

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102334
Local Authority	Havering
Inspection number	286344
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	414
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr S Gregory
Headteacher	Mrs C Jones
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2001
School address	115 St Mary's Lane Upminster RM14 2QB
Telephone number	01708 220277
Fax number	01708 640605

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large school serves a wide, mainly prosperous, catchment area covering two parishes. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is very low. The large majority of pupils are from a White British heritage with small numbers from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average, but the proportion with statements of special educational need is around average. The school has awards for developing its staff and for promoting basic skills, sport and healthy lifestyles.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This outstanding school provides an excellent level of education for all its pupils. Standards are exceptionally high in English, mathematics and science year after year because of the exemplary provision pupils receive. This includes teaching that is always good and often outstanding, a relevant and richly creative curriculum and an extremely caring environment. As one pupil said, 'Our school makes us feel like we all matter, we all belong.' The school's Christian ethos is central to its work and provides a strong moral compass that teaches pupils right from wrong and the importance of respecting one another. The experienced leadership of the headteacher and deputy head are excellent. Together, they have built up a particularly strong team of committed staff and put in place the structures necessary to ensure that pupils thrive and continue to make outstanding progress.

Pupils respond extremely well to the excellent support they receive. Their personal development and well-being are outstanding. They are enthusiastic about learning and keen to participate in lessons. The children in the Foundation Stage get off to flying start because of the outstanding provision. Their natural curiosity is ignited by a wide range of exciting and stimulating activities both inside and outside the classroom. Attendance is high because pupils love coming to school. They know all about staying safe and take plenty of exercise. They contribute widely to their own community and to those further afield. Indeed, a school in India was named after this school because of pupils' involvement in funding clean water to a village there. Pupils become confident, well-rounded individuals and leave the school with exceptionally good basic skills.

Leadership and management are outstanding and have a real impact on the provision and pupils' excellent achievement. Monitoring by school leaders and subject leaders is rigorous and systematic and identifies quickly where improvements are needed. An innovative approach to strategic planning ensures that everyone takes ownership of the school's priorities and that they are reviewed regularly. The governing body has expertise which is used well to support financial planning and building projects. Governors are very supportive of the school and proud of its achievements, but their monitoring is too informal and relies heavily on receiving reports rather than getting into school themselves to see what is actually going on. School leaders have continually sought to build on their success and to review critically every aspect of their work. As a result, the school continues to go from strength to strength and its capacity for further improvement is outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure governors monitor the work of the school systematically through regular, focused visits during the school day.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding and standards are consistently exceptionally high. Children enter the school with a wide range of skills and capabilities, which tend to be above those usually expected. They make excellent progress in the Reception classes because of the high quality provision they receive, which builds on their existing knowledge and moves them on rapidly. This level of progress continues in Years 1 and 2, so that most pupils are reaching standards that are exceptionally high by the time they enter Year 3. Consistently good or better teaching ensures that progress does not falter in Years 3 to 6, so that by the time pupils take the national

tests at the end of Year 6 standards are exceptionally high in English, mathematics and science. Pupils meet challenging targets so that almost all pupils attain the expected Level 4 and large numbers attain the higher Level 5. This has been the pattern year on year for at least the past five years. The small number of pupils with learning difficulties makes exceptional progress and usually attains nationally expected levels. There are no differences in the performance of boys and girls, as all do extremely well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school has a calm friendly atmosphere built on mutual respect and support. One pupil commented, 'I like the pupils around me. When I first joined the school they all made me feel welcome.' Pupils feel free from bullying, but know that they can go to an adult with any worries and that something will be done to help them. Pupils celebrate different cultures and enjoy themed weeks and special days when they focus on particular aspects of their heritage. Their behaviour is exemplary, with excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils have a deep understanding of living healthily and maintaining a balanced diet. School councillors, who are elected democratically, make a significant contribution to the school community, for example through fund-raising for 'buddy benches'. Pupils take part in church activities and also join pupils from other schools in musical and sporting events. They are particularly conscientious in raising funds for charity. They develop a love and enthusiasm for learning and are extremely well prepared for secondary school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. All teaching is at least good and there are many outstanding elements, particularly in the Foundation Stage. A variety of interesting and purposeful activities engages children extremely well and promotes their independence. For example, as travel agents in the role play area, children examined a range of brochures to book flights and holidays, finding out about the world and learning to relate together cooperatively. Throughout the school, relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent and there are high expectations of pupils' learning. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace with a wide range of strategies used to interest and involve pupils. They enjoy discussing their work together as partners or in small groups. One pupil explained, 'If they have different ideas from us we can use those as well as our own.' Teachers use resources very effectively, including the new electronic whiteboards, and make lessons active and exciting for pupils. This appeals particularly to boys and contributes to their outstanding progress, which is much better than that of boys nationally. Pupils with learning difficulties are particularly well supported by teaching assistants. The very few pupils who are learning English as an additional language are fully included in lessons and make rapid progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It is kept under constant review so as to be relevant and appropriate for all pupils. There are excellent links across subjects, which broaden pupils'

learning and enable them to practise and apply their skills. For example, in history, pupils were thinking up powerful verbs to describe a Roman soldier. The Foundation Stage curriculum takes fully into account the needs of young children and encourages them to investigate and learn in enjoyable ways. The curriculum is enriched by a wealth of different activities. Pupils learn French and Italian and have opportunities to play orchestral instruments such as the flute and the clarinet. They take part in many clubs including liturgical dance, gymnastics and the golden jubilee history club. Visitors regularly inform and entertain pupils, and there are many visits for them to enjoy. Year 6 pupils have recently returned from a residential trip to the Isle of Wight where they studied the coastal environment and learnt about the history of Osborne House. There are close links with secondary schools to extend sporting opportunities, such as swimming. These activities make a valuable contribution towards pupils' enjoyment of school and their excellent personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils receive outstanding levels of care, guidance and support. All statutory requirements are met and the school is rigorous in promoting safety. This is a school at the centre of its community. Parents praise its caring approach towards the whole family. One wrote, 'We have been particularly grateful for the care and support offered to us and our son.' The school has extremely effective links with outside agencies to support its most vulnerable pupils. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is outstanding. Very effective systems are in place to identify pupils who need extra support and to meet their needs promptly. Teachers keep meticulous records of pupils' progress and this enables them to plan work that is matched to pupils' abilities. Pupils are shown how to improve and have appropriate targets that enable them to make outstanding progress. Marking is of a consistently high quality, with teachers and pupils often entering into a written dialogue about a piece of work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Parents fully support the work of the school and appreciate all it does for their children. One commented, 'My son is proud to say he attends St Joseph's and as a family we are proud of what the school has achieved.' The headteacher has a passion for education set out in her vision for the school, which is shared by all staff. At the heart of this are the individual child and a culture of respect based on Christian values. She is very ably supported by the deputy head. Their combined experience and high expectations have given the school consistency and continuity over the years. They have put in place outstanding systems to monitor its work. Each subject leader produces their own detailed evaluation and these combine to give a very thorough picture of the school's strengths and areas to develop. Plans for improvement are carried out successfully and the impact of initiatives is measured. This means the provision continues to improve and exceptionally high standards are maintained, both academically and in terms of pupils' personal development. Governors meet staff informally and receive presentations about subject areas, but do not currently make regular visits to the school while it is in operation to see for themselves how well it is doing.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

25 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Upminster, RM14 2QB

Thank you very much for making us so welcome at your school. We did enjoy visiting you. We know you are very proud of your school and we agree that it is outstanding. There are many things that are excellent about it, but here are some of the main ones.

- You reach exceptionally high standards in English, mathematics and science by the time you leave.
- You make outstanding progress because the teaching is always good or better and the lessons are interesting and fun.
- Children in the Reception classes get off to a flying start.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you have a real enthusiasm for learning.
- You care for one another very well and work together cooperatively.
- Your attendance is extremely good.
- You are involved in helping your local community in lots of different ways and also in raising money for charities.
- There are lots of clubs and visits for you to enjoy.
- The school looks after you really well and gives you particularly good guidance in how to improve your work.
- The school is led and managed exceptionally well by the headteacher and her team.

We think the governors are very supportive and have helped you to get your new buildings. We would like them to come into school more often to see you at work, so that you can tell them about how you enjoy your studies. That way they will know more about the school when they are making their important decisions.

Thank you once again for your help. Our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. N. Butt, Lead Inspector.