

St Joseph's RC Junior School

Woodend, London, SE19 3NU

Inspection dates 16–17 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Rapid improvements in progress have reversed a history of inconsistent achievement, particularly in mathematics. Many children now make better than expected progress, and most reach at least average levels by the end of Year 6.
- Reading is a strength of the school. Good and outstanding teaching leads to children being excited about a wide range of books. Attainment in reading is above national averages.
- Teaching is good. Teachers use a wide variety of teaching methods to make sure that teaching is interesting and well paced. Pupils use their learning time well in lessons.
- Most parents have confidence in the school. They feel that the staff listen to any concerns and respond well.
- With strong support from governors, the recently appointed headteacher and deputy headteacher have motivated the whole staff team. Teachers are included in decisions about school development and are keen to improve their practice. As a result, the quality of teaching and progress is continuing to improve.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe. They are courteous and demonstrate good manners. The strong community atmosphere within the school is enhanced by the respect that both pupils and adults show for each other's beliefs and values.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Despite rapidly improving rates of progress, attainment in writing, especially for the most able, is still not high enough.
- There is not enough outstanding teaching. Teachers do not give pupils sufficient opportunities to solve real-life problems and make links between subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in every class and made a number of additional short visits to lessons. They listened to readers and talked to pupils about their work.
- A meeting was held with a group of pupils, including representatives from each year group. Inspectors also spoke to pupils at break and lunch times.
- Inspectors met with a parent governor, the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority. They held discussions with school leaders and the teachers who coordinate literacy and numeracy. They took account of the 31 completed staff questionnaires, and the eight responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also spoke to parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspection evidence took account of a number of documents, including school improvement plans, data about pupils' progress, minutes of meetings and records and policies relating to behaviour, attendance and safety. Inspectors also scrutinised a range of pupils' work.

Inspection team

Claire Baldry, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Webster

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized junior school. The proportion of pupils eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups or for whom English is an additional language is much greater than in most schools nationally.
- Numbers of pupils identified as disabled or with special educational needs is well above national levels for those at school action, and above average levels for pupils at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's floor standards which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school federated with St Joseph's RC Infant School in September 2011, at which time the headteacher of the infant school was appointed as headteacher overall of both the infant and junior school. A new deputy headteacher of the junior school was appointed at the same time.
- There is an onsite breakfast and after school club which is run by a separate provider and is not included in this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in writing by:
 - making sure that teachers challenge the most able pupils with more difficult questions and extended writing
 - helping pupils to improve their writing in all subjects, not just literacy
 - using teachers' strengths in the teaching of reading to further improve the teaching of writing.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to use their learning to solve a range of real-life problems
 - developing the skills of middle leaders to support and coach their colleagues.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils enter Year 3 with levels of attainment which are broadly average overall. However, there is a wide range of abilities within the school. Skilled support is offered to the significant number of pupils with special educational needs and to those for whom English is not their first language. These pupils make especially good progress. As a result, most pupils reach expected levels or better in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Exciting lessons in the teaching of reading have maintained good standards in reading. Attainment in reading has been consistently above national averages for the past three years. Pupils greatly enjoy books and read with confidence, many reaching levels well above those expected for their ages.
- Achievement in writing is less consistently good than in reading. In 2011 the proportion of more able writers who reached the highest levels dipped to well below national figures. This has now been addressed, and in 2012, rates of progress in writing increased significantly with attainment overall in line with national expectations. However, the achievement of the most able pupils in writing does not yet match their success in reading.
- A sharp focus on improving the teaching of numeracy has increased pupils' rates of progress. The school's detailed tracking of learning shows a steady upward trend in the pupils' progress in mathematics. In 2012 almost 10% of pupils achieved at the highest levels in mathematics tests at the end of Year 6. This indicates very good progress for these pupils.
- Achievements across other subjects is less clearly recorded. However, examples of good achievement in art and Spanish are strong throughout the school. This was very evident when Year 3 pupils were confidently using Spanish words for numbers during their mathematics support group session. In the outstanding lessons seen, clear links with wider themes in different subject areas are used to encourage pupils to think creatively and further extend their progress. This approach is not yet consistent in all lessons.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most teaching is good with some that is outstanding, especially in reading. For example, in a Year 4 class, the teacher encouraged a group of pupils to think deeply about whether information in a text about Wayne Rooney was fact or fiction. Probing questions from the teacher made sure that the readers understood the need to back up opinion with evidence.
- Throughout the school, pupils read with confidence at their own level and use a range of skills to tackle unknown words. In some lessons, opportunities are missed to link learning to problems which relate to the pupils' own experiences. In a mathematics lesson exploring bar charts pupils used data, which was provided by the teacher, and missed the chance to extend their learning further by collecting their own information for the charts. Similarly, in a writing lesson based on pirates, opportunities were missed to further extend pupils' vocabulary through drama or role play.
- Teachers make sure that pupils remain interested throughout their lessons by using a range of teaching methods. A mixture of practical activities and short periods of listening help to keep up the pace of progress. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson exploring shape, pupils planned to build rockets by plotting the way the shapes would fit together, either on individual whiteboards or by using plastic building shapes. The teacher's questioning encouraged them to reflect on their work. Use of the 'working walls' with post-it notes, now in every classroom, provides an instant way for teachers to help pupils share what they are learning.
- Most teachers carefully assess how pupils are learning as each lesson proceeds. This enables them to direct different questions to learners at an individual level and increase pupils' understanding. This is less effective in the teaching of writing, where some teachers underestimate the ability of the most able pupils, and ask questions which are too easy. There

are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills across a range of different subjects.

- Pupils for whom English is not their first language and pupils with disabilities or special educational needs are taught very well. The school has introduced a flexible system of organising pupils into a variety of teaching groups according to age and ability. This makes very good use of staffing levels and the available teaching space. Most teaching assistants are skilled in supporting groups and individual pupils due to high quality training. They make a very positive contribution to the rapid progress made by these groups.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well throughout the school. They are helpful to visitors and are extremely polite. They take pride in the diverse school community and show each other respect. This contributes to a very calm and orderly atmosphere in school.
- Behaviour in lessons is good, supported by good teaching which keeps pupils interested in their lessons. In the least effective sessions, pupils very occasionally become distracted. However, they rarely break the school rules which are well understood by all. The consistent system of 'right choice' language is now understood and used by the whole school community. Staff and most parents appreciate the very clear boundaries which have been set by the new headteacher for behaviour. One parent described improvements in behaviour as 'a definite change for the better'.
- Vulnerable pupils are well cared for, with additional support provided if needed. Teachers and support staff have been trained to help pupils with behavioural difficulties. As a result, serious incidents of bad behaviour are rare and the rate of exclusions is low.
- Pupils feel safe. Lessons in safety, and events such as Citizenship Day, have increased their understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. They can talk about ways of avoiding unnecessary risks when using the internet, playing outside or mixing with their friends.
- Incidents of bullying or racist name calling are rare. Pupils understand different types of bullying and are very confident that any incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively by the adults in school.
- Pupils want to come to school. Attendance is higher than the national figures for primary schools. There are very few pupils whose low attendance is of concern. This is because the school quickly follows up cases of poor attendance and contacts parents and carers to resolve any difficulties.

The leadership and management are good

- Since the appointment of the headteacher and deputy headteacher in September 2011, the school has started on a journey of rapid improvement. Expectations of achievement and behaviour have been raised, and teaching is now at least good with no inadequate lessons.
- The local authority has maintained close links with the school and monitored its development during its transition to a federation, providing good support.
- Training of teachers and support staff has helped them to assess pupils' progress more accurately. This means that they are able to give much clearer advice in lessons about what learners need to do to make their work even better. Nevertheless, the school recognises that there is scope for middle leaders to provide more support for their colleagues, for example through coaching. Senior leaders manage teachers' pay and performance well.
- There are far fewer inconsistencies in pupils' progress than at the time of the last inspection. Rates of learning are increasing. Areas for development from the last inspection report, which was just over a year ago, have been dealt with systematically and with considerable success. This shows that the school has a strong capacity to continue to improve.
- Staff turnover in the early stages of the federation has not been allowed to slow the pace of

school improvement. Positive deployment of teachers across the infant and junior school has encouraged staff to share expertise and therefore raise standards. This is especially apparent in the appointment of the inclusion manager from the infant school to the leadership team of the junior school. Shared knowledge about the learning needs of pupils has greatly added to the school's ability to care for its pupils and improve their education. Procedures are in place to make sure that children are kept safe in school.

- The vision and drive of the new headteacher has been key to improvements in the school. Her energy and clear view of what makes a good or better school have enthused the whole staff team to work together and aim for common goals. Teachers know that they will be held accountable for the progress of the pupils in their class. Pupils have noticed the difference. They enjoy the range of clubs and activities. As one child said, 'Over the last year, new things have been put into the school. There are more opportunities for responsibility.'
- Parents are pleased with the school. Most commented positively on the changes. One parent said, 'Some moments here are magical, when I get involved as a parent. I like to get up in the morning to come here.'
- **The governance of the school:**
 - is good and improving
 - initiated the move towards a federation and had a clear view of the benefits of shared leadership
 - understands the school's strengths and weakness and is taking an increasing role in challenging the school to become even better
 - has been involved in its own self-evaluation. The governing body's expertise is used by the local authority to support the governing bodies of other schools
 - keeps a keen eye on the budget and closely looks at the link between pay scales and the progress of the pupils
 - fulfils its statutory requirements with regard to safeguarding.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	101795
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	404783
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	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elaine Jones
Headteacher	Tamsyn Lawlor
Date of previous school inspection	6–7 July 2011
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