



St Joseph's Catholic Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103090
LEA Waltham Forest LEA
Inspection number 276842
Inspection dates 12 September 2005 to 13 September 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Mike Thompson AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Marsh Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		London
Age range of pupils	3 to 7		E10 7BL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	2085393000
Number on roll	215	Fax number	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	15 May 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Maryanne Lecount

Age group 3 to 7	Inspection dates 12 September 2005 - 13 September 2005	Inspection number 276842
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St. Joseph's Infant School is situated in the East London district of Leyton. Its pupils are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, with about a quarter from homes in which English is an additional language. The number of pupils with special educational needs is about average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and effective school with some outstanding features. It gives good value for money. The quality of education, including teaching, is good throughout the school. As a result the pupils achieve above average standards by the time they leave at the end of Year 2. The large numbers of children who speak little English when they join the nursery class make very good progress. This happens because their individual needs are quickly identified and met; and the school works in excellent partnership with their parents. All pupils are warmly welcomed and equally valued. Teachers know them extremely well and are exceptionally good at using what they know to ensure that they make good progress in their learning. Pupils' personal development is outstanding because they are exceptionally well cared for and, therefore, feel secure and happy. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. A highly committed staff team and the governing body give her good support. Together, they have developed an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and have devised a clear plan for the further development of the school. Teachers manage their areas of responsibility well but do not generally observe lessons in subjects other than English and mathematics. The school has made good progress since its last inspection in 2000. The good standard of teaching has been sustained and the school's performance in reading, writing and mathematics has remained at or above the national average each year. The provision for child protection, which was the single major weakness identified by the previous inspection, has been significantly improved and is now very good. There is a strong commitment to continuous improvement at all levels within the school; leaving it well placed to make further progress.

What the school should do to improve further

* Use the good practice in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics as a model for other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Throughout the school bilingual pupils make very good progress in developing their skills in English because, from an early age the school gives them a lot of individual attention. In addition, it works exceptionally well with their parents to make sure that they practise what they have learned at home. Children in the nursery and reception classes get a very good start to their education. When they join the nursery most are at the levels expected for their age in all areas of learning except communication in English. In this area standards are well below average. Children quickly develop as independent learners because of the very good range of activities designed for them and the high quality help given. Although they make very good progress in developing skills in English standards are below average by the time they move from reception to Year 1. In all other areas of learning most achieve all of the learning goals expected at this age. By the end of Year 2 standards are above average in reading, writing,

mathematics and science. Almost all pupils make good progress because they are well taught and their steps in learning are regularly and carefully checked. Those with learning difficulties also do well because their individual needs are clearly identified and they are given high quality help. The school's very good analysis of pupils' results in the national tests shows that there is no significant difference between the achievements of pupils from different cultural backgrounds. However, the school has identified underachievement by some pupils, usually boys, who are clever but appear to lack motivation. Staff are taking effective action to tackle this problem through, for example, the use of targets and incentives.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in classes and around the school are generally outstanding. They are keen to succeed and say that they want to make their teachers happy by doing all their work. Attendance is very good. Pupils' relationships with each other and staff are excellent; reflecting the very strong emphasis which the school places on pupils' personal development. Pupils play happily together and say that instances of bullying or aggressive behaviour are very rare. They make important decisions regarding their safety, welfare and pastoral care. For instance, they write and sign up to their own class rules and make good choices about what they eat for lunch. Pupils also have a good understanding of how to stay safe and lead healthy lifestyles. The skills that they learn in reading and writing help them to enjoy continued success when they move to the junior school. The life and work of the school has a strong Christian focus. Pupils' spiritual development is a noteworthy feature. Opportunities for reflection are built into the day and pupils learn to understand their feelings because of the sensitive support they are given by their teachers. There is a powerful culture of respect for others in the school and pupils show a very clear sense of right and wrong. Pupils are very aware of their own cultural heritage and that of others because teachers plan carefully to ensure that this is a feature of all that the pupils do, drawing successfully on the school's outstanding links with parents.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good with some pockets of very effective practice. The most striking feature is the well considered deployment of teachers and support staff, who know all pupils very well. As a result pupils learn effectively because the carefully planned activities are closely matched to their needs. Pupils benefit from adults' skilful questioning which is used to check their understanding. This strategy also ensures that pupils are given frequent opportunities to talk about what they have achieved. This improves pupils' vocabulary and helps strengthen their confidence. In the foundation stage teachers plan interesting activities that cover all of the areas of learning and are particularly good at making the best use of the small outside area.

The school constantly refines its systems for checking on pupils' progress and setting targets for them. It is also very good at identifying pupils who are in need of extra help and deciding precisely how to provide this. The well-trained teacher with responsibility for gifted and talented pupils gives her colleagues good advice, ensuring that the needs of these pupils are met in full.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a wide range of activities which excite its pupils. Its curriculum for the youngest children is very good and ensures that children are given a secure platform for future learning. An outstanding feature is the way in which all topics are given a black cultural perspective, reflecting the distinctive character of the school. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is very good. These pupils have clear and detailed individual education plans which are carefully used to make sure that they achieve well. The school organises a wide variety of out-of-class activities such as drama, football and music clubs. These attract many pupils and make a strong contribution to pupils' learning and enjoyment. A rich and well planned programme of visits and visitors adds extra enjoyment and interest to pupils' learning. The school makes good provision for ensuring that its pupils keep healthy and safe. This is emphasised at every available opportunity. There is an effective personal, social and health education programme. This helps pupils to grow in confidence and understand that they have a useful contribution to make to the community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school's care and support for pupils is outstanding. The very high quality of its links with parents underpins all that it does. High expectations of pupils' behaviour are implicit in all activities. There is very good care and guidance for pupils with special educational needs. Very good child protection procedures ensure all adults are aware of the needs of pupils experiencing personal difficulty or trauma. These pupils benefit from the very high quality help given by a learning mentor. Her very good knowledge of each individual's circumstances and the sensitive way in which she works, puts pupils at ease and contributes strongly to their very good progress. The school's effective links with a range of partners has significantly improved the personal skills of some pupils. For example, the school made very good use of a local education authority project to help build the confidence of those identified as needing help. Work on this initiative continues and is now organised and run by members of the support staff.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's leadership is very good. She gives clear direction for the school's work and focuses strongly on raising standards and improving the achievement of all learners. She knows the school very well and makes very good use of information

gathered through regular monitoring to plan its development effectively. She has ensured that the curriculum reflects the rich diversity of the local community and helps pupils to learn about and appreciate their own and others' cultural heritage. The headteacher has also developed an excellent partnership between the school and its parents which is an important factor in the good progress made by pupils. The headteacher has built a very good staff team and deploys them very effectively. There is a clear sense of shared responsibility to ensure that pupils do well and are fully included in activities. There are good opportunities for staff training, closely linked to responsibilities and the school's needs. Very good use is made of the building and the grounds provide a stimulating learning environment. Teachers regularly monitor their areas of responsibility and use the information which they gather to make useful contributions to the school's improvement. Teachers' monitoring of English and mathematics is good but in other subjects their monitoring does not generally include observations of lessons. This means that good practice in these subjects is not easily identified and shared with others. Governance is satisfactory. Governors care about their school and adequately hold it to account. They provide useful support for school initiatives and ensure that it meets its legal responsibilities. Particularly noteworthy is the work of the curriculum committee, which effectively monitors pupils' progress.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	NA
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Following our visit to inspect your school we would like to tell you what we think about how well you are getting on and how well your school is helping you to learn. We enjoyed seeing you at work and at playtimes and liked talking to you. There are lots of things that we like about your school.

Some of them are: * Your school is friendly and welcoming. You behave really well and get on very well with each other. * You listen carefully to what your teachers have to say and try very hard in your lessons. * Your teachers teach you well and when you find work hard you are given the right sort of help. * Your teachers spend a lot of time looking at what you have done in class and working out how to help you to make your work even better. * All of the adults who work in your school make sure that you are safe and are really well looked after. * Your headteacher, and all of the other people who help run your school, are good at making sure that you get the very best education. We agree with your parents that you go to a good school.

All of the adults in your school want it to be even better. To help them to do this we think that the thing to do next is to make sure that teachers from other classes come to look at what you are doing in lots of different sorts of lessons. Then they can share the good things that they see with their own class.