and good standards of care. Pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science is broadly average by the time they leave. Pupils respond very well to opportunities to develop their enterprise skills and this, along with their maturity, well-developed social skills, above average attendance and their increasing ability to apply the basic skills across subjects, means they are well prepared for the challenges of secondary school and later life.

Pupils enjoy school and learning. Although they make satisfactory progress overall, progress is inconsistent across the school. The current focus on tackling some underperformance among specific groups, strengthening mathematics teaching and improving pupils' skills in English is having a positive impact. For example, lower attaining pupils are beginning to catch up in reading, and pupils across the school are motivated to write and are developing confidence when tackling mathematics problems. Nevertheless, in general, pupils make more consistent progress in reading than they do in mathematics and writing. Too many lower attaining pupils have weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and handwriting which inhibit their progress.

Pupils make good progress in their personal development. Their good behaviour, positive attitudes and enthusiasm make a positive contribution to their achievements.

Pupils feel safe and develop a good understanding of how to stay safe in a variety of situations. They have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles, which is reflected in their daily lives. They enjoy growing vegetables and eating healthy school dinners and snacks. They enjoy lots of opportunities to take part in sporting activities and their success in competitive sport indicates that many pupils reach high standards in physical education.

Teaching is satisfactory with some strengths. Teachers and other staff are conscientious. They plan interesting lessons, form good relationships with pupils and usually manage them well. Teaching remains only satisfactory because of inconsistencies in teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment and their use of this information to plan lessons that enable all ability groups to learn consistently well. In addition, some lessons lack pace and challenge, through probing questions for example.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement are satisfactory. Senior leaders have maintained a positive inclusive ethos, good teamwork and the strong focus on providing good standards of care and a broad curriculum with excellent enrichment opportunities. Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the school's work on the academic standards pupils reach and their learning and progress, however, is not rigorous enough. As a result, targets for improvement in the school improvement plan are not always sharp enough. Moreover, whilst governors are

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supportive, they do not hold leaders to account with sufficient rigour for the performance of the school. This is one of the reasons why the school has an overgenerous view of how well it is performing in some areas and means that its capacity for improvement is only satisfactory.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing and mathematics across each year group by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write about their learning in different subjects and making mathematics work interesting, practical and linked to real-life experiences
 - placing even more emphasis on helping lower attaining pupils to use basic punctuation accurately, spell everyday words correctly and develop a joined style of handwriting.
- Strengthen teaching and especially assessment by supporting teachers to:
 - improve their day-to-day assessment of pupils' learning and use the information to ensure that tasks match the full range of abilities
 - extend their questioning skills to challenge pupils and deepen their understanding
 - ensure that feedback through marking and target setting challenges pupils and guides them towards improvement.
- Strengthen the school's leadership and capacity for improvement by:
 - setting challenging progress targets for all pupils
 - ensuring that the school's provision is monitored more rigorously to measure its impact on pupils' learning and progress
 - bringing greater precision to school improvement planning
 - extending the governors' role in challenging the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Although there are some year-on-year variations, for example in English and mathematics and the attainment of different groups, the three-year trend for overall attainment at the end of Year 6 is average. Progress in Years 3 to 5 in mathematics and writing is uneven, however. The school has started to address this, for example by engaging boys' interests in writing and providing meaningful opportunities for all pupils to write as part of their work in a range of subjects. Similarly, increased opportunities for problem solving and linking mathematics work to real-life situations are helping to challenge some pupils' thinking. Although some of the lower attaining pupils' work highlights weaknesses in basic skills, for example in punctuation, spelling and handwriting, these weaknesses are not being sufficiently addressed through the day-to-day teaching. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress from an average starting point on entry. Progress is strongest in Year 6 where the most experienced teachers are deployed.

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Pupils' progress is variable, and in some lessons it is more rapid when they are challenged. For example, pupils in Year 4 made good progress in a mathematics lesson when the teacher first taught them how to approach problems systematically, then encouraged them to explore and discuss different methods. Similarly, the more able pupils in Year 6 made good progress when they were challenged to plan a family holiday that met specific criteria within a fixed budget, whilst also making a five per cent profit.

Sometimes, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make more rapid progress in lessons. In an English lesson in Year 3 for example, pupils with a variety of needs did well in writing because the teacher supported their learning well, gave plenty of time for them to work independently and helped them to evaluate their work and decide how they might later improve it. Similarly, pupils with additional needs in learning English are making good gains in reading, through regular small group interventions.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and a particular strength is their understanding of cultural traditions. Pupils behave well, and are friendly, polite and considerate. They respect one another's backgrounds, as is evident in the way that pupils from varied backgrounds work and play very well together. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities around the school and readily get involved in charitable and community activities.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	2
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	2
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

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How effective is the provision?

Relative strengths in teaching include teachers' secure subject knowledge, clear explanations and positive relationships with pupils. The use of ICT has improved considerably since the last inspection and technology is used well to support teaching. Many lessons include good opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. Teaching assistants usually make a good contribution to pupils' learning. In some lessons, the pace of learning is too slow, pupils are not allowed enough time for independent work and weaknesses in assessment limit the challenge for different groups of pupils.

One of the school's current priorities is to strengthen assessment. Some effective practice is evident. For example, most teachers encourage pupils to consider how well they have learned and pupils in Year 6 understand clearly the levels they are working at and what they need to do to reach the next level. In a number of lessons, teachers use probing open-ended questioning and target specific questions to different ability groups. However, assessment practice is not yet consistent. There is sometimes over-reliance on using tests to gauge pupils' progress, rather than ensuring accurate teacher assessments and using these to set end-of-year progress targets for all pupils. Teachers' day-to-day use of assessment to match tasks and teaching to different ability groups is also uneven. The use of short-term learning targets for individual pupils is at the early stage of development. Marking is regular and up-to-date. Teachers' comments occasionally point pupils towards improvement, though in general these provide more encouragement than advice or challenge to pupils.

The broad and well-balanced curriculum gives good attention to different subjects, often linking these together well, and whenever this happens, pupils' progress improves. Initiatives to improve provision in writing and mathematics are starting to have an impact on pupils' progress. The curriculum also includes opportunities for pupils to learn to play a musical instrument and learn languages - Spanish in all classes and Mandarin in Year 5. Excellent enrichment opportunities provided by the school include many well attended after-school sports and competitive events, music events and challenges for gifted and talented pupils. All of these make a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as well as their health and physical development, as is reflected in the school achieving the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards.

Good care, guidance and support mean that pupils settle quickly into the school, are well cared for and feel safe. Similarly the school prepares pupils in Year 6 well to make the transition to secondary school. Pastoral care for all pupils is strong. The school meets the personal needs of its most vulnerable pupils well, including providing individual counselling and family support. The school's sterling work to raise attendance has been very effective in raising this to above average.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leaders share a commitment to inclusion, providing a broad curriculum and good levels of care for all pupils. They maintain good links with parents and carers and the community, and have developed strong partnerships with other schools, institutions and external agencies that contribute well to broadening pupils' experiences and supporting their personal development. Leaders' monitoring and evaluation of the school's work, including teaching, learning and pupils' finished work, however, lacks rigour and leads to a lack of incisiveness in school improvement planning. The school improvement plans identify too many priorities and lack clear indicators of how success will be measured. Although subject leaders' role in monitoring pupils' work and teaching is underdeveloped, they make a positive contribution to supporting staff. For example, training has helped improve the staff's subject knowledge in mathematics and their confidence in using ICT.

The governing body has a clear overview of the school's strengths and some of its weaknesses. Governors are supportive of the school, but do not provide enough challenge to school leaders to help drive improvement. The governing body ensures that statutory requirements are met, including those related to the safeguarding of pupils. Regular risk assessments are undertaken, child protection procedures are known to staff and due attention is given to the safety of the staff and pupils.

The school takes satisfactory steps to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination. Staff ensure that all groups of pupils are fully involved in activities, including those after school. They ensure that pupils from a wide range of backgrounds respect each other and get on really well together. Although improvements are being made, the school does not track the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils rigorously enough. This is why equality of opportunity is judged satisfactory. The school makes a strong contribution to community cohesion at the school and local level. Its contribution at the national and international levels is still developing.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers are very happy with the school. Parents and carers feel that their children really enjoy school and that this is a well-led, caring school with good teaching and a strong focus on helping children to be healthy. The inspectors judged that although there are strengths in teaching and school leadership, these are satisfactory overall. A small number of parents and carers would like to see improvements, especially to behaviour, pupils' progress and the information they receive about their child's progress. Some also expressed some concerns about the uncertainty of the school's future, following the decision to federate and the consultation process. Inspectors found that the majority of pupils behave really well, but that occasionally some pupils do behave inappropriately. They found that while pupil progress is satisfactory overall, it is not consistent across classes.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Joseph's RC 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 77 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 238 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	62	29	36	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	48	62	28	36	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	23	30	45	58	6	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	35	38	49	6	8	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	30	39	42	55	3	4	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	29	44	57	7	9	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	45	39	51	0	0	1	1
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)	23	30	44	57	2	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	34	41	53	3	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	32	40	52	5	6	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	23	44	57	7	9	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	32	42	41	53	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	43	38	49	2	3	1	1

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



8 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's RC Junior School, London SE19 3NU

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and watching you at work. We found that yours is a satisfactory school.

These are our main findings.

- You enjoy school and most of you behave well and work well in lessons.
- You are polite and friendly. You take good care of each other and older pupils and buddies help to make playtimes enjoyable.
- You make satisfactory progress in your learning.
- By the end of Year 6, standards are similar to those found in other schools, but in Years 3 to 5, not enough children make all the progress that they could.
- You know how to stay safe and have an excellent understanding of the importance of eating healthily and taking exercise.
- You make a good contribution to the school and the local community.
- The staff and school leaders ensure that you are well looked after. They ensure that that you enjoy a broad curriculum and excellent enrichment activities, such as clubs, visits, competitions, and sporting and music activities.

We are asking the school to make the following changes so that you do even better.

- Help you to reach higher standards in mathematics and writing, including helping some of you to improve your spelling, handwriting and punctuation.
- Help you to make better progress by ensuring that lessons are challenging, matched to your abilities and that teachers assess your progress accurately.
- Give you more information about exactly where you have made mistakes so that you can correct these and improve your work.
- Ensure that staff set challenging targets for you and check your learning and progress more thoroughly, so that they can better plan how the school can be improved further.

You can help by working hard and doing your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Taylor

Lead inspector

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