

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School

Goodson Road, London NW10 9LS

Inspection dates 16–17 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- This is a lively and energetic school with clear aims.
- Under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, there has been a relentless and successful drive to improve the school. This means that pupils have a strong start in their education.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are a strong team. Other senior leaders, all staff and governors support them very effectively.
- Pupils achieve highly in their academic and personal skills. They make excellent progress, often from very low starting points.
- A very careful watch is kept on the progress of all pupils. Any pupils falling behind because they find learning difficult are quickly given the extra help they need. This gets them back on track.
- Teaching is outstanding. Pupils succeed because lessons are consistently good and outstanding. There is a wide range of very effective extra support for pupils. All staff have very high expectations.
- Even though teaching is outstanding, in a few lessons there is scope for the higher ability pupils to be stretched even more.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are exemplary. They are keen to do well and meet the school's high aspirations. They say they feel completely safe.
- The larger than average group of pupils whose first language is not English make excellent progress because they are very well supported.
- The youngest pupils are helped to settle quickly. They soon 'take on' the aspirational culture of the school. They make excellent progress.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons. The topics they learn about interest them. There is a strong emphasis on developing skills in English and mathematics. Pupils' learning is successfully enhanced by carefully planned creative and sporting activities.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 27 lessons and parts of lessons. They also listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff, pupils, parents, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's improvement planning, policies, safeguarding information, pupils' books, information about pupils' progress and other documentation.
- Twenty-five responses from the online 'Parents View' questionnaire were considered. Inspectors also reviewed responses from staff in a survey about the leadership and management of the school.

Inspection team

Daniel Towl, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Maura Docherty

Additional Inspector

Noureddin Khassal

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for additional support through the pupil premium funding is above average.
- Over 90% of pupils come from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is higher than average.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils is supported through school action. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is above average.
- The school exceeds the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise all teaching to the standard of the very best by:
 - ensuring that, in all lessons, there is enough challenge for the higher ability pupils so that they are 'set-off' more quickly in lessons on their stretching tasks.
 - ensuring that all lessons have crystal clear explanations and challenging pace.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children start in the Nursery class with skills that are generally well below those typical for their age, especially in language, social and personal development. Most children are new to the English language when they start at the school. Staff help children to settle quickly. They plan activities that help children make rapid progress. This continues from the Nursery right through the Reception Year. Children are well prepared for the demands of Year 1 because most have reached or exceeded the levels expected. These young children reflect the high expectations and aspirations of the school.
- Pupils continue to make rapid progress across the school. Results in national tests are above average in English and mathematics. The school is fully aware that not quite as many pupils reach the highest levels in writing as in reading and mathematics. School leaders are successfully addressing this matter. Careful attention is now given to ensuring that pupils have the necessary skills and vocabulary. The quality of writing is improving but remains under the close scrutiny of senior leaders.
- Careful and targeted use of pupil premium money has been very successful. These pupils do better than similar groups nationally. The small gap in achievement between their levels and those of their classmates is closing rapidly. Almost all these pupils make consistently good or outstanding progress from their starting points.
- Pupils get off to a good start with their reading. High quality teaching of letter sounds from an early age enables pupils to read very competently. By Year 2, they have reached or exceeded expected levels. Pupils develop their reading skills well as they move up through school. Older pupils gain a broad and varied vocabulary which they use to good effect in their reading, writing and speaking.
- Pupils who are new to learning English do exceptionally well. Where additional support is required, it is extremely well matched to pupils' needs. The school uses a wide range of support, including small-group and one-to-one activities. Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs also receive well-managed support. They make excellent progress from their starting points. Pupils of all backgrounds do equally well.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- High quality teaching is one of the keys to the success of the school. Consistent quality across all the different types of teaching, for example class lessons, additional booster sessions, one-to-one groups and individual support, ensures that pupils' needs are met.
- All staff have extremely high expectations of their pupils. Relationships are excellent. This creates a strong learning environment. It gives pupils the confidence to contribute ideas and participate effectively in lessons, helping them to make excellent progress.
- Lessons are carefully planned. Teachers use a variety of techniques effectively to fully engage all pupils. Role play, group work, investigations, practical tasks, and opportunities to ask and answer questions and share ideas all contribute to pupils' excellent learning and enjoyment.
- Occasionally, in a minority of the lessons observed, higher attaining pupils did not have the chance to move on more quickly and sometimes explanations did not have the sharpness and clarity of those seen in the very best lessons.
- Teachers give clear information to pupils about how to improve their work. Timely reminders in lessons help to maintain pupils' focus. Key skills are carefully and expertly taught, whether they be letter sounds in the Nursery and Reception classes, developing hand/eye coordination and accuracy in physical education or how to make writing more atmospheric and thoughtful, in the case of older pupils.
- Marking is very thorough. At its very best, it is a written dialogue between the pupil and teacher about what the next steps might be to improve. Pupils said that they find both the ongoing

written and spoken comments from teachers very helpful.

- Teaching assistants work very effectively alongside class teachers. They provide seamless and valuable support both in class and working with small groups and individuals.
- Very rigorous checking of pupils' learning leads to effective 'pin-point' teaching of specific skills. This enables pupils, especially those who are disabled or have special educational needs, to quickly overcome a specific problem and move on more quickly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils enjoy school and have excellent attitudes to learning and to each other. They want to succeed. One young pupil, having solved a problem, said to an inspector, 'Was that good thinking?' – an attitude that sums up the school's approach.
- Pupils respond well to the high expectations of staff. This results in outstanding behaviour in lessons, assemblies and break times. There are very few incidents of poor behaviour. Instances of racism or bullying of any sort are extremely rare events. Expert staff are very successful in supporting pupils who struggle to control their behaviour. They make excellent progress in developing their self-control, which in turn enables them to learn well.
- Parents are very pleased with the standards of behaviour at the school.
- All groups of pupils feel safe and are acutely aware of what constitute unsafe situations. They know how to keep themselves and others safe, including while using the internet. Pupils and staff receive training in e-safety.
- Attendance is high because the importance of going to school to learn is clearly explained to pupils and parents. Absence is followed up very rigorously.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher and dedicated staff team have successfully created a culture where there is a belief that everyone can succeed. This is evident when talking with pupils and parents about the school. Staff questionnaires showed that there is overwhelming support for the way the school is led and managed.
- There is a very rigorous and uncompromising approach to improving the school in all aspects of its work. There is no complacency. Even though strong improvements have been made since the last inspection, there is still a constant strive to do better still. Improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievements are always the highest priorities for the headteacher.
- Governors and leaders at all levels are very clear and accurate in judging the strengths of the school and identifying those areas that can be improved further. Improvements are carefully planned and progress towards targets is very robustly monitored.
- The school does all it can to ensure that pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed. Pupils' progress is regularly and very rigorously checked. If a pupil falls behind for any reason, quick action is taken to remedy this. Additional support for pupils who need it, including the use of pupil premium money, is expertly managed. This results in all pupils making consistently good or outstanding progress.
- The governors and headteacher have made every effort and succeeded in appointing high quality and committed staff. The performance of staff is extremely well managed. Teachers' performance targets and pay progression are very closely linked to pupils' progress and the expectations of the national Teachers' Standards. Teachers new to the profession – about a quarter of the staff – are very well supported.
- Senior leaders' continual pursuit of excellence in teaching means that the bar is set very high. Teachers are keen to improve. When areas for improvement in teaching are identified, they are followed up very quickly with appropriate support and training.
- The local authority provides 'light touch' support. There are four visits per year to review

standards and discuss school developments. Some support has been provided for newly qualified teachers and governors.

- Although there is a strong emphasis on teaching key skills in English and mathematics, the curriculum is broad and varied. It is enriched with opportunities for pupils to develop their creative and sporting skills and interests. Pupils enjoy their themed projects, with one entitled 'heroes and villains' being seen during the inspection.
 - The strong emphasis on personal achievement and self-esteem, the consistently high expectations of pupils and broad learning experiences strongly support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
 - Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are thorough and fully meet statutory requirements.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. Governors are well informed and have received training to ensure that they have the necessary skills to carry out their roles. They know the key strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are fully aware of how the pupils are achieving compared with other schools nationally. Governors are not complacent about their work. The headteacher is held to account with rigorous performance targets. Governors are fully aware of the performance of staff and their pay levels. In conjunction with the headteacher, the governors manage the school's finances efficiently, including the use of the pupil premium money.
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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	101555
Local authority	Brent
Inspection number	404770

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	490
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clive Romain
Headteacher	Dawn Titus
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 February 2011
Telephone number	020 89655651
Fax number	020 89619022
Email address	admin@stjo.brent.sch.uk

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