

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100834
Local Authority	Southwark
Inspection number	307501
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Sue Vale

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	234
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon Michael Cooley
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Barber
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Little Dorrit Court Redcross Way London SE1 1NJ

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2009
Inspection number	307501

Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Saint Joseph's is an average sized Catholic Primary School. A Nursery and Reception class with the equivalent of 56 full-time places make up the Early Years Foundation Stage. Approximately two thirds of pupils speak English as an additional language. There are 39 different languages spoken, the major minority ethnic group are Black African heritage. The number of pupils who leave or join the school other than at the usual time is high throughout the school. An average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These largely relate to behaviour, social, emotional, and speech and communication difficulties. The school has the Healthy School and Active School awards.

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 Catholic Primary is a good school. Outstanding care, guidance and support pervade the Catholic ethos of the school. Pupils achieve well and make good progress. A strong staff team works hard to support the effective headteacher. Pastoral care and support are excellent and underpin the pupils' very good personal development and well-being. Parents, who are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, recognise this. As one wrote, 'I have had four children attend St Joseph's and each one has developed into a kind and thoughtful child, maintaining the ethos of the school.'

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They continue to make good progress as they move through the school and are achieving well overall. This is despite around a third of pupils in each year group leaving and starting at times other than expected. Good progress throughout the school is resulting in the older pupils reaching higher standards in lessons and in their work. Standards are now above average and show that the school is building successfully on the broadly average results attained in national tests over the last few years. Standards in reading are higher than in writing. Many pupils make very good progress in their reading, particularly those who started with low literacy skills. The school recognises that too few pupils are attaining the highest level by the end of Year 6 in English and is aware of the need to support pupils in developing their writing skills. Strategies, such as those seen during the time of the inspection where Year 5 parents were invited in to be involved in the 'Impact for learning' with their children, are positive ways that the school is improving standards. These opportunities are thoroughly enjoyed by all who were involved and one reason why pupils achieve so well in reading. This is a positive start to build on in order to improve standards in writing.

Teaching is good overall. Its impact has been strengthened by rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress and of the quality of teaching, as well as the provision of extra resources, such as intervention groups for those who need more help, and challenge for gifted and talented pupils when necessary. A new tracking system for assessment of pupils' progress enables teachers to monitor pupils' progress rigorously and to support any underachievement as it may arise.

There is a varied and interesting curriculum and good opportunities for pupils to engage in a range of extra-curricular activities. These contribute to the pupils' considerable enjoyment of school. Staff know their pupils well and relationships are good both between pupils and between adults and pupils. They provide a high quality of care and support and consequently pupils feel very safe and respond by behaving well. Pupils understand about the need to live 'healthy lives' and there are a number of interesting and varied opportunities to extend their learning. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural needs of pupils are well fostered and support their personal development and well-being.

The school is well led and managed. Strong teamwork, along with the supportive and knowledgeable governing body, ensures that the school is forward-looking and that its self-review is accurate. The new management structure is working well. The governors act effectively as critical friends. Given the school's record of accomplishment, its capacity to improve further is good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children receive a good start to their education in the well-organised Early Years Foundation Stage. The majority of children enter the Nursery with very low skills in communication and language, and limited personal, social and emotional development. The staff rightly focus on supporting children in these aspects. This results in children making good progress across the areas of learning, so that an increasing number of children leave the Early Years Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 with skills and understanding that are broadly in line with what is expected for their age. There has been a significant improvement in children's ability to link sounds and letters. Writing remains a relatively weaker skill. The environment inside and outside, while used well, is in need of refurbishment and reorganisation to ensure easier and more child-friendly access to it.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing.
- Review the organisation of the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure a free flow of movement between Nursery and Reception and the outdoor learning environment.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in each year group from starting points well below expectations for their age in the nursery. Pupils are now reaching above average standards in their work by the end of Year 6. More pupils than usual are achieving high standards in reading but standards in writing are not as high. Nevertheless, overall achievement is good. There is little difference in the attainment among different group of pupils. There is some slight underachievement by White British pupils. The school is aware of this and has put in place strategies such as additional phonics support. Good support enables pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make progress that equals that of others and which is sometimes better. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also progress well. In lessons observed by inspectors, there was no significant difference between the progress made by boys and girls.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Staff place the highest importance on developing pupils' self-esteem and confidence. The impact of this emphasis can be seen in pupils' good behaviour, their enjoyment of school and the positive relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils' spiritual awareness is well developed and strongly reinforced by the school's religious identity. Prayer and liturgies are central to all aspects of school life. Pupils' good cultural development results from the many opportunities to experience art, music, drama and dance. Pupils really enjoy the extended curriculum opportunities which are on offer such as working with a visiting theatre group. The school has put in place effective measures to improve the attendance rate, which is satisfactory.

Pupils develop an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and adopt healthy, fit and safe lifestyles. The opportunities pupils have to contribute to the school and wider community are good. Pupils' skills in literacy and mathematics prepare them well for the future. Pupils say they feel safe at school and are confident that if any incidents of bullying occur, they are dealt

with swiftly. Pupils have extremely positive attitudes towards school and learning. The school council is influential in making decisions, for example about which charities to support.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers manage their classes well. They have established positive working atmospheres in which pupils come ready to learn. They make effective use of interactive whiteboards to make lessons more interesting and to explain concepts more clearly. In the majority of lessons, learning objectives are clear and shared with pupils. As a result, pupils know what they are expected to learn and this helps them to make good progress. They also receive constructive feedback on how well they have done and how they might improve further. There are good opportunities for pupils to express and develop their ideas and effective use is made of 'talk partners'. Support staff are used well and consequently pupils who are new to learning English and those who have more difficulties with their learning achieve as well as their peers and make good progress in their learning. In the small number of lessons which could be improved, the pace is too slow and so pupils lose interest in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has rightly focused on the development of an interesting, varied and relevant curriculum to cater for the pupils' backgrounds and interests. This has contributed positively to improved rates of progress. Provision for information and communication technology is good. This is an improvement from the last inspection. Staff are beginning to make good links between subjects and are setting pupils tasks that encourage them to use their imagination and encourage creativity. A suitable range of educational visits and links with other schools and external agencies support pupils' learning and broaden their experiences. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and take part wholeheartedly, partly due to the introduction of a more active approach to learning. There are many interesting activities that add colour and enjoyment for pupils, and contributes significantly to their good personal development and well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils feel safe because their welfare is at the centre of all that the school does. A strong commitment on behalf of all the staff ensures an outstanding caring environment. This results in an excellent level of care and support for all pupils. Pupils say that there are many adults who they can turn to when necessary. The school complies with statutory safeguarding procedures. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well structured and supports them in the very good progress they make. Strong links with external agencies ensure all pupils receive a very good level of support and make good progress. Marking of pupils' work is positive and constructive. The school is seeking ways of extending the already very good opportunities for parents to be directly involved with their children's learning. Assessment is rigorous and fully supports pupils in their learning, giving them many opportunities to reflect on their own and others' progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The management structure was reorganised at the start of this school year. This strengthened the senior team, under the good leadership of the headteacher, and is having a positive impact on moving the school forward. There is more effective joint planning and a much greater sense of teamwork. The school has rightly identified as a priority raising the standards in writing to the same standards or better as those which pupils achieve in reading. Such initiatives by the school are underpinned by a thorough analysis of the data and supported by appropriate training. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well. Community cohesion is good. The school has close links with the Catholic parish and promotes understanding of local, national and global communities. Governance is good. Governors are supportive of all that the school does and are proactive in helping the school to grow and move forward.

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Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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 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?	1

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

03 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, London, SE1 1NJ

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome when we came to visit your school. Yours is a good school and it has improved very well since its last inspection. This is what we found out.

- You work hard and make good progress in your learning.
- There is outstanding care, guidance and support in your school.
- Your headteacher and all the other staff look after you very well.
- The standards that you reach are improving.
- Your teachers teach you well and many of your lessons are fun and interesting.
- You learn about lots of different things.
- Most of you behave well.
- The school is very well led and managed by your headteacher, the senior management team, and the governing body.

In order to make the school even better, I have asked your headteacher, governors and staff to:

- help you to get even better at your writing
- look at the way the Early Years Foundation Stage is organised in order to help things run more smoothly between Nursery, Reception and the use of the outdoor area.

Thank you once again and we wish you good luck for the future.

Yours faithfully

Sue Vale

Lead Inspector