

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Old Road, Crayford, Dartford, DA1 4DZ

Inspection dates 12–13 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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.

- The school has improved rapidly since its last inspection and is well placed to continue to do so.
- Pupils achieve well and make good progress.
- Progress in lessons is usually good and sometimes outstanding.
- Teaching and learning have improved and are now consistently good or better in all classes.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good or better. Pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming. They feel safe and have positive attitudes to learning.
- Leadership and management across the school are good. The headteacher provides determined and inspirational leadership. She is well supported by the senior leadership team and other staff. There is a sharp focus on improving the quality of teaching and raising achievement.
- The governing body has enthusiastically embraced its responsibilities. It provides well-informed challenge and good strategic direction.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Sometimes activities go on for too long and teachers are not always clear about exactly what they want pupils to learn. Teaching assistants do not always support learning well enough.
- While overall achievement is good and progress is accelerating, in some classes more-able pupils are not making as much progress as they could.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons or part-lessons, three of which were joint observations with the headteacher. Inspectors also made a number of short focused visits to observe teaching.
- Meetings were held with the school council, another group of pupils, seven members of the governing body, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and other members of staff. The lead inspector also met with a representative from the local authority and a Local Leader of Education (LLE). Inspectors spoke informally to pupils on the playground and around the school. The lead inspector also listened to pupils read and talked to them about their books and favourite authors.
- Inspectors took account of the 28 responses to the online questionnaire, (Parent View), during the inspection.
- They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' achievement, documents relating to safeguarding and staff training, minutes of the governing body and other monitoring groups, and those relating to the performance management of staff. The lead inspector also scrutinised the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning.

Inspection team

Robert Lovett, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

June Woolhouse

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- St Joseph's is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is close to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and supported through the pupil premium is about half of that found nationally.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage, with others being from a range of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak a first language other than English is lower than average with few being at the early stages of learning English.
- The school exceeds the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by ensuring that:
 - the pace of learning is always brisk and activities do not go on for longer than they need
 - teachers always carefully explain exactly what they want pupils to learn.
- Raise achievement for all pupils so that it is outstanding overall by:
 - increasing the level of challenge for the most-able pupils
 - making sure that pupils' work is always well matched to their abilities, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Ensure that all teaching assistants support learning more effectively by:
 - checking fully that pupils understand what they are expected to do
 - ensuring that all pupils are working hard.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is improving and pupils make good progress.
- Children enter the Reception class with levels of skills, knowledge and understanding which are broadly as one would expect. They make good progress during their first year in the school and are well prepared to enter Year 1.
- Attainment in Key Stage 1 is rising. Pupils are doing well when compared to the school's performance in 2012 and the performance of pupils nationally. Attainment is rising in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's accurate checks on pupils' achievement at Key Stage 2 show that they are making rapid progress and are likely to reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics which are above those expected for their age.
- Pupils in Year 6 are likely to do better than in 2012 and better than pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion reaching the higher Level 5 is also set to rise. While attainment for the most-able pupils is improving and they are making good progress overall, not all are making as much progress as they capable of, and rates of progress are not as rapid as for some other groups.
- Almost all pupils are eager, confident readers. They are keen to talk about the books they are reading, their preferred style of book and favourite authors. Pupils read well for their age. They read with good expression and obvious enjoyment.
- Progress observed in lessons is consistently at least good. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that progress over the year is good and improving. In lessons seen, pupils made the best progress when expectations were high and clear so that they knew exactly what they were expected to learn and how their work would be assessed. Sometimes pupils did not make as much progress as they could because work was not well-enough matched to pupils' different abilities. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are good.
- The school is successful in promoting equality of opportunity. It is closing the achievement gap for those pupils who underachieve compared with nationally. In some classes the performance of pupils supported through the pupil premium exceeds the progress of other pupils in English and mathematics and is particularly rapid. However, there is still some way to go before the attainment gap closes completely. Those pupils who speak a first language other than English typically achieve well and do better than similar pupils nationally.
- Because their progress is carefully tracked and their learning needs are met well, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching was observed in all classes and by all teachers. This is now the norm. Almost all teaching is good and some is outstanding. There is good teaching and progress in all subjects, including phonics (the sounds letters make), mathematics and English.
- Pupils make the most rapid progress when teaching proceeds at a good pace, pupils know how much time they have to complete their work and teachers carefully explain exactly what they want them to learn. In these lessons work is carefully matched to meet the needs of the most and least able and everyone is clear about how their work will be assessed. Where teaching is less successful the pace of learning slows because introductions go on for too long and teachers do not properly explain what pupils are to do.
- Marking, which was a weakness at the time of the last inspection is now of high quality. Pupils have regular opportunities to respond to teachers' detailed marking and improve their work. Pupils are clear about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. As a result they achieve well, are increasingly confident and their writing is more ambitious. Pupils know their targets in reading, writing and mathematics and how they need to improve in order to meet them.

- Pupils work very well together and readily cooperate in order to complete tasks and solve problems. They greatly enjoy being able to discuss their ideas and solutions with one another. In a good English lesson pupils were practising their persuasive arguments on one another in order to improve their writing. While this was very successful overall, one Year 4 pupil found his argument to consign Justin Bieber to Room 101 much less persuasive than he had hoped.
- Pupils talk about their work with great enthusiasm and enjoy using subject-specific vocabulary, whether in English, mathematics or physical education.
- Daily guided reading is proving very effective in promoting older pupils' enjoyment of books and improving their wider English skills. Pupils are expected to read every day and most read at home on a regular basis. Reading records are checked every day and daily reading at home is strongly encouraged. Where pupils are not heard regularly at home they are the focus of additional support in school.
- While most teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning, some are too passive and do too little to promote learning or support pupils' progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good and often exemplary. They are polite, friendly and welcoming. They willingly hold the door open for visitors and for each other. Pupils are eager to talk about their work and have positive attitudes to learning. They play well together and the playground is a busy but harmonious place. Even the games of football are calm and good humoured. Pupils enjoy taking on additional responsibilities such as eco-warriors, friendship buddies and as school councillors.
- Pupils say they feel very safe and secure. They say that bullying is rare but that should it occur they are confident about reporting it and equally confident that problems would be resolved. They know about different forms of bullying and how to deal with them. Year 6 pupils say that they feel confident and well prepared to move on to their next schools. Pupils know about staying safe online and about the potential dangers of mobile phones and social networks. They spoke positively about the recent e-safety sessions and said that their parents and carers had benefited from the separate parent workshops.
- Pupils say that the warm and nurturing ethos of the school is important to them and that they value the strong sense of community that attending a faith school provides.
- Attendance is well above average and the number of persistent absentees is low.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management across the school are good. The headteacher provides quietly determined and inspirational leadership. She is well supported by the senior leadership team and other key members of staff. Throughout the school there is an eagerness to improve, openness of mind and a willingness to act decisively on constructive feedback in order to improve outcomes for pupils. As a result, the school has improved significantly since the last inspection and is very well placed to continue to do so. There is a particularly sharp focus on improving teaching through a performance management system which focuses on improving outcomes for pupils and on targeted training for teachers.
- The school's evaluations of how well it is doing are clear and accurate, resulting in effective and detailed improvement planning with measurable success criteria so that the school can be held to account for how well it is doing.
- Displays of work in classrooms and around the school are of high quality and are used well to provide a stimulating learning environment. They reflect a broad range of subjects and exemplify high expectations. Good quality writing is on display from every child.
- The local authority has provided very effective support for school improvement through its

brokered partnership with a successful Catholic secondary school and the support provided in mathematics, English and the teaching of phonics. There has also been very effective strategic monitoring and support for the headteacher and senior leadership team.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Since the school was last inspected the governing body has enthusiastically embraced its responsibilities and provides well-informed challenge and good, clear strategic direction. Governors ensure that all statutory safeguarding requirements are met and staff training in child protection is up to date. Recent training on analysing data has enabled the governing body to focus carefully on pupils' progress, checking on those groups of pupils most vulnerable to underachievement, and use this information to review the school's performance with that of similar schools. They have a very good understanding of the data and make appropriate links between the use of resources, pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. Teachers' performance management reviews are explicitly linked to pupils' achievement.
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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	101457
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	420424

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	All-through
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tom Boshell
Headteacher	Jean Sinclair
Date of previous school inspection	15 May 2012
Telephone number	01322 524162
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