

St Joseph's RC Junior School

Woodend, London SE19 3NU

Inspection dates

27–28 April 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' assessment of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. It is not always as good as they think it is.
- Some teachers are inconsistent in their use of assessment information. Pupils' learning is not checked carefully enough. This is particularly true for the most-able pupils.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school. Overall, teaching requires improvement because expectations of pupils are not high enough. As a result, too few pupils make accelerated progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Until recently, governors have not held leaders sufficiently to account. As a result, governance has been reviewed so that the school's actions are checked effectively.
- Work in some subjects including science lacks challenge. The work seen in pupils' books did not consistently extend pupils' writing skills. Consequently, some pupils do not make the strong progress of which they are capable.
- Outcomes for pupils require improvement. The published results in 2015 were disappointing, although attainment in writing improved. Standards of work have improved since the last set of published results but are still below what they should be.
- The progress of pupils with special educational needs or disability, and disadvantaged pupils, is improving. In Years 3 and 6, disadvantaged pupils are making stronger progress than their peers are. However, performance gaps remain in other years.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils reported they feel happy and safe at the school. They enjoying coming to school. Peer mediators and the school council are popular. Exclusions are very rare and attendance rates are above average. Consequently, the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils is good.
- Safeguarding is effective. The school has a caring atmosphere. Pupils understand how to keep safe and support each other well. Staff receive appropriate and regular training on a variety of aspects of safeguarding.
- The curriculum has a clear emphasis on developing pupils' religious, spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes by ensuring that:
 - pupils' achievement continues to improve in reading, writing and mathematics
 - all pupils make good or better progress from their starting points.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - high expectations and effective practice are consistent across the school
 - leaders closely monitor and improve the quality of teaching
 - governors provide strong challenge and carefully check how well the school is doing.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - all teachers show high expectations of what pupils can achieve, by providing challenging work to pupils of all abilities
 - teachers consistently and accurately use assessment information to improve the learning of all pupils.
- Improve the personal development and welfare of pupils by ensuring that:
 - pupils show excellent attitudes and are confident to develop their own learning.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium should be considered to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- In the past, leaders have been too generous when checking the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Consequently, the progress and attainment of pupils declined. In 2015, the outcomes of pupils in reading and mathematics were poor. However, leaders are now more proficient at scrutinising planning and undertaking lesson observations to check the quality of teaching and the progress shown in pupils' books. As a result, there have been improvements in pupils' progress although outcomes still require improvement.
- School leaders use the pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils. However, some projects funded by the pupil premium to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils have not been as successful as others. Consequently, although reducing, the gaps in performance of those disadvantaged pupils currently in school have not reduced as much as the school would like.
- Middle leaders have been given greater responsibility since the last inspection. They lead developments across the school and share practice with federation colleagues. Professional courses have provided staff with a better range of skills and understanding. A mentor supports newly qualified teachers and staff visit other schools to observe good practice.
- Where the performance of teachers needs improving, action is taken. Leaders set performance targets for teachers which include the progress expected of pupils. However, inconsistencies in teachers' performance remain. Leaders have had some success in improving some aspects of teaching, but not with improving the level of challenge for the most-able pupils.
- Leaders have developed an accurate system to track pupils' progress. It includes careful analysis of all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability. As a result, teachers' assessments are recorded and used appropriately to monitor pupils' progress.
- Leaders have reviewed the curriculum. A new approach in mathematics is being used to challenge pupils' problem solving and their application of number skills. In English, pupils' writing skills have been developed across the school. Pupils' writing includes a good range of grammar and vocabulary. However, in wider subjects pupils are not always challenged to extend their writing. Pupils read formally in class and are encouraged to read at home. A broad range of extra-curricular activities supports the curriculum. These include: sport, drama, dance, modern foreign languages, homework club and Saturday teaching. The effective use of the primary sport premium for physical education (PE) provides for a wide range of sports activities.
- The federation's Catholic values provide a clear emphasis on developing pupils' religious, spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Pupils from the school council told inspectors about their knowledge of life in modern Britain, respect and tolerance.
- Too few parents completed the online survey, Parent View, for their views to be considered typical. However, those parents who completed the school's own parent survey shared positive views about the school. A small number of parents contacted inspectors to say that their child was not always challenged in lessons. The staff who completed the staff questionnaire suggested that the school had improved since the last inspection. Inspectors did not share their view.
- The local authority issued a warning notice to the school in September 2015 because standards were too low. External support from the local authority and Diocese has been provided to school leaders and governors. Consequently, leaders have taken action that is improving standards.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Since the last inspection, governors have not always held leaders strongly to account. However, recently the governance of the school has changed significantly. The work of the governing body has been externally reviewed and a 'national leader of governance' provides support. A new chair has been elected and governors are much clearer on how they monitor the performance of the school. Governors have attended training to improve their skills in understanding and analysing school results. As a result, the challenge to leaders has improved and the governing body now monitors the impact leaders have on the progress pupils make.
 - Governors understand their statutory duties. They monitor the spending of the pupil premium and additional funding for sport. The headteacher is required to report regularly on the impact of any whole-school developments.
 - The governing body challenges the school strategically. It has a comprehensive plan of action with

steps to improve the school. Any required support is identified and meetings are used to monitor and evidence the impact of work undertaken. Governors visit the school to hold leaders to account and report on their findings. Furthermore, the governing body now expects leaders to present updates on any new whole-school initiatives before they are agreed.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The safeguarding governor has completed appropriate training. The governing body ensures that procedures in place are regularly reviewed. The single central record for recording the recruitment checks on staff meets statutory requirements. Staff receive appropriate and regular training on a variety of aspects of safeguarding. Training includes how to identify pupils at risk, and staff understand how to report any concerns should they arise.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Although work in pupils' books confirmed that more pupils are now making expected progress or better than in 2015, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. Too few pupils are making rapid progress and attainment remains low at the end of Year 6.
- Where teaching is less effective, not all pupils are stretched through the provision of appropriately challenging activities. This is often the case for the most-able pupils.
- Pupils' writing skills are generally developed well across the school. Teachers' planning of writing activities is consistent and meets different pupils' needs. Pupils told inspectors about their writing and why they include particular expressions and grammatical devices in their text. Work in pupils' books in some wider subjects such as science lacked challenge because opportunities for extended writing were not always provided.
- Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and in line with the school's policy. However, written assessments are not always effective because not all teachers' comments are helpful in showing pupils how to improve their work. This is particularly true in Years 4 and 5, where progress is not as well supported as for other pupils in key stage 2.
- In lower key stage 2, mathematical thinking is taught more effectively because pupils experience regular problem solving. However, the most-able pupils in upper key stage 2 are not always challenged in mathematics. Although more difficult tasks are provided, higher-ability pupils are often reluctant to choose these tasks without being instructed to do so.
- Pupils' reading skills are developed well across the school. Pupils who read to inspectors were able to decipher less familiar words using phonics (letters and the sounds that they make), and could explain the meaning of the text. Pupils typically read widely and they told inspectors about the books they had read in class and the characters in the story. For example, a group of the most-able pupils in a Year 4 class described, with enthusiasm, how the character 'The white witch' had control over Narnia.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are closely supported. Work in pupils' books showed them to be making the progress expected of them. Teaching assistants review and check the progress of these pupils carefully, so that activities can be adapted to ensure their needs are met.
- Where teaching is more effective, teachers have higher expectations of the progress pupils can make. They challenge pupils to reflect so they clearly understand how to improve their answers. Consequently, pupils are able to explore their mathematical understanding and apply their writing skills to a range of subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Catholic values are part of the atmosphere of the school. Pupils are proud of their religious values and told the inspectors that 'this is a Catholic school, but other people are welcome'. They shared with inspectors that they recently learned about Islam and understand people have different faiths. Pupils are helped to develop their well-being by peer mediators who have a recognised role in the school and support their peers' social and moral development. Pupils are aware that they can use the 'worry box' if they have any concern. The school council is popular and pupils feel it provides them with a voice.
- Colourful displays of pupils' work are presented around the school. They effectively model the standards of work expected. The school site is clean and tidy with reading resources for pupils to access in areas

across the school. Classroom displays support pupils' learning and the Catholic ethos of the school.

- Year 3 pupils performed to their peers in assembly and described their future career ambitions. They spoke with confidence and shared a good understanding of a wide range of future careers. An effective transition programme supports the transfer of pupils from key stage 1 to key stage 2. Pupils participate in activities with their peers across the federation and are prepared well for their next stages of education.
- Pupils who are more vulnerable are well supported. The school works carefully and closely with a range of professional agencies to provide support to pupils and their families. Pupils say that they are rarely upset and that the school is quick to support them if they feel unwell.
- Pupils enjoy a range of academic, sporting and musical activities. The school provides wide opportunities for pupils to engage in sporting activities that support their choices to remain healthy.
- Pupils told inspectors that they know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and they are aware of the risks from strangers. Pupils are clear of how to seek help in school if it is needed. They feel bullying is rare and indicate that any issues are easily resolved. Inspectors agree.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and that they are happy. Consequently, attendance rates are above average and have improved over time, with few persistently absent pupils.
- Pupils play well together and feel teachers deal swiftly with any unkind behaviour. Pupils and staff who completed the questionnaire suggested that behaviour is well managed and positive. Inspectors confirmed that reported incidents of poor behaviour have reduced over time. Exclusions are rare and none have taken place this year.
- Inspectors saw pupils moving around the school calmly. Pupils were observed being attentive and sitting silently in assembly. They showed respect and tolerance for their peers who were leading the assembly.
- Pupils typically have positive attitudes within lessons. Their class and homework books are well presented and neatly written. A few pupils are occasionally distracted because they are less confident to work without guidance. However, the vast majority of pupils' behaviour for learning is positive.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- The published results in 2015 were disappointing, although pupils' attainment in writing improved in comparison to the 2014 results. Standards of work have improved since the last set of published results, although outcomes still require improvement. In Years 3 and 6, disadvantaged pupils are making stronger progress than their peers are. However, outcomes still require improvement.
- The school has responded to the decline in results by taking action to raise standards. The progress of all pupils is regularly reviewed and action taken so that pupils do not fall behind. Inspectors confirmed that the work seen in pupils' books showed that most are making at least the progress expected of them. A higher proportion of pupils in Year 6 are now making above expected progress. This reflects the school's own assessment information, which shows a picture of improvement for those pupils currently in the school.
- In English, pupils are being challenged to extend their writing skills across the school. Pupils' writing in their books includes effective use of vocabulary and grammar. They are able to use expression well and write creatively.
- In mathematics, higher expectations for pupils to explore number skills and undertake problem solving in lessons are having a positive impact on their progress. Pupils are now able to apply their mathematical thinking and use a range of methods to solve problems. The most-able mathematicians are able to use a range of techniques to calculate their answers and challenge their thinking, although they still have to be instructed to try the harder tasks.
- Pupils who read to inspectors did so with confidence. They were able to decipher unfamiliar words and use expression and punctuation appropriate to their age. Although the most-able readers reported that they enjoyed many of the reading activities, not all said that they were stretched.
- Information provided by the school shows that disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs and or disability are making the progress expected of them. Furthermore, the progress gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are closing, particularly in Year 6.

School details

Unique reference number	101795
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10017483

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	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kate Guest
Headteacher	Tamsyn Lawlor
Telephone number	0208 653 7195
Website	http://www.stjosephsfederation.co.uk/
Email address	office@st-josephs-jun.Croydon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 October 2012

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized junior school.
- The school federated with St Joseph’s RC Infant School in September 2011. The headteacher leads both the junior and infant school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language is much greater than in most schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils with disability and those with a statement of special education needs or an education, health and care plan is higher than average.
- The school has an on-site breakfast and after-school club not included in this inspection. A separate provider runs it.
- The school meets the government’s floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils’ attainment and progress.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes, many jointly with a member of the senior leadership team, and listened to pupils read. The lead inspector also attended a school assembly.
- Inspectors discussed lessons jointly visited with senior leaders and made a number of other short visits to lessons and smaller teaching groups.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, a range of staff, including newly qualified staff, and groups of pupils including members of the school council. Meetings also took place with the chair of the governing body and three other governors, two representatives from the local authority, and a representative from the Diocese.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation including: the work of pupils, records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, minutes of meetings, information on the progress made by pupils, the school's self-evaluation, and records relating to the quality of teaching and the performance of teachers. Inspectors also reviewed safeguarding records, policies and procedures, including the single central record of recruitment checks made on staff.
- Inspectors spoke informally with a small number of parents at the start of school. Too few parents responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, for their views to be considered. Inspectors did consider questionnaires completed by 18 members of staff, pupils, and parents.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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