



St Joseph's RC Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101546
Local Authority Brent
Inspection number 276533
Inspection date 11 September 2006
Reporting inspector Sue Vale

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Waverley Avenue
School category	Voluntary aided		Wembley
Age range of pupils	3-7		HA9 6TA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02089036032
Number on roll (school)	258	Fax number	02089035263
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Tom O'Rourke
		Headteacher	Mrs P Gibney
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2000		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspection.

Description of the school

St Joseph's RC Infant School serves a culturally diverse community. There are 27 different languages spoken. A growing proportion of pupils, around half, are learning English as an additional language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Joseph's Infant School is a good school that thrives on strong teamwork. It values highly and fully includes all children in its daily life. The needs of the pupils are central to all that the school does. As a result, the pupils' personal development and well being is outstanding. Pupils greatly enjoy learning and are eager to come to school. Parents are very enthusiastic and pleased with what the school offers. As one parent commented, 'the love and attention that is shown to each child is what makes it (the school) shine.' The strong Catholic ethos promotes outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, ensuring the pupils quickly become confident and happy learners.

Leadership and management are good. Central to the school's success is the headteacher's clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and an accurate assessment of what it needs to do to improve further. The school has tackled the issues from the last inspection effectively and the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is much improved. The capacity to improve further is good. Governors make a strong contribution and are fully involved in implementing the school's very detailed plans.

The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of activities but the transition from the Foundation Stage to Year 1 curriculum is not as smooth as it should be. Nevertheless it supports those children who are new to learning English particularly well so that their spoken language develops quickly. Teaching and learning are good. Well planned lessons interest and motivate the pupils. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught well giving pupils a strong foundation for the next stage of their education. Most of the children begin school with broadly average skills, except in their language development which is weaker, and make good progress. The children make a good start in the nursery and Reception classes. Pupils continue to make good progress and achieve equally well in Years 1 and 2. As a result they reach above average standards by the end of Year 2. This has been the case for a number of years.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the smooth transition from Foundation Stage to Year 1 through a curriculum that fully meets the needs of all children.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All pupils do well irrespective of their background and ability. The make up of the school has changed considerably over the last few years and there are now increasing numbers of pupils who are new to learning English. St. Joseph's has adapted well to these changes and has introduced a number of new strategies that allow pupils to make good progress and to achieve well as they move through the school. Attainment on entry is broadly average but many pupils have weaker language skills than might

be expected for their age. The school is particularly successful in developing their spoken English and is providing an increasingly broad range of opportunities for them to be as successful in writing. Children make a good start in the nursery and Reception classes and they build on this to reach above average standards by Year 2 in reading, mathematics and science. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities also make good progress as they receive good support from their teachers and teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well being, including the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, are outstanding. As one parent commented, 'the school fosters a strong sense of self-worth and cares extremely well for the children.' Pupils greatly enjoy coming to school, know the importance of keeping safe and in lessons show a keen interest in learning. Their behaviour is excellent. As one child said, 'everybody is well behaved because we listen and know what to do.' Older pupils look after younger children and eagerly take on responsibilities such as playground pals. Pupils make a strong contribution to their community. For example, the school council listens to pupil's opinions and uses them very effectively to make the school a better place for everyone. Pupils perform and talk in front of their classes and the whole school. This helps them become confident, motivated learners and equips them exceptionally well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils are taught well. The good subject knowledge of teachers, along with good support from the teaching assistants, motivates and helps pupils to make good progress. Lessons are very well planned and organised. In most lessons the teachers ensure that the needs of different groups of pupils are catered for effectively but the support for some pupils in the transition from the Foundation Stage to Year 1 does not take sufficient account of their particular needs. Clear explanations by teachers about what pupils are learning and why helps them to achieve well and to make good progress in their learning. Regular checks by teachers on how pupils are progressing allow teachers to know what pupils need to learn next and to set them further challenges. This is proving to be particularly useful in raising standards in writing. The well focused support for pupils who are new to learning English is particularly beneficial and ensures they achieve well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Pupils enjoy a well planned, broad and interesting range of activities that promote effective learning and the Catholic ethos of the school. It is enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular and other activities. The school has rightly placed an emphasis on developing writing skills. This is helping pupils to make good progress and is contributing effectively to raising standards. The curriculum in Year 1 is not linked closely enough to the well constructed programme in Reception to ensure a smooth transition for the pupils from Foundation Stage to Year 1.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school cares for its pupils well and they receive good guidance and support from their teachers, other staff and, where necessary other agencies. Child protection arrangements are fully in place and there are good systems for ensuring pupils health and safety. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and their strengths encouraged. There is good tracking of pupils' academic progress against their challenging targets but the school is not taking sufficient account of pupils' needs at the start of Year 1. Regular assessments ensure that teachers know what is needed for the pupils in their care to do next to improve. The targets are shared with parents and pupils alike.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

There is a strong commitment from all involved with the school to put the pupils at the centre of all that they do. The headteacher leads by example. She leads her team very well. The school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is accurate, albeit more modest in its evaluation of pupils' personal development and well being. The school has adapted well to the changing needs of its pupils and has initiated strategies that fully support the raising of standards and achievement. The school improvement plan is an impressive document and the areas identified for development are being consistently implemented across the school. These are having a positive impact for example on raising standards in writing and other areas of literacy.

The school uses its resources prudently. It has a large budget surplus. This has been earmarked for the improvements to the building and increased security.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

It was lovely to meet some of you when I came to visit your school.

I agree with you that St Joseph's is a good school.

There are lots of things which you do well.

- You work hard and achieve good standards.
- You are kind to each other and look after children who need help.
- Your teachers plan good lessons for you and help you to make good progress in your learning.
- Your headteacher leads and manages your school very well.
- The spiritual moral and social development in your school is excellent.

Some of the children when they start in Year 1 need a slightly different curriculum from the one they have got. I have asked your teachers to look at how they can help children move from Reception to Year 1 more smoothly.

Regards

Sue Vale

Lead Inspector