

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101239
Local Authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	376529
Inspection dates	21–22 September 2011
Reporting inspector	John Anthony

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	336
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Stephen Myers
Headteacher	Mrs Bernadette Horton
Date of previous school inspection	27–28 April 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 16 lessons featuring the work of 13 teachers. They held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils, and met informally with parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at strategic and curriculum planning, records of pupils' progress, school documentation and monitoring records of teaching and learning. Inspectors analysed 138 parents' and carers' questionnaire returns, as well as 33 from staff and 145 from pupils.

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 improvements in the quality of teaching have impacted directly on accelerating progress, and in raising pupils' attainment.
- How well provision supports the learning and development of lower ability and more vulnerable pupils.
- How far assessment for learning informs and guides pupils to know how to improve their learning.
- The extent to which the curriculum has been adapted to help improve pupils' attainment.

Information about the school

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is a larger than average primary school, based on a one-and-a-half form entry system, but with Years 5 and 6 arranged in dedicated year groups. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which relate mainly to moderate learning and speech, language and communication needs, is below average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages, and those who speak English as an additional language, is above average, the largest group coming from Black African backgrounds.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is located in an annexe which is separated from the main building by a public right of way. Fifty-two children attend the Nursery on a part-time basis and the rest are organised into two Reception classes. A major building project to provide additional classroom space and improved facilities is likely to be completed in time for the next academic year.

The school runs a Breakfast Club, and has Healthy Schools status. The headteacher has led the school since September 2009.

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

This is a good school. Together, with the staff and the members of the governing body, the headteacher has worked tirelessly since her appointment two years ago to reorganise the workings of the school at all levels. Particular focus has been placed on improving the quality of teaching. This has met with notable success, particularly at Key Stage 2. Teaching is good overall but more consistently good in Years 5 and 6. Improvements are now apparent in pupils' overall rates of progress, although the progress of more able learners is less rapid because teachers' planning does not provide them with sufficient challenge. While attainment remains broadly average, pupils achieve well overall.

A very significant indicator of the school's success is the outstanding response of pupils through very high attendance. Pupils confirm that they benefit immensely from extremely caring and dedicated relationships with all the staff. An atmosphere of friendliness and welcome is evident throughout the school. Pupils respond with trust and gratitude, growing in confidence academically and personally, so that by the time they leave the school, they have evolved into well-grounded and mature personalities, and are well prepared for future learning. The exemplary behaviour routinely seen around the school is not always replicated in all classrooms, however. Behaviour is overall good but attitudes to learning are sometimes too casual. This has an adverse effect on progress and learning.

Central to the pupils' good personal development is the outstanding spiritual strength that they gain through their immersion in the deeply embedded Catholic ethos which threads through every aspect of school life. They are socially well adjusted, and this, together with their good behaviour, makes for a highly enjoyable and productive learning environment.

The Early Years Foundation Stage has enthusiastically embraced the proposals for improvement outlined in the last inspection report. It is well managed, provides the children with a stimulating and enjoyable curriculum, and has made good use of the available, but limited, outdoor space to provide a learning environment that is well matched to the childrens' needs.

The headteacher and her staff are to be congratulated on the speed with which the school has moved forward since the last inspection, in particular in successfully harnessing the existing strengths of all the staff, in recruiting talented newcomers, and in leading change across all aspects of the life of the school. The school's self-evaluation is broadly accurate, albeit a little generous at times. It has correctly

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identified the need to improve outcomes by focusing on developing pupils' basic skills. This rapid development so far, coupled with the continuing good will of staff, parents and carers, and pupils, demonstrates that the school has a good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment further by:
 - ensuring that the many strengths in teaching, particularly in Years 5 and 6, are replicated throughout the whole school
 - improving the practice of assessment in class, especially in the earlier year groups, to ensure that teachers' planning more closely matches the needs of all learners
 - providing more challenge for more able learners
 - matching teachers' planning for resources more in line with pupils' learning needs.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to apply their basic skills throughout the curriculum by:
 - incorporating measures into daily planning to highlight occasions for pupils to apply basic skills
 - ensuring that the tracking of pupils' progress extends to a more detailed analysis of how well and where pupils' apply these skills.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils come to the school from a wide variety of backgrounds, bringing with them a rich diversity of cultures, and with a range of different abilities and aptitudes. Many enter the school via the Nursery with skills, knowledge and understanding that are below expectations for their age. At the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is broadly average. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is broadly average, but better than expected progress is made in English, and at the higher levels in mathematics. Good progress was also seen in many lessons, indicating that pupils are making good progress generally throughout the school. Accelerated progress for some pupils is hampered by their limitations in basic skills, but the school is planning to address this issue. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those with English as an additional language are fully included in all aspects of school life, and as a result, make the same levels of progress as their peers.

Pupils feel safe because they feel they can trust their teachers. There is some concern about the adjacent building works, 'but not much'. Good academic guidance supported by strong pastoral care has engendered a clear sense of mutual trust at all levels. A highly pastoral approach, firmly rooted within the school's underlying Catholic ethos, has been instrumental in leading to good spiritual, moral, cultural and social outcomes. Some parents and carers have voiced reservations about pupils' behaviour, noting that there is a need for better supervision in class. Pupils were considerate, courteous and friendly around the school, but in some lessons, loss of

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concentration and passive attitudes hindered progress.

Pupils contribute well to their school and local community. Older pupils look after younger children through a well-organised playground buddy system, and they support many charitable causes, including the 'Hats for Haiti Appeal', providing 'Pullovers for Pakistan', and their local diocesan Catholic Children's Society. Pupils understand how to lead healthy lives, reflecting the school's Healthy School's awards. They take full advantage of the good range of sporting activities provided both within lessons and by way of after-school clubs, and engage enthusiastically in the 'Tenergy' sessions that take place regularly throughout the school day. Pupils are usually punctual, and their attendance rate is exceptionally regular. They say that this is because they enjoy school so much. They are well prepared for success in their future lives.

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	3
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	2
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Pupils are provided with a good curriculum which is generally well matched to their needs, and in which many exciting opportunities enrich their learning experience. However, it currently does not provide sufficient planned opportunities for the use and application of pupils' basic skills across a range of subjects.

A priority of the headteacher has been to stimulate pupils' learning through improvements in the quality of teaching. This has been the focus of intensive continuing professional development, and has proved successful. Teaching is good, but most effective at the upper end of the school. Here, teachers' good subject

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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knowledge, enthusiasm, and well-targeted challenge results in pupils' good attention. For example, in one lesson in which pupils learned about the properties of teeth, they were provided with dentist's mirrors to carry out a practical exercise in which they pretended to be dentists. This stimulated their concentration and creativity, and as a result they learned very well, and were able to articulate very clearly the names and functions of the various types of teeth, including 'canines, incisors and molars'. Lessons were less successful where questioning limited pupils' options, or where instructions were not sufficiently understood and pace and attention faltered.

Care, guidance and support are good. This strong pastoral care reaches out to families as well as their children so that they can better help their children in both their personal and academic development. The school runs a small breakfast club each morning, which provides pupils with toast, cereal and drinks, and a cheerful environment in which to prepare for the school day. There are very good links with external agencies and with Catholic institutions which help to support children and their families. Links with the local Catholic high school are strong so that children's transition to secondary education is made as smooth as it possibly can be.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management at all levels have a significant impact on improving the school. Central to this is the inspired and devoted leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by new additions to the management team. This is acknowledged in feedback from parents and carers, one noting, for example, that there have been many positive changes since the new headteacher has been appointed. Pupils perceive an 'improving school', with 'wonderful teachers' and a 'lovely headteacher'. The assistant headteacher, who has responsibility for data, has been instrumental in transforming the approach to record-keeping, planning, and tracking, which provides a comprehensive and detailed breakdown of the progress of each child. Increasingly more accurate assessments provide teachers with the information they need to ensure that pupils are set appropriately challenging individual targets.

A very strong and fruitful relationship with parents and carers has been established. One excellent initiative, the Parents' Forum, enables them to meet regularly with the headteacher and to contribute ideas to improving the school. An informative and readable newsletter is published weekly, and the school is currently developing its

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website. This has not led to a response, in practical terms, of voluntary support within the school.

The work of the governing body has been transformed. New members have been recruited, and contribute towards a more challenging approach, which is having a clear impact on planning for improvement. The Chair's drive and ambition was a catalyst for sowing the seeds of the new building programme. Good partnerships have been established with other schools, especially the local secondary school, and external welfare agencies are regularly used to help both pupils and their families. The school has bolstered its community cohesion by preparing an action plan to further its already good national and global links.

Safeguarding is central to the school's ethos of care. All statutory requirements are met, staff receive regular training, and child protection procedures are well organised. Risk assessments are comprehensive and thorough. The adjacent building work, a potential source of risk, has been carefully managed by the school, and stringent safeguards are in place to ensure the safety of children and staff. In this highly inclusive school, everybody is treated equally, equality being a hallmark of the school's principles that no discrimination of any kind is condoned.

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	2
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

This is a well-managed, clean, safe, and friendly setting in which children thrive. Children are looked after well and provided with a good learning experience and, as a result, they make good progress. By the time they leave to go into Year 1, their attainment is broadly average and they are well prepared in all aspects of their

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development to continue to the next stage of their education.

The Nursery provides a lively environment and stimulating activities, which encourage independence, as a result of which the children learn well and make good progress. In Reception, some delightful links are made across different curricular topics. For example, in a science lesson where the children were examining the properties of compost, they were able to refer to the previous day's exercise in digging up worms, excitedly examining their features, and developing their speaking and listening skills by discussing what they found. During another outdoor activity, the children discussed properties of shape, light and shade while painting large shapes in the playground, becoming familiar with some basic principles in numerical reasoning. Through a range of other well-considered activities, children become motivated to find out more about the world around them, learning to stick with an activity until it is finished, and developing, at the same time, valuable perseverance skills.

Good leadership and management have successfully linked planning to improving attainment. Detailed weekly evaluations of pupils' progress, which involve parents, have led to the children's improved personal, social and emotional development. Good liaison has been fostered with outside agencies, including the school nursing service and the health visitor. Key workers have responsibility for children's welfare and care, and good interventions extend children's thinking and learning successfully.

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 response to the Ofsted questionnaire was above average. Parents and carers are highly positive about the school, especially about how well it cares for their children, one noting: 'I cannot speak highly enough of the utmost care and attention that has been shown to our daughter.' Parents and carers feel that the school keeps them well informed of their children's progress, the overwhelming majority responding that they receive a lot of support to help their children's learning. Many of their views are reflected in the observation that they are 'very happy that the children are looked after by such hard-working, dedicated professionals'.

There was no consensus of negative comment, although some parents and carers felt that their children would benefit from more support during transition to Key Stage 1 and to secondary school. They share a general sense of improvement,

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typically that 'there have been many positive changes since the new headteacher has been appointed', that 'the teachers are an asset to the school and I am proud that my children attend this school', and 'Staff and teachers are very kind and helpful.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Joseph’s Catholic Primary 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 138 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 270 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	94	68	44	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	79	57	55	40	4	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	84	61	51	37	2	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	71	51	60	43	6	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	74	54	59	43	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	70	51	64	46	3	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	68	49	60	43	2	1	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)	59	43	60	43	6	4	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	59	43	71	51	4	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	66	48	62	45	4	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	54	39	65	47	7	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	72	52	58	42	4	3	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	85	62	49	36	4	3	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



23 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Dagenham RM9 5UL

Thank you very much for welcoming my colleagues and me to your school. On behalf of the team, I would like to thank the school council and those of you who met with us at lunchtime to tell us all about the many wonderful things that you do. I am pleased to be able to tell you that you go to a good school. These are some of the things that really stand out.

- You are punctual, well behaved, friendly and kind to each other.
- You work hard, are attentive to your teachers, and make good progress in your lessons.
- You are very generous, and help people who have less than you.
- All those who lead and manage your school work hard to give you the best possible education, and look after you very well.

Although yours is a good school, I have asked your headteacher, staff and members of the governing body to do the following to make it even better:

- Plan activities in lessons that stretch your imagination and match your individual strengths so that you all do as well as you possibly can.
- Keep more detailed records of how well you are learning so that your teachers know how well you are developing all the skills that will help you to be successful in the future.

Again, thank you for your kind welcome, and for your friendly and very interesting conversations with us. You can help by always trying to pay attention in lessons and asking for help if you are unsure as to what to do.

With best wishes for the future,

Yours sincerely

John Anthony
Lead inspector

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