

Saint John Fisher Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101921
Local Authority	Ealing
Inspection number	286224
Inspection dates	24–25 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Olson Davis

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	457
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs M Elliott
Headteacher	Mrs G Scannell
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2002
School address	Thirlmere Avenue Perivale Greenford UB6 8EF
Telephone number	020 8998 4426
Fax number	020 8810 9131

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St John Fisher is a large Catholic primary school with a Nursery. In recent years there has been an influx of pupils at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and for whom English is an additional language is higher than in most schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who join the school other than at the usual time is higher than in most schools. The school operates on a split site with the Nursery, Year 1 and Year 2 approximately 1.5 miles away from Years 3 to 6.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils. Under the effective leadership of the headteacher and the deputy the school includes every child so that they all make good progress in their learning. Pupils learn to live up to its mission statement, which is to '...respect and value every person'. Parents and pupils hold the school in high regard. A particular strength of the school is the good care, guidance and support it provides for its pupils. As a result pupils' personal development and well being is outstanding. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy. They greatly enjoy their lessons and participate enthusiastically in a range of activities out of school time. The strong partnerships with the church, other schools and outside agencies provide many benefits to pupils' learning and well-being. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Teaching and learning are good and contribute to pupils' good achievement. Children get off to a flying start in the Foundation Stage and settle quickly, making good progress because of good teaching. Pupils do well in the national tests at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6. Standards are above average. However, their progress in science is not as rapid as in other subjects because pupils have too few opportunities for independent, investigative work. Fundamental to the pupils' good progress is teachers' effective use of regular assessments to set work that is well matched to pupils' needs and abilities. Another important feature of teaching and learning is the very good relationships between teachers and pupils. As a result pupils behave very well and show positive attitudes to learning. A good curriculum is particularly successful in meeting the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and pupils at the early stages of learning English.

Good leadership and management are firmly based on effective school self-evaluation. Rigorous monitoring leads to prompt and successful actions being taken to bring about improvements. The school is well placed to build on its strengths in the future. Pupils make good progress because of the positive impact of good leadership and management at all levels. Subject leaders offer good support and advice to colleagues throughout the school. However, their broader role in monitoring the quality of teaching and working alongside colleagues has only recently commenced. Governors are effective. They are supportive, yet provide good challenge to the school by holding it to account for the standards achieved by pupils. Parents hold the school in high regard. One parent wrote, 'St John Fisher RC Primary School is simply the best!'

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in science by providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their investigative skills and apply their scientific knowledge.
- Develop the role of subject leaders to ensure that each has proper oversight of standards and the quality of teaching in their subject across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Good teaching, effective teaching assistants and well managed support programmes contribute significantly to this. Many children have low level skills on entry to the Nursery, particularly in communication, and language and literacy. An increasing number of pupils at the early stages of learning English are joining the Nursery. Children make rapid progress in the Foundation Stage particularly in learning English and in their personal and social

skills because of the strong emphasis placed by the school on developing these areas. As a result, many children reach the learning goals expected by the start of Year 1. Pupils continue to make good progress and attain above average standards at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils successfully build on their good levels of attainment reaching above average standards at the end of Year 6. However, their progress in science is not as strong as in English and mathematics because insufficient investigative work is carried out. Standards dipped in 2005 because of a high intake of pupils joining the school at the early stages of learning English or with learning difficulties and disabilities. Swift and effective action by the school in strengthening provision for these pupils has resulted in raised standards in 2006. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and pupils with English as an additional language make good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties also make good progress in relation to their individual education plans because of the effective support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' great enjoyment and appreciation of the school is reflected in above average attendance and excellent behaviour. Pupils report that bullying is rare and they feel safe because staff deal with problems quickly and effectively. Pupils get on exceptionally well with each other and with adults, creating positive relationships. They are very considerate towards newly arrived pupils and help them to settle in quickly.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They show reverence during prayers and their ability to reflect is very much evident in lessons. Their singing in assembly is joyous. Pupils' cultural awareness is good, and is reinforced through visits to galleries and museums as well as learning from visiting artists and musicians. They respond generously to the plight of those less fortunate, for example, pupils raised money for the 'Chain of Hope' through sponsored skipping during Lent.

Pupils are trustworthy and readily take on responsibilities as Prefects or Councillors. The school council has taught them how to represent majority views in making decisions. Pupils understand how to avoid risks both in school and in the world outside. The school has Healthy School status, which has helped pupils to develop an exceptional understanding of how to keep fit and healthy. They work well in teams and have good basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT ready for the next stage of their education and future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils speak highly of the way teachers teach and support them during lessons. They enjoy their lessons and achieve well because work is presented in interesting ways, stimulating their interest. Teachers' improving use of interactive whiteboards and their use of other resources help them to capture pupils' attention and to explain things well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. They make good use of assessment data to provide work that is pitched at the right level to ensure challenge for all pupils. Effective deployment of well-briefed teaching assistants and specialist teachers ensures that all groups are well catered for. Relationships are very good and as a result pupils behave very well. Lessons are calm and purposeful and pupils work with sustained concentration. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to talk about their work in pairs and small groups. This helps pupils to clarify their thinking and boosts

their learning. On occasions, teachers can talk too much during whole class sessions limiting the opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills and to give extended answers to questions. Pupils enjoy their science lessons but have insufficient opportunities to undertake independent investigations in science.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has responded well to the needs of its growing number of pupils with English as an additional language through a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy. As a result, all pupils achieve well in these areas. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved since the last inspection and pupils use their ICT skills well to support their learning. For example, Year 4 pupils used programs to produce pictures and writing about Tudor food, effectively linking their learning in history to art, English and ICT. On the whole, links in the curriculum are not so well planned with the result that pupils cannot so easily apply their skills from one subject to others. There is a good range of enrichment activities, particularly in sports and music that extends pupils' learning during and after school and contributes very effectively to their personal development. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is well organised with a good range of stimulating activities that engage children well and encourage them to participate in lessons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a good quality of care, guidance and support for its pupils. As a result pupils form excellent relationships with adults, develop in confidence and feel safe. Parents are particularly appreciative of this aspect of the school's work. One parent wrote, 'All members of staff from our headteacher to caretaker are continuously providing a caring, respectful and approachable environment.' There are robust procedures for safeguarding pupils and for ensuring their health and safety.

Meetings and home visits help to prepare young children for school life and good procedures ensure that pupils transfer smoothly between the infant school and the junior school. Good induction systems help pupils new to the school to settle quickly and to participate fully in the life of the school. Good tracking systems and close analysis of information ensure that staff are aware of pupils' needs and the next steps in their learning. Pupils are not as closely involved in this process as they could be. They are aware of their challenging learning targets but do not always have a clear understanding of what they need to do to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and deputy provide clear direction to the school. They ensure that it is strongly focused on raising standards and promotes a good standard of care. They are well supported by the staff team. As a result pupils' personal development is excellent and pupils achieve well. School leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths to be built on and the weaknesses to be addressed from their close monitoring. They make good use of assessment information to monitor the progress of pupils and to set key priorities for improvement. As a result, the staff responds quickly to correct weaknesses such as the dip in standards in 2005

and to meet the challenge of the school's changing intake. Effective leadership in the Foundation Stage contributes to the good start made by the younger children. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and for those new to learning English is well organised by the inclusion manager and means that these pupils achieve well. Subject leaders monitor standards by examining pupils' work and by giving useful feedback to colleagues. However, they do not get enough opportunities to work with teachers in their classes. This limits the effectiveness of the advice they can give to colleagues to help them raise standards. Governors are effective and carry out their roles conscientiously. They have a good understanding of the school's strategic development through their own monitoring of the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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	2
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

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.

Annex A

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

4 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Saint John Fisher Roman Catholic Primary School, Thirlmere Avenue, Perivale, Greenford, UB6 8EF

Thank you for all your help when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and took careful note of what you and your parents had to say about the school. We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour and by how well you respect and care for one another.

- Yours is a good school. Here are a few of the many good things about your school:
- You are making good progress because your teachers are good at helping you to learn.
- You enjoy your school because teachers are good at planning interesting things for you to do.
- All of the adults in school look after you well so you feel safe.
- Your headteacher, the staff and the school governors are clear about what needs to be improved and how to improve it. This means that your school should keep getting better.

All of the adults in your school want it to be even better. To help them do this we have asked the school to do a couple of things.

- Help you to do better in science by giving you more opportunities to apply your knowledge and to do more experiments.
- Encourage teachers in charge of subjects to visit classrooms more often to see their subjects being taught. This will help them to check that things are going well in their subjects and that you are making good progress.

We hope that you will continue to enjoy your school. We also hope that you will help your teachers as they work hard to make your school even better for you.

Yours sincerely

Olson DavisLead inspector