

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Macklin Street, Covent Garden, London WC2B 5NA

Inspection dates

10–11 October 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders are successfully addressing the sharp decline in standards in 2017. Teaching, learning and pupils' outcomes are now good.
- Leaders provide teachers with effective training and hold them to account for their pupils' progress. Teaching ensures that all groups of pupils learn well.
- Leaders have established robust systems for assessing and improving the teaching and learning of English and mathematics. Teachers and support staff use pupils' assessment information to plan activities that meet pupils' needs and help them make increasingly stronger progress.
- Leaders and teachers do not use assessment information to improve teaching and outcomes as effectively in other subjects.
- Pupils make good progress across subjects and year groups. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2018 improved significantly from the previous year.
- Pupils feel safe and secure. They know that all members of staff take good care of them. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they demonstrate exemplary attitudes to learning.
- Leaders provide pupils with a broad curriculum that is extensively enriched. These opportunities promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. Pupils leave the school very well prepared for their secondary education.
- Highly effective leadership ensures that children in the early years benefit from an excellent start to their education. The well-resourced provision offers children a richly stimulating learning environment. Teachers and other adults plan a range of exciting learning activities. Members of staff pay much attention to children's welfare. As a result, children make substantial progress in their learning and social development.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the school's work. They frequently visit the school to check on all aspects of its work. They provide a good balance of challenge and support to school leaders.
- New middle leaders are at an early stage of developing their skills in improving the quality of teaching and in improving pupils' outcomes.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and pupils' outcomes by developing teachers' skills and knowledge so that they routinely plan activities that help pupils reach their potential to make substantial and sustained progress across subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - checking robustly the progress of pupils in subjects other than English and mathematics, and ensuring that teachers and leaders use the information to improve pupils' progress
 - developing the skills of new middle leaders to improve teaching and learning and to hold their colleagues to account for their pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- In 2017, there was an exceptionally high turnover of staff, including senior leaders. This resulted in a decline in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, particularly at key stage 2. There was also a marked increase in pupils' persistent absence. The headteacher, other leaders and governors took decisive action to arrest the decline. As a result, teaching and pupils' outcomes have improved, and persistent absence has decreased. Leaders, despite the challenges, successfully maintained the outstanding practice in the early years.
- All members of staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire said they are proud to be a member of staff at the school. There is a culture of ambition and determination shared by all leaders and members of staff to improve the school further.
- Senior leaders have established effective systems to develop teachers' competence. Leaders help teachers to reflect on and evaluate their effectiveness. They agree on a personalised development plan and set targets for improvement. Leaders arrange ample professional training for all staff. There is a strong culture of staff sharing ideas about teaching, observing each other and learning from good practice in other high-performing schools.
- Teaching assistants participate in a national research programme on the most effective deployment of teaching assistants. As a result, the quality of teaching and support is improving and leading to better outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders frequently observe teaching, check pupils' work and monitor their progress, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. They use the information to hold teachers to account for their pupils' progress and to plan support for pupils who are falling behind. These procedures have a positive impact on improving teaching and outcomes. Leaders check teaching and learning in other subjects, but with much less rigour. This means that pupils do not make outstanding progress.
- New leaders have evaluated the strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility and have begun to plan for improvements. Those new to leadership are, however, at the early stages of developing their leadership skills.
- Leaders plan the curriculum so that pupils gain knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects through overarching themes. These include saving the planet, how the world works and influential people. This places learning in the context of modern life and helps pupils to become responsible adult citizens in modern Britain.
- Leaders make sure that pupils experience a multitude of enrichment activities. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. Pupils gain a wealth of experience from visits, such as to courts of law, the Royal Opera House, museums and theatres. They attend art workshops and participate in singing, poetry and sports competitions.
- Leaders make sure that pupils learn about other religious faiths apart from Catholicism, and visit their places of worship. These valuable experiences broaden pupils' knowledge and social outlook, as well as raising their aspirations for their future.

careers and adult lives.

Governance of the school

- Governors bring a wealth of expertise, such as from the worlds of education, finance, law, construction and politics.
- Every governor is attached to a class. They regularly visit the school and gain first-hand information about all aspects of the school's work. Governors commission independent consultants to review aspects of the school's work and to verify the information leaders give to them. They are, therefore, well informed about the quality of education at the school and hold leaders to account for their work.
- Governors are highly supportive of the school. One, for instance, takes responsibility for recruiting tens of volunteers from local companies and businesses who come in to read with pupils or help them with their mathematics.
- Governors were successful in securing funding for and building a new Nursery classroom that opened a few weeks ago. This has enhanced the learning environment for children in the Nursery.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Three members of staff are trained as designated safeguarding leaders. They make sure that procedures are robust and training for staff is in place and updated regularly.
- Members of staff are well aware of the range of potential safeguarding issues that may arise in the locality. They are vigilant and report any changes in behaviour or signs that raise concerns.
- Leaders work closely with a range of agencies to ensure pupils' safety and welfare. They run workshops for parents and carers on safety-related topics, for example the dangers of social media.
- The curriculum makes a strong contribution to helping pupils understand how to keep themselves and others safe. The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children delivers workshops on how to stay safe in various situations. For example, pupils have assemblies on 'the power of one' – about how to not be a bystander when someone is being bullied.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is good and improving. It helps pupils to learn well and make good progress.
- Typically, teachers establish clear routines and set high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils respond by following instructions, working hard and using learning time effectively.
- Teachers regularly assess pupils' progress, especially in English and mathematics. They use the information to plan activities that meet pupils' needs and abilities. They give pupils clear explanations and provide them with reference materials to help them gain

new knowledge, deepen their understanding and build on their prior learning.

- Teachers and other adults use questioning effectively to deepen pupils' thinking. Teachers give feedback to pupils, in line with the school's policy, on how to improve their work. Teachers meet regularly with pupils, and their parents, to review pupils' progress and to agree on targets for improvement. As a result, pupils make strong progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants, as well as many volunteers, provide pupils who need to catch up with effective support. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, pupils who speak English as an additional language and disadvantaged pupils make good progress.
- There are a few instances where teaching is not as routinely effective. At these times, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not assess work and use the information to plan for pupils' needs in the range of subjects with the same rigour as in English and mathematics. This means that, although pupils make good progress overall, they do not make outstanding progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- As they progress through the school, pupils gain in self-confidence and develop a mature sense of responsibility for themselves and others. Mentors from a range of local companies, and former pupils who visit the school, help pupils raise their aspirations. Pupils donate to charity to support homeless people, and each class learns about and raises funds for protecting a different endangered animal. Furthermore, the school choir performs at large fundraising dinners for a trust that raises awareness of sudden infant death syndrome.
- Leaders place great emphasis on ensuring pupils' physical health and well-being. Through the curriculum, pupils learn about healthy eating and the dangers of substance abuse. Members of staff test pupils' levels of fitness. The school's work to promote pupils' health was recognised in their recent receipt of the Gold Healthy Schools Award.
- Members of staff are very alert to pupils' emotional well-being and mental health. Pupils and parents know that they can turn to any of the three 'trusted adults' that pupils have for help. Leaders work closely with parents and external agencies to support pupils and their families whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- There is a very strong culture of respect for all. Pupils told inspectors that they learn about different people 'who stood up for things like race, gender and religion', such as Nelson Mandela and the suffragettes. The school has an annual themed week involving pupils and parents, aimed at promoting respect for all people. Themes include peace and respect in sport. Furthermore, the school bases its behaviour policy on restorative justice. As a result, pupils are and feel very safe at the school. Bullying is extremely rare and pupils know that school leaders will deal with any problems promptly and

effectively, should they arise.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They work diligently in lessons and are keen to succeed. Pupils work extremely well in pairs and groups, supporting each other in their learning. Low-level disruption is rare.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. They take good care of the environment and behave particularly sensibly and maturely as they move around the school and at social times.
- Leaders have worked successfully with parents and external agencies to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence. Current overall attendance and rates of persistent absence are now closer to the national averages for primary schools, following improvements last year.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress across subjects and year groups.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils in Year 1 achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check increased considerably, and is now well above average. This is the result of leaders ensuring that teachers and support staff had intensive training last year on the teaching of phonics.
- Pupils routinely make good progress during key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics because of consistently good teaching. The proportions of pupils reaching the expected and greater-depth standards are broadly in line with national averages.
- Progress and attainment at the end of key stage 2 have been inconsistent. There was a significant drop at the end of the key stage in 2017, owing to some poor teaching and turbulence in staffing and school leadership. Provisional information shows a marked improvement in 2018. Progress improved, especially in reading and mathematics. As a result, the proportion of pupils attaining the standard expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics combined rose by 15% and was above the provisional national average.
- Disadvantaged pupils attained similarly to their peers and other pupils nationally. Inspection evidence shows that the school is sustaining and building on these improvements.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language – as well as those who join mid-phase – make good progress. This is because teachers and other staff give them well-tailored support.
- Owing to small numbers, this report cannot comment on other groups as they are not statistically significant.
- With their exemplary attitudes towards learning, excellent personal development and improved academic outcomes, pupils are well prepared for secondary school.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Leadership of the early years is outstanding. Despite facing challenges, leaders have been able to maintain and build on the excellence of the provision that was previously judged outstanding.
- Children get off to a cracking start in the early years. Many join with skills that are below those expected for their age, especially in language and communication. For a high proportion, English is an additional language. They quickly settle down and, as a result of highly effective teaching, make substantial progress in all areas of learning and social development. They are very well prepared for entry into Year 1.
- Leaders and staff have created a very vibrant and highly stimulating environment indoors and outdoors. They make excellent use of the limited space to make sure that children have plentiful resources that grab their interest and help them learn extremely well. Children are inquisitive and adults skilfully help them to pursue their interests.
- Teaching is highly effective because leaders, teachers and other adults prepare a range of exciting learning activities for children. They place particular emphasis on creating plentiful opportunities for children to develop their speaking, writing and mathematical skills through a range of activities. For instance, when developing fine motor skills and learning about colours, children used cotton buds to choose different coloured paints to write letters and words.
- Staff frequently assess children's progress to adapt their planning and target activities to meet children's needs. Adults use questioning skilfully to extend children's vocabulary and deepen their thinking. They also make sure that, in liaison with the inclusion leader, they create resources and target activities for children who have SEN and/or disabilities, are disadvantaged or have other additional needs. As a result, children are highly successful learners.
- From the outset, children respond positively to adults' high expectations. They learn swiftly to respect each other and socialise very positively. They feel safe and secure, and grow in confidence. They know that the adults care for them.
- Early years staff work closely with parents, who support their children, for instance, by helping them to complete homework tasks. Parents share information with the staff about out-of-school activities that contribute to their children's learning and development.

School details

Unique reference number	100041
Local authority	Camden
Inspection number	10052639

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julian Fulbrook
Headteacher	Helen Tyler
Telephone number	020 7242 7712
Website	www.stjosephs.camden.sch.uk/
Email address	admin@stjosephs.camden.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26–27 February 2014

Information about this school

- St Joseph's is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is above average.
- A below-average proportion of pupils have SEN and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is well above that found nationally.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a large turnover of staff, including senior and middle leaders. The current assistant headteacher, literacy leader and numeracy leader took up their posts in September 2018.
- The school had a Section 48 denominational inspection in May 2014.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils learning in 13 parts of lessons. Senior leaders joined inspectors during some of these observations.
- Inspectors looked closely at pupils' work to inform judgements made about pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching and learning.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils and spoke informally to other pupils in lessons and during social times. Inspectors met with school leaders and other members of staff.
- Meetings were held with three governors, including the vice-chair, and with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation, including that relating to pupils' attainment and progress and minutes of governing body meetings. They also looked at records and documentation about pupils' behaviour, attendance and exclusions, and the ways staff help to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors considered the 25 responses to the online questionnaire for parents, which included some free-text responses. They had informal conversations with parents on the playground. Inspectors took account of the views of 24 members of staff and 43 pupils who responded to the inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Meena Walia	Ofsted Inspector

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