

St Joseph Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100041
Local Authority	Camden
Inspection number	276241
Inspection dates	19–20 June 2006
Reporting inspector	Sheila Nolan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon John MacDonald Mr Neville Sherman (interim)
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Macklin Street Drury Lane London WC2B 5NA
Telephone number	02072427712
Fax number	02074301834

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Saint Joseph's Primary School, situated in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Westminster, serves mainly local catholic families but admits occasional pupils from other faiths, as spaces permit. Pupils come from diverse backgrounds with close to half having a home language other than English. Around a quarter of the pupils, higher than average, are eligible for a free school meal. Attainment on entry is broadly average as is the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need. Pupils with learning difficulties account for a lower than usual share of the school population. At present, the school is led by an interim headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade:

What the school should do to improve further

- * Ensure that teachers' planning challenges all pupils so that they make better progress.
- * Eliminate irregular attendance and heighten parents' awareness of the link between non-attendance and low performance.
- * Establish more effective links between Nursery and Reception.

Achievement and standards

Grade:

Personal development and well-being

Grade:

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade:

The school's most recent assessment of teaching and learning as satisfactory overall is accurate. It rightly identifies some aspects of practice in the Foundation Stage as hampered by unimaginative planning within the very limited accommodation. Children are sometimes very restricted in their opportunities for, and choice of, play activities.

The most effective lessons are underpinned by harmonious classroom relationships. As a result, pupils learn well together and consider it 'fun to help each other'. Rigorous attention to presentation, spelling and the regular use of dictionaries supported pupils well in a lesson on persuasive writing. Crisp pace and good use of resources, particularly information and communication technology (ICT), engage pupils successfully in many classrooms. Music is a favourite lesson because 'we practise 'till we get it right'.

No inadequate lessons were seen during the inspection. However, in a number of otherwise satisfactory lessons, tasks are not always planned well enough to challenge all pupils and activities lack variety. Pupils are sometimes unclear about how to improve work because teaching misses opportunities to assess and guide their learning in class and homework. Teachers and support staff do not always pay enough attention to developing technical vocabulary, particularly for those for whom English is an additional language.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade:

The curriculum is satisfactory, meeting all statutory requirements. Recent timetable adjustments provide for a considered balance between literacy and numeracy and other subjects. ICT provision has much improved recently and since the last inspection, through up-to-date resources and the flexible use of the multi-purpose hall. Frequent trips and outings include London landmarks such as the British Museum, the National Portrait Gallery and London Zoo and do much to enrich the curriculum. Local sports and swimming facilities supplement well the school's limited space for physical education. The school rightly notes that there is scope to develop better

resources and opportunities for art and design. The personal, social, health and citizenship programme provides sound opportunities to learn about healthy living and keeping safe. Good links with the police and other agencies enliven special events. Out-of-hours opportunities for mathematics and choir are much appreciated, as is the additional provision for breakfast and after-school club.

Care, guidance and support

Grade:

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Child protection, health and safety and risk assessment procedures are very clear. The welfare and safety of pupils are high priorities for staff. The school provides a secure environment with particular care for safety at the end of the school day. Movement around the site and in the very restricted play area is well supervised. Pupils talk positively of the help they get and the efforts made to include them in the life of the school. The school works well with external agencies to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils as best it can.

Although academic monitoring is efficiently managed, pupils do not have personal targets to guide them on how to improve their work. Arrangements for tracking and supporting pupils at the early stages of learning English, as well as for those who have learning difficulties, are sound. Good guidance and encouragement help all pupils make a smooth transition to secondary education. Regular formal and informal sessions provide clear information for parents on progress and most parents consider they know how well their children are doing.

Leadership and management

Grade:

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Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Pupils

After our visit to your school we would like to share our findings with you. We would also like to thank you for your friendly welcome and for sharing your opinions with us.

We think that St Joseph's is a satisfactory school that is improving. We are pleased that you are proud of your school and enjoy the company of friends and teachers. You tell us you are well looked after and we agree that your school takes good care of you. You behave well and are very sensible in the small play areas. Some of you also look after children in the nursery and reception very well. You help to organise their games and make sure they stay safe. There are many other things that are good about your school. You told us how much you enjoy music, for example. We were sorry that your timetables did not allow us to see you in these classes. You are happy also that you have many more computers to work on. We think that St Joseph's helps you make steady progress. Some of you, though, could do even better if you attended school more often. Too many of you take too many days off even when you are not ill. This means you miss work and not all of you catch up in lessons well enough.

To make St Joseph's even better, we have asked the staff not only to help improve your attendance but to make sure you all make faster progress in lessons. Nursery and reception groups could also work more closely together.

We wish you and your school very well for the future.

Sheila Nolan

Lead Inspector