

St John Evangelist Roman Catholic Primary School

Duncan Street, Islington, London, N1 8BL

Inspection dates

23–24 October 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher's strong leadership coupled with effective team work has been instrumental in the school's recent success. The capacity for further improvement is assured.
- The thoughtful and highly effective governing body challenges leaders to improve the school and supports them to meet their aims.
- By regularly checking each teacher's performance, the headteacher is able to tailor support and further training closely to individual needs. As a result, leaders and governors have improved teaching and raised the pupils' achievement.
- Effective teaching is leading to pupils making good progress and to attainment rising by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school effectively promotes what it means to be British. The values of tolerance and respect thread through all aspects of the pupils' daily lives.
- Pupils behave well. They show great care and consideration for others whether at work or at play. They are very polite and well mannered.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and keen to live up to their teachers' high expectations by working hard and completing homework on time.
- Pupils feel happy, safe and secure in school, knowing there is always someone to turn to if they have a problem.
- The children's learning moves forward well in the early years, particularly in their language and personal development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching does not always challenge the more able pupils. Consequently, their progress is not always consistently good in all classes.
- Learning slows on occasion when the work pupils undertake does not ask enough of them.
- Activities for children in the Reception Year, particularly in the outside area, do not always extend their learning sufficiently.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons, six of which were seen together with the headteacher or other senior staff.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils’ books retained by the school from the last academic year and work from this year. These included records of the learning of children in the Nursery and the Reception Year.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 83 responses to Ofsted’s online parent questionnaire, Parent View, and the 70 responses to a recent parent questionnaire undertaken by the school. Inspectors also held informal discussions with parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents, including: the school’s own information on pupils’ current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors also took account of the 29 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Martin Beale, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Stuart Mansell	Additional Inspector
Janet Tomkins	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is above average in size.
- Half of the pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language has risen sharply and is well-above average. This includes a significant minority who enter the school at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for funding through the pupil premium is well-above average. This is additional government funding which, in this school, supports pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- More able pupils have an extra weekly mathematics activity session at the school provided by a local secondary school.
- The school has experienced considerable recent staff turnover. There are six teachers at the school who have been in the profession for less than four terms, four of whom are newly qualified.
- The Nursery caters for 26 children on a full-time basis.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of teaching on the pupils' learning and progress by ensuring that:
 - teachers consistently set work that challenges the most able pupils
 - work is always sufficiently demanding for all pupils.
- Ensure that activities provided for the children in the Reception Year, particularly in the outside area, extend their learning and build on what they have been doing inside.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and governors have skilfully led the school through a period of staff changes. They tackled vigorously a slight decline in rates of pupils' progress so that attainment is now rising. By checking carefully that all staff consistently implement school policy they have ensured behaviour is good. One result of the school's effective review of its work is that teaching is good and new teachers quickly become effective practitioners. The headteacher sets teachers challenging but achievable targets, and success in meeting them is linked to salary progression.
- Subject leaders have played a significant role in supporting improvements and providing assistance for their colleagues. The school is now embarking on action to build greater capacity in subject leadership following recent staff changes, through further training in evaluating assessment data.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well by tracking the progress of pupils carefully and swiftly taking action if there are signs of potential underachievement. The pupil premium is used well to promote the good progress of disadvantaged pupils. Its use is regularly reviewed so that leaders and governors can target spending to where it has the maximum impact on eligible pupils.
- Links with the local secondary school provide more able pupils with well managed extra mathematics sessions. Pupils are kept safe, behave well and make good progress as a result of being well challenged.
- Engagement with the local authority is comparatively light-touch but still challenging and effective such as in supporting the development of newly qualified teachers. The school also works closely in partnership with other schools to develop a common approach to new national assessment arrangements.
- The well-organised curriculum supports not only literacy and numeracy but also promotes very effectively the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies contribute considerably, such as by looking at inspirational figures and celebrating the cultures represented in the school. Joint projects with the local network of schools enable pupils to share their religious beliefs and learn about others. This is supported further by close links with the local mosque and visits to the local synagogue.
- Additional sports funding is used effectively to extend the school's already extensive provision and ensure that a legacy remains when funding ceases. Purchasing specialists to work alongside and train teachers is leading to their increased confidence and skill in teaching physical education lessons.
- **The governance of the school:**

Governors have considerable expertise, particularly in understanding assessment data. They use this very effectively to ask pertinent and challenging questions of school leaders. They are fully involved in setting targets for the school and checking progress towards their achievement. Governors are acutely aware of the quality of teaching and the strategies to secure its continual improvement. They ensure that the headteacher justifies pay increases for teachers by them meeting challenging targets. Governors strive to ensure they obtain value for money from their spending decisions by evaluating carefully their impact on the progress of pupils. Governors make sure safeguarding procedures are constantly reviewed, updated and rigorously implemented by staff.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This helps to make for a calm, happy and welcoming school. Any disruption to learning is very rare. Pupils are very communicative and keen to show off their school. They move safely around the school, at lunchtime and in assemblies showing due regard for themselves and others.
- Pupils enjoy learning and take great care over their work. Their attendance is above average and rising. Pupils mostly listen carefully to their teachers and to each other. They volunteer answers to questions enthusiastically. The learning of a small number suffers very occasionally through a loss of concentration when activities do not fully engage or challenge them.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents and carers very firmly support this view. Pupils learn how to identify risk and stay safe such as when using the internet. They know to 'Think before you click' and to alert adults if they are concerned about the content of sites.
- Pupils are quite clear about what constitutes bullying. They say any incidents are very rare and dealt with swiftly by staff. Their parents and carers agree. Pupils also say how well staff help resolve any problems when friends fall out with each other.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- Teaching is leading to good pupil learning and resulting in increasing rates of progress over time, especially in literacy, reading and mathematics. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils' work and behaviour and their classrooms are calm and purposeful as a result.
- The programme for teaching phonics (learning the sounds that letters represent) and initial reading and writing skills is taught well. Lessons follow a clear pattern that the pupils become familiar with, and resources are used creatively to stimulate their imaginations and hold their attention.
- The pupils' good progress and rising attainment in mathematics are based on better teaching and also the adoption of an online homework package. This has greatly increased the quality of work undertaken by pupils outside school.
- Support staff work well with individual pupils with special educational needs guiding their learning while encouraging them to work and make decisions about their learning themselves.
- The guidance teachers provide to pupils through comments in their marking is increasingly supporting their learning and helping them to eliminate mistakes quickly. Pupils respond thoughtfully to their teachers' written comments and also evaluate each other's work sensibly.
- Teachers generally adapt the work they set to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. For example, they often split the class into smaller groups in order to focus their teaching more sharply. However, occasionally the learning of the more able pupils slows because they spend too long on work they already understand.
- The time available is not always used to best effect in a small number of lessons. For example, some of the daily 'carousel' activities are undemanding and do not push learning forward rapidly enough except at the upper end of Key Stage 2.

The achievement of pupils**is good**

- Pupils make good and improving progress. Their attainment has risen to above average by the end of Year 6. There is no significant difference in the achievement of pupils from different minority ethnic groups.
- Year 6 test results have been broadly average in recent years. They rose considerably in all subjects in 2014 having fallen slightly in mathematics and reading the year before. Pupils are given a firm platform for success at secondary school.
- The progress of the more able pupils varies between classes and subjects but is good overall. The number of pupils reaching Level 6 in mathematics increased in 2014. This was because of effective actions such as small group teaching and their attending some master-classes at a local secondary school.
- Pupils make good progress in phonics. Results of the screening check for Year 1 pupils were above average in 2013 but fell in 2014 because several pupils had significant speech, language and communication difficulties.
- Pupils speaking English as an additional language also make good progress in all subjects. Their test results are generally at least at a similar level as others in each year group.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make at least good progress. The school works closely with outside agencies to secure advice and funding. This enables teachers to design support programmes carefully tailored to individual needs.
- Disadvantaged pupils make rapid progress in reading and writing. For the 2014 Year 6 cohort, their progress was greater than for others. This helped close the gap in attainment between eligible pupils and their peers in the Year 6 test results to one year in writing and two terms in reading. Their results in both subjects were higher than the national average for all pupils.
- Progress is good for disadvantaged pupils in mathematics but not as rapid as in reading and writing. Subject leaders have identified that not all disadvantaged pupils were able to access the online homework last year. This meant the gap in Year 6 results with other pupils was about two years, although much closer to the national average for all pupils. Identified pupils are now given time to undertake this work in school. This has increased completion rates but it is too early to see its impact on their achievement.

The early years provision**is good**

- Children achieve well in the Nursery and Reception classes because provision is well led and managed. Progress is good from starting points which, for a significant minority, are below those typical of this age group in language and communication skills and in mathematical development. Their attainment is broadly average by the time they enter Year 1 but generally higher in literacy than in their mathematical development.
- All adults focus on developing the children's language skills by being models of clear spoken English, explaining new vocabulary carefully and providing an environment in which talk is valued. This, and the attention of adults to the children's social development, helps them to settle quickly and enables those new to English to make rapid strides in their speaking.
- Children develop their understanding of phonics quickly because sessions are well taught and followed up by activities that enable them to build on what they have learnt. This is not consistently the case in other areas of learning where opportunities for children to extend their learning are not always as effective. This is particularly the case in the Reception outdoor classroom where activities do not always hold the children's attention or build on what they have been learning inside.
- Children are well motivated and become quickly engaged in learning, particularly in sessions led directly by adults. They follow classroom routines without fuss and work together well supporting each other in discussion or when working on activities. They show confidence and a readiness to learn, which comes in part from the close and productive partnership between school and home.

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	100438
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	449328

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	305
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patricia Meerstadt
Headteacher	Tina Oliva
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2010
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