

St Joseph's RC Infant School

Crown Dale, Upper Norwood, London SE19 3NX

Inspection dates

9–10 January 2019

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
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, staff and governors are successful in supporting pupils to 'live to love and love to learn'. The school is an inclusive, nurturing community in which pupils feel safe and are well cared for. Staff are well trained and vigilant in their safeguarding of pupils.
- Since her appointment, the headteacher has identified the right actions to improve pupils' achievement. Leaders and governors are highly skilled in taking effective action to address areas for improvement. As a result, children in the Nursery and pupils in key stage 1 make good progress.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Teachers provide pupils with interesting activities and tasks in a range of subjects.
- Leaders have been successful in improving the teaching of phonics, reading and mathematics. Parental involvement in their children's reading has improved greatly as a result of leaders' actions.
- Most parents and carers are happy with the school's work and typically comment that 'this is a great school.'
- The early years provision requires improvement. Staff are committed to improving their skills, and provision has improved because of well-targeted professional development secured by leaders. However, the quality of teaching in the Reception Year is variable, and this is reflected in the inconsistent, and sometimes weak, progress that children make. They are not prepared well for the demands of the Year 1 curriculum.
- Despite the efforts of staff and leaders, attendance remains below the national average.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and play happily together at breaktimes. Rare bullying incidents or poor behaviour are dealt with effectively. Pupils are polite, friendly and helpful and keen to chat about themselves and their school. They are routinely kind to each other and to visitors.
- While outcomes are strong, they could be better. Teachers sometimes do not plan work which precisely meets the needs of pupils with different abilities, particularly the most able pupils or those who are struggling with learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attendance so that it is at least in line with the national average.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the Reception Year by sharing the strong practice evident in all other year groups.
- Ensure that teachers consistently set tasks which help pupils of all abilities, including the most able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to make the best possible progress that they can.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has been a force for improvement since her appointment in September 2018. Together with her leaders and governors, she has identified precisely the right actions to strengthen all aspects of the school's work.
- Leaders have taken effective action to ensure that the early years provision is improving. They have secured and acted upon good support and advice from the local authority and from their network of schools. Nevertheless, teaching, learning and assessment in the Reception classes require further improvement.
- Staff are extremely proud and happy to work at the school. They share leaders' high aspirations and commitment to improvement. Leaders work well in collaboration across the federation. Their consistent approach and professional support for each other is leading to a swift pace of positive change in the infant school.
- Leaders have provided good professional development for teachers, particularly in relation to the teaching of mathematics, phonics and reading. As a result, teaching in key stage 1 is strong and current pupils are making good progress.
- Subject leaders demonstrate excellent subject knowledge, which helps them to work together to offer pupils an interesting curriculum. Topic books show that pupils benefit from a good range of interesting themes and subjects. Beautiful 'floor books' exemplify high-quality work to support pupils' religious studies and to demonstrate pupils' understanding, respect and tolerance of religions and beliefs which are different from their own.
- Leaders check the progress that pupils make regularly and respond to any potential underachievement swiftly. They undertake sharp analysis of pupils' achievement across the school over time. This informs school improvement planning.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils exemplify British values, and invest in training and resources for staff to enhance their teaching of the rules of democracy further.
- Leaders and governors target pupil premium funding appropriately. This strengthens the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, while also sharply focusing on their well-being. The sports premium enhances the curriculum by providing pupils with a range of after-school sports clubs. The provision for pupils who have SEND is well managed.
- Leaders have taken action to improve attendance, but this is yet to ensure that attendance is consistently in line with the national average.

Governance of the school

- Governance is a strength of the school. Governors add strong capacity to the leadership team. They have a range of skills and knowledge which support and challenge the work of the school appropriately.
- Governors were successful in recruiting the headteacher and structuring the current effective leadership team.
- Governors visit the school often and work alongside leaders to help them understand

the emerging strengths and areas for further improvement. They constantly seek ways to improve their effectiveness. For example, they are keen to strengthen further their partnership working with the parents' association.

- Governors ensure that checks made prior to the recruitment of staff are thorough. They undertake appropriate safeguarding training and are very well informed about any potential local risks.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Record-keeping is thorough.
- Leaders, staff and governors are well trained and highly vigilant in their commitment to keeping pupils in the community safe. Keeping pupils safe lies at the heart of the school's work.
- Staff use the school's referral systems effectively and consistently. They fully understand their responsibilities with regard to keeping children safe, and keep up to date with current advice and guidance.
- Leaders secure the best support possible for vulnerable children and families or those at risk of harm. They challenge external services to act swiftly and go 'above and beyond' the call of duty in order to support their community. The school's early help provision is a strength.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment in the Nursery class and across key stage 1 are good and improving.
- Because of high-quality professional development, the teaching of phonics, reading and mathematics is now a strength. Leaders precisely pinpointed aspects of teaching which needed improving and have supported teachers in making improvements. As a result, teaching is typically interesting, engages pupils and is fun.
- Teachers and other adults use spoken language well to underpin reading and writing activities. For example, pupils retell stories using actions with real gusto, and this helps them to be successful in the writing tasks to follow.
- Phonics teaching is strong in key stage 1, but teachers are faced with challenges when trying to secure strong attainment in phonics because children typically come to Year 1 from Reception classes with skills that are below where they should be. This is because teaching of phonics is weak in this year group.
- Teachers have been successful in involving parents in their children's reading. This means that pupils read regularly and often. They benefit from scheme books as well as additional high-quality children's literature which is read aloud to them in class.
- Teachers have successfully and consistently implemented a mathematics programme which is helping pupils to make strong progress overall. However, the most able pupils are sometimes held back by going through tasks which are too easy for them in order to get to the 'challenge' task. This sometimes means that they do not make the progress they could.

- Books show that in English and mathematics, teachers do not consistently adjust work or tasks to meet the needs of the differing abilities in their class, including those pupils who have SEND and the most and less able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. This means that pupils do not consistently make the best possible progress that they could.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. During their time at the infant school, pupils develop confidence in themselves and in their ability to be successful learners. Pupils show pride in their learning and in their school.
- Pupils come together during whole-school assemblies and show a great deal of respect and kindness to each other and particularly to the pupils who have SEND. The community is inclusive and nurturing. Pupils are welcoming and enjoy a good chat with visitors. Even the youngest learners happily offer guidance on how to 'be kind' or 'to share'. They are a credit to their school and their parents.
- All adults in the community strive to ensure pupils' well-being. A wonderful, unique and heart-warming feature of the school are the visits from Buster, the therapy dog who works with targeted pupils and enjoys it when they read to him. The benefits of this approach to pupils' personal development and well-being are instantly obvious.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and can articulate clearly the dangers of the internet.
- Pupils feel safe and state clearly that any bullying or bad behaviour is dealt with effectively. Detailed records show that leaders deal well with the small number of incidents which occur.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their conduct in lessons, around the school and in the playground is good.
- Pupils respond well to the reward system and beam with pride when they become 'the star of the day' or when they receive an invitation to the 'golden tea party'. They are clear on the implications of not behaving well. They have a strong moral awareness and know right from wrong.
- Pupils' attendance is below the national average. Leaders have put actions in place which are yet to have a sustained impact in all classes.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year is below the national average.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was well below the national average. Because of strong

teaching in the current Year 1, attainment looks to be improving. However, because of previous weak teaching of phonics in the Reception Year, pupils have gaps in their learning and need to 'catch up' to age-related expectations when they enter Year 1. Teaching is currently of a good standard and helping them to do this.

- Pupils' outcomes in writing are improving. Work in books and the school's information about pupils' progress show that attainment is set to improve this year and rise above the national average.
- At the time of the previous inspection, the most able pupils were highlighted as a group who could be challenged to achieve more. In 2018, the most able pupils achieved above the national average in mathematics. This included the most able disadvantaged pupils. They also achieved highly in writing and in science. However, books show that the most able pupils who are currently in the school are not consistently given work which challenges them. Sometimes, they spend too long on learning which they are already secure at before moving to the most challenging task. Therefore, progress could be strengthened further for this group of pupils.
- Because of the excellent work of subject leaders, outcomes in reading are improving for pupils of all abilities in key stage 1.
- Outcomes in the early years require improvement because teaching is too variable.
- The pupils in the current Year 2 classes are being well prepared for their transition to the junior school.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The early years requires improvement, but provision is improving.
- Children are happy and safe in the early years. Staff care about the children, and all are committed to improving their teaching skills. Parents speak highly of the positive start to school that their children experience. Children are kept safe and secure.
- The Nursery learning spaces inside and out are interesting and inviting. The experienced staff have created a calm, kind, caring ethos which children respond well to.
- Children make good progress from their varying starting points in the Nursery class. Roughly half of the children transfer to the Reception classes. Progress stalls in the Reception Year because the quality of teaching is variable. Children do not make consistently strong progress.
- The proportion of children who achieve a good overall level of development at the end of the early years foundation stage is below the national average and has been for the past three years. While there have been recent improvements to the learning spaces and to the quality of teaching in Reception classes, these have not been embedded enough to secure consistently strong outcomes for learners.
- The learning spaces across the early years, nevertheless, reflect all the areas of learning well. Nursery staff challenged gender stereotypes by creating a hairdressing salon based on the theme of 'Dad does my hair'. Reception children enjoyed and benefited from their visit to the woodland area, where they were confident in using this

stimulating environment to develop their early number skills.

- The teaching of phonics is weak in the early years. Some adults with responsibility for teaching phonics groups do not have the necessary subject knowledge or confidence to build effectively on children's developing knowledge and skills. As a result, progress is weak; children repeat learning and do not learn the sounds at the swift pace recommended by the school's phonics programme. Therefore, some children are working well below age-related expectations in this area of their learning.
- Leaders are rightly focused on developing children's spoken language and vocabulary. In the Nursery class, skilled practitioners successfully build on children's developing language through their spoken interactions and questions. For example, children were challenged to explain what they were digging for and what they had found and then to describe their findings. However, many interactions in Reception simply repeat what the children say or offer general praise without any further questions or explanations to help children think a little more deeply.
- Staff have worked hard to reflect on external support and improve their teaching of shape and space. This has had a noticeable impact on the quality of teaching and on the progress children make in this area.
- Children play and learn well together, often without adult intervention. They are kind to each other and help one another. For example, some Reception children made a 'picnic' in a tent for each other, sharing and chatting happily about what else they might need for their picnic.
- The headteacher is supporting the development of middle leadership in the early years. She has secured strong networks with local schools to share good practice. The school's subject leaders are precise and accurate in their identification of what they need to do to further support leaders responsible for this phase of the school.

School details

Unique reference number	101803
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10086342

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kate Guest
Headteacher	Leonore Fernandes
Telephone number	0208 670 2385
Website	www.stjosephsfederation.co.uk
Email address	head@st-josephs-inf.croydon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 December 2014

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than average-sized infants school. It is federated with St Joseph's Roman Catholic Junior School and is a collaborative partner of the Croydon Catholic Schools Umbrella Trust.
- The substantive headteacher was appointed in September 2018.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average.
- The largest ethnic groups are those of White British or African heritage, and a larger proportion of pupils than average speak English as an additional language.
- The early years provision consists of a part-time Nursery class, attended currently by 19 children. There are two full-time Reception classes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups. Observations were undertaken with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body.
- Inspectors met with a representative of the local authority.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils to discuss their learning and their views on the school.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss their roles and the impact of their work.
- Inspectors met with a group of staff to discuss their work and their views on the school. Inspectors also reviewed the eight responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to pupils in the lunch hall, as they moved around the building and on the playground.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents, including information on pupils' progress across the school, improvement plans, curriculum plans and checks on the quality of teaching. They examined school records relating to safeguarding and behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with parents as they brought their children to school, and took account of the 23 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also held meetings with individuals and groups of parents.
- Inspectors scrutinised a sample of books to see what progress pupils have made across a range of subjects.

Inspection team

Ruth Dollner, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Barney Geen

Ofsted Inspector

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