

St Joseph's College

Beulah Hill, London SE19 3HL

Inspection dates	27–28 April 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. He understands its strengths and areas for development well and has already had a significant impact on the quality of education provided.
- Governors provide a high level of support and accountability as a result of a restructuring process. They are very ambitious for the future of the school.
- Pupils achieve well in most subjects at the end of Year 11. Their progress in mathematics, science and languages is particularly strong and it is improving rapidly in English.
- Teaching enables pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding; high-quality questioning was a consistent feature of the lessons observed during the inspection.
- The school has a strong community ethos and there is much evidence of pupils developing skills such as public speaking through their contributions in chapel, or organisation and teamwork through charitable-giving events.
- Pupils are smart, well mannered and orderly both within the school and in the local community. They feel safe at school and appreciate the high level of pastoral care.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The outcomes in the sixth form are not as good as they should be.
- Middle leaders are dedicated and capable but require professional development and exposure to models of good practice so that they can take the school to the next level.
- The school's approach to gathering accurate assessment information across all departments is in its early stages. As a result, the ability to track progress and target interventions sharply is variable across subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - providing opportunities to develop the expertise of new middle leaders so that the best practice which exists in some departments runs through the whole school
 - developing consistency in the use of assessment information so that progress can be monitored and interventions precisely targeted.
- Improve provision and outcomes in the sixth form by making sure that:
 - the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good across subject areas
 - attendance in the sixth form is as good as in the rest of the school
 - the facilities for sixth form students meet their needs
 - there are sufficient opportunities for learning beyond the academic curriculum, specifically in personal and social education and extra-curricular activities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The senior team are working cohesively to move the school forward under the leadership of the headteacher. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a clear action plan to tackle the areas where development is needed; for example, a plan for improving the use of assessment information is already in place.
- There is an established programme for monitoring the day-to-day quality of teaching and learning in the school. Senior leaders walk through the school every lesson to 'take the temperature' of what is going on.
- The senior team have an accurate picture of the quality of teaching through their formal observations of lessons and by looking at pupils' work. This feeds into an effective performance management process.
- The 'Good in Six' programme offers support and development opportunities for all staff. The teaching and learning group, which draws in teachers with a range of experience, has contributed to the development of this programme and teachers feel excited about the next phase of their professional learning.
- A 'securing exceptional progress' programme of after-school sessions led by lead practitioners and senior leaders is focused on delivering consistently good and outstanding teaching and ensuring exceptional progress for pupils. Teachers talked positively about the changes that the school has made and there is a clear emphasis on developing teaching techniques and trying new strategies in the classroom.
- Middle leaders are highly committed to the school and say they are 'energised' by the positive changes in the senior leadership. This group have had little development over time but are keen to take their departments and areas of responsibility forward.
- Newly qualified teachers are well supported and developed. The weekly sessions, run by a member of the senior leadership team, together with the support provided by subject mentors, enable new teachers to settle quickly and thrive.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively. A number of interventions take place across the school, for example the key stage 3 'Project Hero' to ensure pupils identified as underperforming are kept on track, and these have had a demonstrable impact on progress and attainment.
- Leaders have recently reviewed the curriculum and consequently the school is moving to a three year GCSE programme and extending the length of lessons to achieve greater depth of study at key stage 4.
- In addition to a core of five subjects, the key stage 4 curriculum offers a range of options for pupils of different abilities. These GCSEs and vocational courses include more specialised subjects, such as engineering and Mandarin which are both popular and successful.
- The school has a strong focus on promoting values through its assembly programme. There is a clear emphasis on respecting all within the school community and looking after each other. The school encourages pupils to think about British values such as justice and standing up for what is right, for example during a Year 9 assembly on St George.
- The new behaviour policy has made a significant difference to the school environment. Leaders support its implementation and consequently the school is an orderly environment.
- The staff survey indicates that staff morale is high. Most teachers indicated that they are well led and encouraged to innovate in ways that are right for the pupils. Many commented about the sense of excitement and energy they feel under the new leadership.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The chair of the governing body has worked with the headteacher to reorganise and improve the governing body's sub-committees so that they work with the whole senior team of the school. There is a healthy culture of self-criticism and reflection as part of the focus on sustainable improvement.
 - A new process of preparing questions in advance of meetings has stepped up the level of scrutiny and accountability. Governors now have an accurate picture of, for example, underperforming groups and strategies to move them on.
 - Governors have a good range of skills, for example the vice-chair is providing strong guidance on managing the financial challenge of maintaining the historic buildings.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school has responded to the government's requirement that schools are alert to extremism by providing additional training for staff. Procedures to monitor e-safety in school are robust and presentations to pupils mean that they are aware of a range of risks and how to be safe.

- The designated safeguarding lead provides strong direction in this area. When required, intervention is appropriately swift and effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers use effective planning to ensure that pupils are well prepared for their assessments and examinations. In the best lessons, there was a clear focus on improving work and evidence of pupils reflecting and developing their responses.
- High-quality questioning by teachers and articulate responses from pupils are a common feature of the approach to teaching. Consequently, the boys are able to deepen their understanding and make good progress.
- There is a range of strategies to support the progress of the most-able pupils. This includes the use of directed 'stretch and challenge' tasks in some lessons and specific intervention for the most-able in other areas, for example in English. In addition, enrichment opportunities such as STEM club, to promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and mathematics challenge are available for this group. Work in books demonstrates strong progress over time for the most-able cohort.
- The school is a 'Confucius Classroom' school and has a range of opportunities related to this. Mandarin achieves exceptionally strong results and the uptake for the subject is high at GCSE.
- There is a new momentum for developing teaching and learning in the school. Staff membership of the voluntary teaching and learning group has created a drive to try different styles of teaching. 'Risky teaching in progress' signs indicate that boys may be engaged in group work, presentation or kinaesthetic learning and encourage other members of staff to come in and observe.
- Target sheets give pupils a clear indication of what they are expected to achieve and pupils are aware of their position in relation to these. Pupils want to do well and have high aspirations.
- There are effective structures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning across departments. A three-weekly cycle for scrutinising books, which is led by heads of department and senior staff, means that there is a higher level of accountability than previously.
- The school's homework policy is not consistently followed. The use of homework to consolidate and extend learning and to engage parents in their child's learning is underdeveloped.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils know that they are part of a community and enjoy moments to reflect together, such as in their year-group assemblies in chapel.
- The school council and prefect system provide opportunities for pupils to present their views. Pupils are an articulate group who speak positively about the changes that have taken place at the school this year.
- A robust anti-bullying strategy is in place and pupils confirmed that bullying is effectively tackled. Pupils know how to report any bullying which takes place. The organisation of play spaces, with a separate Year 7 area and quiet quad area, supports the school's work to ensure that pupils feel secure and confident.
- A clear programme of workshops, assemblies and tutor time provides opportunities for boys to discuss issues and ensures that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils are trained in e-safety and have sessions from external agencies to ensure that they understand how to mitigate risks such as those posed by gangs and extremism.
- The school's careers programme provides effective guidance and supports decision-making for the next stage of education, training or employment.
- Opportunities to get involved in charity work, both within the local community and by supporting the link school in Ghana, ensure that the pupils are outward-looking and aware of their role in wider society.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are well behaved, polite and respectful to each other and adults in the vast majority of lessons and when moving around the school.

- Punctuality to lessons is good and, in spite of the sprawling layout of the school site, pupils rarely arrive late to lessons.
- The new behaviour policy is having a significant impact on standards. Teachers, pupils and parents commented positively about the change it has brought to the learning environment. There is clarity about what will not be tolerated and the resulting sanctions. Records from the 'exit room' for pupils who do not meet the standard expected indicate that there has been a dramatic reduction in pupils getting to this stage.
- Pupils socialise across year groups well and conduct themselves in an orderly manner in the canteen at break and lunchtime.
- Whole-school attendance figures are above national average, but the attendance of some groups, specifically the Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils, is significantly lower. The school is aware of these patterns in absence and has made changes to the pastoral support team to ensure that they are tackled effectively. However, these changes are yet to show a sustained impact on the attendance of these groups.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Progress in mathematics has been particularly strong, with pupils exceeding the national average from different starting points.
- In a number of other subjects, pupils achieve better results than pupils nationally, specifically in art and design, Spanish, Mandarin, French, science and biology.
- In English, all pupils have exceeded the national figures for making more than expected progress, but disadvantaged pupils lag behind their peers within the school. This is a priority area for the school, and in-school assessment information suggests an improved picture this year with the gap between these groups closing.
- Similarly, in mathematics, although the school's pupils made greater progress than those nationally, the disadvantaged pupils did less well than their peers. Interventions are in place to improve the performance of this group.
- Current assessment information indicates that GCSE pupils are on track to exceed last year's performance and the value added scores are predicted to rise.
- Higher-attaining pupils are on course to achieve well in their GCSEs and some subjects, including English, are predicting a significant increase in A* and A grades.
- The school has plans to develop its assessment and tracking practice so that it is easier to monitor and manage progress across the year groups. Some subject areas are already using it to good effect and standards are being driven up by this close scrutiny.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and access arrangements are in place. Currently, the performance of this group shows clear progress in mathematics, science and languages, but poorer performance in English.

16 to 19 study programmes

require improvement

- In the most recent examinations, A-level and AS-level outcomes and those for vocational courses were low compared with those nationally.
- There is significant variation between the performance of different subject areas within the sixth form offer.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged learners on academic courses are particularly poor.
- The accommodation for the sixth form is basic; the school recognises this and plans to improve facilities as part of an improvement programme.
- Provision for personal, social, health and economic education is limited. Although support for university applications has improved, the learners would like this element of their education to be developed so that it is as good as the programme lower down the school.
- Attendance rates in the sixth form are not as good as those in the rest of the school.
- External support for the development of the sixth form has led to a new approach to sixth form teaching. Lessons are being pitched higher and there is more stretch and challenge evident in the planning and delivery of courses.

- The sixth form leader has a good understanding of the areas of weakness and has begun to take effective action to improve this aspect of the school's work. The sixth form is improving, but it is too early to see the impact of changes.
- In lessons, learners are on task, hard-working and thoughtful about their progress. They have positive attitudes to learning and are ambitious about their future destinations.
- Increasing numbers of the school's pupils are staying on into the sixth form. Sixth formers say that the teachers are supportive and approachable and that this is a key motivation for deciding to stay.
- Learner voice is thriving in the sixth form and there is a large learner leadership team. Learners are active in raising funds for both the school and charities. In addition, they take an active role lower down the school, for example by mentoring Year 7 pupils.
- There are small numbers of girls in the sixth form. Girls spoke positively about their experiences at the school. The sixth form is a cohesive and friendly environment without any issues of bullying or segregation.

School details

Unique reference number	138221
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10011900

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,179
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	294
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Sweeney
Headteacher	David Garrido
Telephone number	020 8761 1426
Website	www.stjosephscollege.org.uk
Email address	admin@sjc.ac
Date of previous inspection	22–23 January 2014

Information about this school

- St Joseph's College is a larger than average Roman Catholic (Lasallian) boys' comprehensive.
- There is a sixth form which also admits a small number of girls in Years 12 and 13.
- The proportion of pupils supported with additional government funding, known as the pupil premium, is slightly above the national average. This funding is provided for those known to be eligible for free school meals and for looked after children.
- Pupils come from a diverse range of backgrounds and the percentage from minority ethnic backgrounds is high relative to that nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who receive special educational needs support is above the national average. However, those with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.
- This is a stable school population.
- The school does not use any off-site alternative provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher was appointed in January 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 36 lessons or parts of lessons across a range of departments, some paired with the headteacher and senior leaders. Books were scrutinised as part of these lesson observations. In addition, a separate scrutiny of books of most-able pupils was carried out.
- Inspectors observed behaviour in the corridors, the canteen and play spaces at breaks and lunchtimes and at the school gate at the end of the day.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and senior leaders, members of the governing body, middle leaders, the special needs coordinator, a newly qualified teacher, the careers information, advice and guidance leader and the deputy director of the diocese.
- Formal meetings were held with various groups of pupils, including the most-able, the school council, recently excluded pupils, sixth form students and pupils who receive the government's pupil premium funding. Informal conversations were held with pupils in lessons and around the school.
- A large number of documents were scrutinised including the school's self-evaluation, information on the current progress of pupils, behaviour logs, attendance and punctuality information, governing body minutes and policies and procedures, including for pupil premium spending, the curriculum and social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- The single central record and safer recruitment procedures were checked.
- Inspectors took account of the 86 responses to the staff survey, 28 responses to the Parent View survey and 16 text and telephone comments from parents and carers.

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