

St Joseph's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100441
Local Authority	Islington
Inspection number	276312
Inspection dates	3–4 November 2005
Reporting inspector	Daniel Kilborn

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	Mr Michael Cosh Mr D Leavy
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Highgate Hill Highgate London N19 5NE
Telephone number	02072721270
Fax number	02072729278

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This large Catholic Primary voluntary aided school is located on Highgate Hill in the borough of Islington. The school is popular and oversubscribed with some pupils travelling from beyond the immediate area. Attainment on entry represents a spread of ability but is average overall. The school community represents a wide cross section of society and the ward is in the top 15% on the national deprivation indicator. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is higher than the national average. The percentage of pupils' whose first language is not English is very high with one in five pupils being at the early stages of learning English. Some 63% of pupils have minority ethnic backgrounds of which 23% are from a black African heritage. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above the national average.

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

* In order to ensure even greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning, strengthen teaching and learning where it is only satisfactory.* Continue to develop strategies to help some girls in Key Stage 1 to achieve better in mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade:

Personal development and well-being

Grade:

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade:

Teaching is good with some outstanding lessons seen across the school. The impact of teaching on learning has been a major contributory factor to the maintenance of high standards over time. Teachers work very successfully in teams led by the experienced and very able assistant head and phase leaders. They have high aspirations for all pupils and relationships are excellent. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is mostly good and enables children to gain a good start to their education. Teachers use resources very well to extend and consolidate pupils' understanding. They are skilful at using a wide variety of approaches to make learning enjoyable and rewarding. Classroom support assistants are deployed very effectively and the support and teaching for pupils with learning needs is outstanding. The school recognised that some girls in Key Stage 1 have not done as well as boys in mathematics and recent targeting of additional support for girls is showing some improvement. During the good and outstanding lessons, teachers used questions effectively to encourage pupils to think more deeply about their responses. There were very good opportunities for them to discuss their learning with each other. Work was matched effectively to pupils' needs. On the few occasions when the quality of teaching was no better than satisfactory, classroom management was not so strong and activities did not always engage the interest of all pupils effectively. As a result, progress slowed and pupils did not achieve as well as they should. Assessment, including the marking of pupils' work, is consistently good and the information gained is used effectively to plan the next stages of learning. The setting of individual targets for pupils in literacy is good, although more could be done to extend these in mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade:

The curriculum is good with some outstanding elements. Planning is strong and ensures that knowledge, skills and understanding are developed progressively in all subjects. Pupils' good progress in literacy, numeracy and ICT provides them with the skills needed for economic well-being. There is a good Foundation Stage curriculum that prepares pupils well for work on the National Curriculum. There are good opportunities for pupils to use their skills in support of work across the curriculum, for example, there are opportunities for extended writing in all

subjects. Provision and standards in ICT have improved well since the last inspection and ICT skills are used well in support of work across subjects. The use of visits and visitors to support and enrich learning is outstanding and impacts markedly on pupils' learning and experience. Pupils gained much, for example, from the visit of a professional opera company. Given the constraints posed by the accommodation, extra curricular opportunities are good and have improved since the last inspection. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is outstanding and ensures that pupils make rapid progress with the appropriate targets in their individual education plans.

Care, guidance and support

Grade:

The quality of the care, guidance and support provided for pupils is outstanding. The school has very secure and sensitive procedures in relation to child protection issues. Health and Safety, including careful attention to risk assessments, First Aid and security, are promoted and monitored very well enabling pupils to feel secure and safe. Behaviour management is very good. Pupils feel confident that they have someone to talk to and that they will be listened to if they have a problem. The school provides very good support for pupils with learning difficulties allowing all pupils to play a full part in school life. Pupils are very well prepared for and speak confidently about their move to secondary school. Academic support is good. Pupils are well aware of their targets and how they need to improve their work. The school's work with other agencies and parents is outstanding. For example, the regular help of a counsellor from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and support workers for Portuguese and Spanish families enhances the care and support available to each pupil very successfully.

Leadership and management

Grade:

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Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I should like to thank you on behalf of all the inspectors for the friendly way in which you welcomed us to your school. We enjoyed talking with you during our visit and your views and opinions were very helpful. You were all very polite, friendly and well behaved. It is very clear to us that you get on well together and enjoy coming to school. We know that you always work hard and try to do your best. You like and respect your teachers and many of you told us how you trust them to look after you if you have any problems.

You are good at English, mathematics, science and working with computers. We think that some of the girls in the infants could be doing even better with their mathematics and have asked the teachers to help you even more with this. The head teacher and all your teachers care very much about you and want you to do well. They work very hard to make your lessons interesting and enjoyable. We want all of the lessons to be like this and have asked the head teacher to make sure that this happens. You tell us about all the exciting things you do when visitors come into school and when you go out on visits. We know that children in Year 6 are greatly looking forward to going to Amsterdam and Ironbridge and we hope that these visits go well. We wish you all good luck with the new school council you are setting up

All the inspectors join me in wishing you a happy and successful future.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Kilborn, Lead Inspector