

# St Joseph's RC Infant and Nursery School

Crown Dale, London, SE19 3NX

**Inspection dates** 11–12 December 2014

|                                |                      |             |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Good        | 2        |
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Good</b> | <b>2</b> |
| 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 and leadership team have set clear expectations for good teaching and they support staff to improve their practice. As a result, the quality of teaching across the school is good.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is strong. Pupils feel very well looked after and their parents are very confident that their children are secure in the school.
- Pupils speak very highly of their school. They feel safe, behave well and treat adults and each other with kindness and respect.
- Teaching is good because most activities are carefully planned at the right level of difficulty for pupils and, as a result, they make good progress.
- Leaders, managers and governors have made sure that teaching has improved since the previous inspection. They are working well to drive further improvement across the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong because activities to promote it are well planned. This, together with the work of the school council, helps to prepare pupils for life in modern democratic Britain.
- Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and make good progress.
- Over the last year, the teaching of mathematics and writing has been reorganised. This is helping pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1, to learn more quickly and make better progress towards achieving more ambitious targets.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all adults are skilled in planning activities that help pupils, particularly the more able, to deepen and widen their knowledge.
- In the past, some targets set for pupils were not high enough to help them to attain the highest levels and this has had an impact on standards by the end of Year 2.
- Marking in subjects other than in English does not always identify clearly enough what pupils should do to improve their work. Staff do not always make sure that pupils have made the necessary corrections.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 12 lessons or parts of lessons taught by seven teachers. In addition, they observed pupils' activities at break and lunchtimes.
- One lesson was observed jointly with the headteacher, who also accompanied an inspector on an additional visit to look at pupils' activities in two classes. The deputy headteacher joined an inspector scrutinising pupils' workbooks.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body, and middle leaders. A telephone discussion took place between an inspector and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of 16 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as informal discussions with parents. The views of the staff were taken into account through meetings and consideration of the 15 responses to staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and discussed their choices of reading books.
- The school's own attainment records for the current year as well as previous academic years were scrutinised in addition to published information on pupils' achievement. Planning documents were also examined.
- Records relating to pupils' safety and welfare were examined. Behaviour logs and attendance records were also scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Patricia MacLachlan, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Roger Fenwick

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium (extra money provided by the government for disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for free school meals and for children who are looked after) is above the national average. About seven in 10 pupils are supported by this additional funding.
- The largest ethnic groups of pupils are those of African and White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average with about one in 10 receiving additional support.
- The early years provision comprises a Nursery and two Reception classes. Thirty children currently attend the Nursery on a part-time basis in the mornings.
- Since its previous inspection, the school has joined a federation of St Joseph's Catholic Junior, Infant and Nursery Schools. The headteacher leads the whole federation. A new early years co-ordinator has been appointed since the previous inspection and the posts of mathematics and writing leaders were created in September 2014.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that the overall quality is outstanding by making sure that:
  - teachers consistently plan activities that deepen and widen pupils' knowledge, especially for the most able
  - making sure that marking in other subjects matches the quality, detail and time allocated for pupils' responses as the marking system in English.
- Improve achievement by setting more ambitious targets in reading, writing and mathematics, and checking frequently that pupils are reaching them.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management are good. Leaders have worked successfully to make sure that pupils are making good progress to achieve standards in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1. Leaders have organised frequent and rigorous checking of teachers' marking within the federation and the local cluster of Catholic schools so that the assessment of pupils' work is now more accurate.
- The committed and energetic headteacher, and the leadership team, have focused on making frequent observations of pupils' learning and detailed recording of their progress. This information is used well to improve the quality of teaching and to drive up standards.
- In the past some pupils, particularly the most able, were not set sufficiently challenging targets to reach the highest levels. Leaders have recognised this and are now starting to address this issue by focusing more sharply on target setting. Newly appointed subject leaders are being enlisted in checking that able pupils are making rapid progress.
- Middle leaders in charge of subjects also check that teachers' assessments of pupils' work are accurate. However, this has started only recently and it is too early to evaluate the full impact of their work. They are involved in training staff for new approaches to teaching mathematics and writing, and in checking pupils' progress, as well as helping parents to understand the new National Curriculum. Subject leaders are linked with their counterparts in the junior school to evaluate proposals for new assessment systems and to support faster progress for pupils as they move into Key Stage 2.
- Staff performance is managed meticulously and pay rises are only awarded if teachers help pupils to meet their progress targets. The headteacher has not shied away from difficult conversations and tackles underperformance decisively.
- School leaders are making effective use of additional funding to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, with gaps in the current Years 1 and 2 between the disadvantaged and their peers in the school having been eradicated.
- Very strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is planned in the subjects and activities offered to pupils. Pupils are helped to understand British democratic values because the curriculum includes this. Reflection upon the moral and social impact of actions is a routine part of lessons and all classrooms have attractive prayer corners. In addition to Christianity, religious education includes Judaism and Islam. There are also regular visits from a Greek Orthodox priest. All of this helps to deepen pupils' understanding of a range of faiths.
- The school council is involved in planning the school's donations to charity. The curriculum widens pupils' cultural horizons with, for example, an international celebration of the different cultures represented among the school's families. The forest school enthralled pupils and deepens their environmental understanding. Drama, music and dance performances involve the whole school and pupils' self-confidence is boosted as a result.
- Safeguarding systems meet statutory requirements and policies are reviewed regularly. Leaders promote equality and tackle any potential discrimination effectively.
- The additional government sports funding has been used to train teachers to improve physical education lessons and to give pupils additional extra-curricular opportunities in dance, tennis and gymnastics. The school is now entering more sports competitions across the borough and local cluster of Catholic schools.
- The local authority assists the school by working across the federation. Particular support has been given to the Infant and Nursery school by checking the school's assessments at the end of the early years phase; by reviewing provision for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs; and supporting training of staff who work with those who speak English as an additional language. The local authority provides training for governors and subject consultants led work to revise the mathematics curriculum last year.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the governing body know the standards of achievement and teaching in the school. This is because governors ask detailed and probing questions about pupils' performance when leaders report to them. The governing body augments this questioning with a schedule of focused visits to check that reported improvements are taking place. Governors have an accurate understanding of how pupils are performing compared with national standards because they use the published data to compare pupils' performance. They have received training from the local authority to use published data effectively. Governors understand the link between teachers' pay increases and pupils' progress. They are aware of what support has been provided to improve teaching and if there has been any underperformance. Checks are made that the pupil premium funds are spent

on the intended groups and governors hold school leaders to account for the impact of the expenditure on pupils' performance. British values of democracy and tolerance are actively promoted because governors meet the pupil council to discuss their concerns and proposals for expenditure. The governing body welcomes the celebration of families' diverse cultures and works on the principle that 'tolerance underpins our Catholic faith' by inviting parents who follow other faiths to explain their festivals and practices to the whole-school community. Governors are assiduous in ensuring that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. The budget is carefully managed to support the school improvement plan.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their attitudes to learning are positive because teachers and other adults encourage them and apply the behaviour policy consistently. Pupils respond well to, and value, the 'golden time' gained through behaving well, when they are allowed to choose their own activities.
- Pupils cooperate well with each other in lessons. Behaviour is good, rather than outstanding, because it is not exemplary across the school. Pupils' attention can wander occasionally if adults have not set high enough expectations for activities.
- Pupils behave very responsibly outside classrooms. Pupils, some given daily duties, take responsibility around the school and keep watch, for example, for anyone at the 'friendship stop' to include them in their playtime activities.
- Typically, pupils conduct themselves well around the school. This is because all staff set high expectations. Positive values are emphasised through the moral value of the school. Pupils showed enthusiasm about their advent promises to be kind to others.
- The absence rates for those pupils who find it difficult to attend school regularly have declined over recent years. This is because of more effective checking and following up of absences with parents and carers. Attendance over the past three years has been in line with the national average. Exclusions have not been used because the management of behaviour is effective.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils speak appreciatively of the way that they are looked after.
- Pupils have a good awareness of personal safety, including using the internet, because it is explained well in lessons and assemblies. Road safety is well understood and practised because it is well taught.
- Pupils understand what bullying means and their student council has been instrumental in drawing up an anti-bullying charter. They say that any incidents are rare and that staff can be relied upon to help them to overcome any problems quickly.
- The overwhelming majority of the parents who responded to Parent View or who spoke to inspectors believe that the school provides a safe and caring environment.

## The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good because it promotes good progress across all subjects.
- The school's own evaluation of the quality of teaching shows that some staff, in the past, did not set high enough expectations in mathematics to help pupils make good progress. However, mathematics teaching has now improved as a result of focused subject leadership and the introduction of new policies and methods. Pupils are now making sustained progress, particularly in Year 2.
- Marking is regular and many teachers make helpful comments on pupils' work, particularly in their English books. However, comments by teachers about what pupils should do next to improve their work are not always so detailed, nor are pupils' corrections so thorough in other subjects.
- Teachers set high expectations for pupils' extended writing work because a new system for teaching writing has been adopted across the school. This is also seen in writing in subjects such as religious education and, as a result, progress in developing vocabulary, and using grammar and punctuation, is consistent across subjects.
- Tasks in mathematics are designed to challenge the pupils' thinking and to stimulate discussion about how

to solve problems. For example, in a Year 2 activity, children were challenged to find out the answer to a key question about whether or not taller children have bigger feet. Pupils' enthusiasm was stimulated because they worked in groups to measure height and sizes of shoes. The teacher's insistence on using full sentences enabled further discussion of a pupil's comment that 'you have to stand still as a statue' to identify that this was an example of a simile. There were lively discussions among pupils about their proposed answers and how this could prove their ability to count in tens.

- Pupils who find the work difficult benefit from helpful support in class that enables them to make progress. The pupils who are capable of attaining higher levels are sometimes set extension challenges but these are not always hard enough to stretch their capabilities. Not all teachers consistently plan activities that deepen and widen pupils' knowledge, especially for the most able.
- Reading for enjoyment is encouraged across all year groups. Leaders have provided well-equipped and cosy reading areas and help pupils select books for sessions in school and at home. Pupils' reading is checked frequently by adults in detailed record books. Lessons linking sounds to letters (phonics) are well organised, sometimes enthralling pupils with stimulating activities to improve standards.

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' achievement is good. While in recent years attainment by the end of Year 2, especially in mathematics, was below that at the time of the previous inspection, this still represents good progress. Many pupils were entering school with skills that were below, and recently, well below, those typical of three- and four-year-olds.
- The school's own records show that rates of progress in mathematics, reading and writing are now good and improving, particularly in Year 2.
- Progress information on all pupils is checked regularly by leaders. Class teachers are held to account for any pupils who have failed to make expected progress and for whom they are expected to arrange additional help. Subject leaders are increasingly involved in checking whether or not this support is effective.
- More-able pupils now make good progress from the Reception classes to Key Stage 1. In the current Year 2, more-able pupils are now making better progress than in previous years, given their starting points, especially in reading and mathematics. However, school leaders recognise that there is not yet enough emphasis on setting demanding work in a range of subjects to help these attain the highest levels by the end of Year 2.
- School records show that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making the same, or even better, progress as their classmates. This is because staff work well together to make sure that these pupils are given the help that they need.
- Boys' performance in literacy has improved, closing the gap with that of girls. Pupils from different ethnic groups make equally good progress as those who speak English as an additional language. This is because well-focused training has been given to staff who support small groups.
- Additional government funding is used to run small-group activities for disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2014, the funds were used to ensure that, in reading, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers narrowed. However, in the current Years 1 and 2, the disadvantaged pupils have outperformed their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics, showing that the money is being spent increasingly effectively.

### The early years provision

is good

- Children join the Nursery and Reception classes with skills that are below, and in recent years, well below, the levels typical of three- and four-year-olds. About half the pupils every year join Reception from settings other than the school's Nursery. As a result of good teaching, increasing numbers in recent years have achieved a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year, preparing them well for Year 1. This represents good progress.
- Parents and carers are visited before their children enrol and encouraged to help their children to learn by joining well-attended workshops that focus on phonics. A 'wow moments' project encourages parents to share landmark experiences in the home environment with the school for further celebration. Helpful information about children's progress is shared frequently with parents so

that they are aware of their child's targets.

- Children behave well and respond positively to the routines established by sympathetic staff who help to defuse any minor disagreements.
- Staff help children to experience a range of interesting activities that engage their attention drawing skilfully upon classroom, outdoor and forest-school environments. Phonics is taught particularly effectively in Nursery and enables children to make a good start in reading.
- Leadership and management of the early years provision are good because teaching and support for children are effective. Adults' questions are systematically checked by leaders to make sure that all adults are helping children to develop their reasoning and powers of self-expression. Senior leaders are aware of the need to provide training in the Reception classes to assess and track children's progress more frequently to achieve even higher attainment by the end of the Reception Year.

## 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

|                                |         |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 101803  |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Croydon |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 443790  |

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

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                                |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary aided                        |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3-7                                    |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 210                                    |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                     |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Elaine Jones                           |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Tamsyn Lawlor                          |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 10–11 February 2011                    |
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