

St Joseph's Catholic Junior School

Vicarage Road, Leyton, E10 5DX

Inspection dates 4–5 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- All groups of pupils achieve well. Attainment is rising across the school in reading, writing and mathematics as pupils are making faster progress.
- Teaching is typically good. Pupils enjoy learning activities that are carefully planned and interesting.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding. Their enthusiasm, initiative and keen participation make a strong contribution to their progress in lessons. They are very aware of how to keep safe.
- Pupils are extremely polite and respectful. They take on meaningful responsibilities and are well rewarded for their efforts. They enjoy coming to school and attendance is consistently high.
- Teamwork is a strength. Staff are united in their determination to ensure pupils achieve their full potential.
- The quality of teaching is regularly kept under review so that staff, including those new to teaching profession, develop their teaching skills well.
- Reading is taught well so that pupils quickly become fluent readers and develop a love of books.
- Leadership and management are good. The very dedicated headteacher, supported by the effective leadership and management team and governors, has been successful in improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Pupils have memorable experiences, including those in art, music and sporting activities which contribute strongly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet typically outstanding throughout the school.
- Tasks and activities do not always stretch pupils to achieve to the very best of their abilities, especially the most able.
- Teachers do not always clarify, through their marking, what pupils must do to improve their work. Pupils are not consistently given time to respond to their advice.
- Middle leaders are not yet fully effective in checking the quality of teaching in the subjects they are responsible for across the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 14 lessons or parts of lessons, including ones that were focused on physical education (PE). Five of these were jointly observed with senior leaders. Inspectors also made short visits to specific support classes.
- Inspectors talked to pupils both informally and formally, including a group of more able learners. They heard pupils read and looked at samples of their work.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents, including those in the school's most recent questionnaire and the 19 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire. They also talked to several parents before school and considered the views of staff expressed in 13 questionnaires.
- Discussions were held with representatives from the local authority's advisory service and the Acting Chair of the Governing Body and other representatives. The inspectors held discussions with members of the senior and extended leadership teams.
- Inspectors examined pupils' progress information and the work of a randomly selected group of pupils supported by pupil premium funding (extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children in local authority care). In addition, other school documentation, including the minutes of governors' meetings and information relating to targets set for teachers and safeguarding, was scrutinised.

Inspection team

Barbara Firth, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kate Robertson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Joseph's Catholic Junior School is an average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils come from a minority ethnic group and approximately half of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action are above the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding given to schools for children in specific groups including those in care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics.
- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2012 following a period of instability within the leadership of the school.
- The school works closely with the feeder infant school and local Catholic secondary school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that it is typically outstanding, by:
 - making sure that tasks and activities always stretch pupils to achieve the very best of their ability, especially the most able
 - improving the quality of marking so that it is consistently effective in providing regular guidance to pupils in how they can improve their work in all subjects
 - ensuring pupils have time to respond to the advice given.
- Strengthen the role of middle leaders in checking the quality of teaching so they can be fully effective in raising pupils' achievement in the subjects they are responsible for across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Attainment has improved since the last inspection. Pupils' work observed during the inspection and the school's progress data confirm that most pupils achieve well from their various starting points.
- The attainment of the Year 6 pupils, who left the school in 2013, was above average in reading, writing and well above average in mathematics. It was an improvement on that attained by pupils in 2012.
- The school has successfully eliminated the slower progress pupils were making previously in Years 3 and 4, so that current attainment is closer to above average across the school.
- Achievement in reading has improved steadily over the last three years so that it is now above the national average. This reflects the greater emphasis put on reading across all subjects. Younger pupils demonstrated that they could read with good meaning and understanding. Older pupils speak enthusiastically about different authors and read widely across a range of literature.
- The most able pupils are making faster progress, and their attainment is rising because teachers have higher expectations. However, achievement is not yet outstanding because the progress of the most able pupils is not consistent throughout the school and some pupils could achieve more.
- Greater numbers of pupils are taking part in a wider range of sports and competitions supported by the new school sport funding. Pupils say they are more active now and enjoy competing with other schools, at a high level and with increasing success. The school ensures that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds have the opportunity to take part in these tournaments.
- The school actively promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination. Regular checks on pupils' progress mean that anyone who needs extra help is quickly identified and provided with effective and specific support. Consequently, most disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress in all subjects and are reaching their potential.
- Pupil premium funding is used well for extra staffing, one-to-one tuition, group support and extra resources, all of which are helping to speed up progress for eligible pupils. As a result, attainment is better than that of similar pupils nationally. However, pupils eligible for free school meals in 2013 were six months behind their peers in school overall, being four months behind in reading and writing and six months behind in mathematics. The largest gap was in English, grammar, punctuation and spelling in which those pupils eligible for free school meals were 12 months behind their peers. Evidence shows that this gap is narrowing over time.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching over time and in a range of subjects including literacy and numeracy is consistently good and is continuing to improve. It is not outstanding as, in a few instances, teachers do not provide the right level of challenge. As a result, not all pupils are achieving as well as they could.
- Teachers have excellent working relationships with their pupils and high expectations of what they are capable of achieving. This results in a good climate for learning in all lessons. Pupils very much enjoy learning and are eager to take part in class activities and join in discussions.
- Teachers have a good shared understanding of what pupils need in order to achieve their best. They work closely together to plan and deliver lessons that provide well for the needs of the pupils. This enables them to make good progress.
- In mathematics in Year 6, for example, pupils solved number problems of varying degrees of complexity using different methods of calculation. They were fully challenged to make the best possible progress, with pupils describing their activity as 'hard'. However, in other lessons, the work set for pupils does not always provide them with enough challenge to achieve the very best

of their ability, especially the most able.

- Teaching assistants are skilled and well trained. They enable those pupils with English as an additional language, those who are disabled and those who have special educational needs to quickly participate in learning. These pupils work alongside their classmates, and in small groups, and make good progress.
- Homework is set regularly for all classes appropriate to their age and stage of learning. Pupils are confident it helps them learn well.
- Not all teachers apply the school's new marking policy well enough and marking in humanities and science is not always as good as it is in literacy, numeracy and religious education. Consequently, pupils do not always know how to improve their work and take the next steps in their learning. In the instances when there is good advice, pupils are not always expected to, or given time to, respond.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. Pupils respond instantly to any instruction. For example, at the end of play when they hear the buzzer, they immediately stop what they are doing and stay still. Then, when they hear the whistle, they move quickly, quietly and sensibly to line up to go into class. Most parents and staff agreed that behaviour in the school is excellent.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning. They are very attentive in lessons and eager to participate in discussions and activities. They concentrate, persevere and are highly committed to their work.
- Pupils thrive in the very happy atmosphere of the school and relationships are respectful and supportive. Staff use praise and the celebration of achievement well to motivate and encourage pupils to give their best.
- Pupils are proud of their school and talk with great enthusiasm about their activities. They treat the environment with great respect, ensuring that there is no litter at the end of play or lunch.
- In all classes, learning proceeds without interruption because the teachers do not have to manage any misbehaviour. The school's records show that, while a few pupils have difficulties with behaviour, the school's very thorough and supportive approach to behaviour management has nevertheless helped them make good progress.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The school gives e-safety a very high priority. Parents and carers are very positive about how happy and safe their children are at school. Most parents and carers say that communication between school and home is very effective. Leaders ensure that the site is very secure and all staff are rigorously checked for their suitability.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and that they have the opportunity to explore how to stay safe in many situations outside of the school, including when engaged with new technologies. They understand different kinds of bullying well, but insist that it is rare at school. They say that they know who to ask for help if they need it.
- Attendance is well above the national average and has been over time. The school operates excellent systems to help families who are having difficulty with their children's attendance and punctuality. Consequently there are very few persistent absentees.
- The school's efforts in promoting pupils' personal and social development are having a positive impact on their growth into responsible and caring members of society. The school's core values are evident in all aspects of school life. Pupils talk with great enthusiasm about the broad range of clubs and activities after school and the visits and visitors which bring their learning to life. They have excellent opportunities to show and take responsibility including being a member of the school council, a play time monitor, an RE ambassador or to raise money for charity.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is very dedicated and has instilled a strong sense of ambition in the school. He is supported very well by all staff and governors. There is clarity as to how the school judges its effectiveness and uses this information astutely to prioritise areas for improvement.
- The headteacher and his leadership team work well together to drive forward the necessary improvements. They have created a culture in the school in which teaching can flourish. They check the quality of teaching, pupils' attainment and progress frequently during the year. This information is then used to set challenging targets to promote faster rates of progress for different groups of pupils.
- Leadership and management are not yet outstanding. This is because leaders have not secured a high enough proportion of outstanding teaching across the school in order for all pupils, particularly the most able, to achieve as well as they should.
- Middle leaders have been supported well in developing their roles. They are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses and have played an increasing role in monitoring pupils' progress. However, their impact is limited as yet because they do not play a full enough part in checking the quality of teaching in the subjects they are responsible for across the school.
- Teachers have clear and challenging targets for improving their performance which focus on pupils' achievement and teachers' wider responsibilities across the school. They know what constitutes good practice and how their pay progresses only when their targets are met. All staff benefit from high-quality training. Newly qualified teachers and support staff are very well supported in their roles.
- The local authority gives light support to the school, mainly in the area of checking the validity of the school's own judgements about its work. The school has commissioned some useful support from an external consultant. This has helped leaders develop their use of data and improve what the school provides for all pupils.
- Pupils' learning experiences across a range of subjects are varied and memorable, particularly in art, music and sport. The school provides a wide array of enrichment activities that contribute very well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Checks on the plans for the use of the new sport funding show that pupils are participating in a wider range of sporting activities and successfully competing in local tournaments. Staff are able to develop pupils' skills alongside sports specialists to help sustain these activities.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They appreciate the good levels of communication, particularly about how well their children are doing, and welcome the opportunities to be involved in their learning. There is a strong partnership between the school and the Catholic infant and secondary schools. The school has also established strong international partnerships with schools in China and Europe.
- All statutory requirements for safeguarding are met and systems are managed efficiently. Staff training in areas such as child protection is up to date.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are committed to providing the best possible education for all pupils and receive high quality information about how well pupils are performing from the headteacher. They have a clear understanding of how the school's performance data compare with similar and all schools nationally. Consequently, they are able to ask leaders challenging questions about the achievement of different groups of pupils. They are involved in developing and checking on improvement plans for themselves. They know about the quality of teaching through their increasing number of visits to the school.
 - Governors bring a good range of skills, which strengthen the leadership of the school, and they have ensured that they have had the appropriate training. They provide a strong link between the Catholic infant, junior and secondary schools, strengthening and supporting pupils' transition between these schools.
 - They know how the performance of staff is managed and how good teaching is rewarded and how any areas of underperformance are tackled. Governors employ the services of a consultant to ensure that the performance management of the headteacher is rigorous.

- The governing body manages the school budget effectively, including the additional funds for sport and pupils eligible for free school meals. Governors know how the funds are allocated and the impact they are having on pupils' physical health and their achievement.

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	103086
Local authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	439494

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

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	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Francila Joseph
Headteacher	John Alexander
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2009
Telephone number	020 8539 5971
Fax number	020 8556 9668
Email address	school@stjosephsjun.waltham.sch.uk

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