

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

The Broadway, Barking, London, IG11 7AR

Inspection dates 20–21 November 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although standards at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 have improved over recent years, the proportion of pupils making good progress is not yet high enough.
- There are gaps in the achievement of pupils from different groups, including those from minority ethnic groups and those with special educational needs.
- The rate of pupils' progress in learning to read varies too much.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their writing in different subjects.
- Marking does not make clear to pupils what they have to do to improve.
- In some lessons, pupils are not active enough in their learning.
- Leaders do not always use information about how well pupils are doing to help make sure that suitable support is provided and all pupils progress well.
- Governors sometimes do not ask the right questions of leaders and managers to help the school improve.

The school has the following strengths

- School leaders have brought about improvements over the last year, particularly in teaching and behaviour.
- Pupils' rates of attendance are excellent and well above the national average. The school works closely with parents and carers to make sure pupils come to school.
- Pupils enjoy school. They behave well, feel safe, are welcoming, friendly and happy, and it is evident that pupils and teachers get on very well together.
- The school has worked very well in partnership with another local school to help bring about recent improvements.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 lessons or parts of lessons, taught by 12 teachers. Seven lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher or assistant headteacher.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives from the governing body, a representative from the local authority, and staff.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence, including the school's documents on self-evaluation and safeguarding. They observed the school's work, looked at pupils' books and the tracking system used to monitor their progress.
- Inspectors considered the five responses to the online Parent View questionnaire as well as information from a recent parent and carer survey carried out by the school.

Inspection team

Miranda Perry, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Richard Boswell	Additional inspector
Jennifer Barker	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Joseph's is an above average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is above average.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those whose first language is not English are well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average as is the proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The majority of senior and middle leaders were new in post from September 2012.
- The school does not have any alternative form of provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to at least good in order to quicken pupils' progress by:
 - ensuring that marking always makes clear to pupils how to improve and provides them with opportunities to respond and practise specific skills
 - increasing the opportunities available for pupils to take responsibility for, and be active in, their own learning.
- Improve pupils' reading and writing skills by:
 - ensuring that letters and sounds are taught consistently in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 so that pupils learn to read and write at a faster rate
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to write for different purposes in different subjects.
- Improve leadership and management so that they are at least good by:
 - ensuring that information about pupils' progress is used effectively to identify potential underachievement and that highly effective strategies and consistently good and better teaching are in place that result in all groups of pupils achieving well
 - developing the skills of governors in holding leaders to account for the performance of the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In the year groups where teaching is not consistently good, pupils' progress requires improvement. As a result, some pupils have to make up for previous underachievement during the following year and this slows their overall progress.
- Pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium and those from minority ethnic groups do not make good progress in all year groups; at times, the materials teachers use do not interest them, so they are not actively involved in their learning.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs requires improvement. Although some make sound progress, staff do not consistently use what they know about pupils' obstacles to learning to plan work that matches their needs and supports good progress.
Some pupils do not make rapid enough progress in reading. They are not taught letters and sounds in the same way in each year group and so become confused about how to improve. Similarly, although they make progress in writing in English lessons, they do not get the chance to practise what they have learnt in other lessons, and consequently their progress in writing is at times not fast enough.
- There are signs that achievement has started to improve. Although progress across each key stage overall is at least adequate, and good for some pupils, this is often because pupils work successfully to catch up in certain year groups, having made slow progress previously. The general trend in attainment over the last five years is rising and is now in line with national averages at both key stages.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage there are examples of good progress. Children enter Nursery with knowledge, skills and abilities at levels below those typically found. The Nursery focuses successfully on developing children's basic skills. In a session about counting, a boy who at first was unable to sit still, by the end was on task, acting out being a duck and counting other ducks.
- Progress is good in Year 6. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, some pupils slowed in their progress when doing a mental calculation. The teacher asked them where it was they had got stuck and helped them to work through all their obstacles, so their progress sped up again. One pupil said, 'Your brain sticks. He helps us unstick it, so we can get thinking again.'
- When pupils are active in lessons, they make good progress. For example in a Reception class, children played at being construction workers, and made good progress in their skills of coordination, teamwork and number recognition.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although there is some good teaching in the school, the quality varies across year groups and classes. Where teaching is less than good, pupils have to listen to the teacher for too long and do not get a chance to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Books are regularly marked. However, marking does not give pupils a clear idea of how to improve. It does not give pupils the chance to respond to their teacher or to practise what they have learnt from the feedback.
- Not all staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 have the subject knowledge to teach letters and sounds well. There is too much variation in approach and in some reading lessons pupils are not taught strategies to help them read that match their reading level.
- Pupils develop skills to improve their writing in English lessons. In other subjects, teachers do not reinforce these skills. Pupils acquire a writing technique in an English lesson, and then fail to use it correctly in the next subject being taught that day.
- When pupils are engaged by inspiring materials, they make good progress. In a Year 5 English

lesson, pupils were asked to describe the eyes of a character in a poem. One pupil said excitedly to her partner, 'I can see him now. His eyes are deep tunnels. That's exactly what he looks like.'

- Pupils learn well when they have resources they are given the chance to move, touch and explore. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, a boy was delighted when he realised he could estimate the weight of a bag of raisins just by holding it.
- When teaching is good, pupils want to satisfy their teacher's high expectations. A Year 3 pupil said, 'My teacher says I am her star learner, so I make sure I always am.'

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils believe that their learning is important, and behave well in lessons. When asked if their behaviour was good, one Year 6 pupil said, 'Of course! You behave here, because you want to learn.'
- Pupils respond well to the school's system of rewards for good behaviour. They compete over who can get the highest reward. A group of Year 3 girls explained that every day they work out how they can behave even better than they did the day before.
- Pupils' attendance is exemplary. The school identifies early if a pupil's attendance is slipping, and puts systems in to place to avoid the possibility of long-term absence. A Year 4 pupil said that they felt cared for, because the school wants them to attend, learn and be happy.
- Parents and carers say that their children are safe, and pupils agree. Pupils enjoy being energetic, but appreciate space in the school to be reflective. One Year 5 girl was pleased that her teacher always found her somewhere to be calm and quiet.
- The school has high expectations of pupils getting on with each other. Pupils manage their own behaviour through respect and an understanding of the difference between right and wrong. A group of Key Stage 1 pupils had got cross with each other about a game they were playing. They agreed that if they all apologised it would be alright and so that is what they did.
- Pupils understand their responsibility to promote equality of opportunity, and not tolerate discrimination. They are very proud of the work they do for Black History Month to understand prejudice. 'It is a very important thing we do every year', one Year 6 boy said.
- Some pupils arrive in the Early Years Foundation Stage without the basic skills to behave for learning. The school understands what strategies will best develop their skills so that very quickly these pupils are able to practise good behaviour.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leaders and managers have systems in place to collect information about how well the pupils are doing. However, it is not always used well to accelerate progress, and leaders have identified the need to improve the use of these data to determine how pupils' needs can be met so that all achieve well.
- Most school leaders were new in post from September 2012. They already have an understanding of what their broad priorities are. However, they do not use what they know about pupils' progress to develop more focused priorities that respond to specific weaknesses in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The progress of pupils with special educational needs is tracked, but this information is not consistently used in lessons to promote good progress.
- The school works well in partnerships. Its open and positive relationship with its neighbour Catholic primary school has resulted in recent improvements in progress and in teaching, due to targeted training. All staff are very responsive to new ideas,

constructive criticism and ways to improve.

- The school has an effective relationship with the local authority. The local authority has worked well with leaders to help them understand clearly where the school has improved, and what more they need to do.
- The school's leaders and managers have increased the focus on promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils and to ensuring that any discrimination is tackled robustly.
- The school's systems for monitoring teaching and managing staff performance are beginning to bring about a more accelerated focus on improvements in teaching. Teachers are set challenging targets which help them to focus on pupils' progress with school leaders recognising that there is still work to be done to ensure that good progress is the norm. These systems also help the headteacher and governors to make fair decisions about pay increases.
- Pupils are becoming better prepared for life after St Joseph's. For example, a mathematics teacher from a local secondary school provides regular sessions in mathematics for the more able Year 6 pupils. The sessions make the pupils feel confident about their transition to secondary school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body understands what the school has done to improve over the last year. Governors understand the school's systems for managing staff performance, particularly how the headteacher has set targets which are beginning to improve teaching. They have now set up a monitoring sub-committee. The governing body's skills in questioning leaders in order to hold the school to account are not yet fully developed. However, the governing body is now beginning to use information gathered through the sub-committee to check regularly how well the school is doing, set the school demanding targets and help the school to achieve these. Governors are effective at identifying their own training needs, and developing themselves professionally. They have discussed the allocation of the pupil premium as they are keen to ensure that pupils at risk of underachieving enjoy the same experiences as their peers, for example, attending school trips. The governing body monitors the impact of attendance at these activities on the pupils' progress. However, this additional funding has not yet had the best possible impact on closing the gap in achievement between these pupils and their peers.
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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	101235
Local authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	400464

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	297
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marcella Murphy
Headteacher	Emlin Bunn
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 February 2010
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