

Saint Joseph Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101924
Local Authority	Ealing
Inspection number	307854
Inspection dates	30 April –1 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Nicola Davies

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	461
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Dawson
Headteacher	Mr Benedict Cassidy
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2004
School address	York Avenue Hanwell London W7 3HU
Telephone number	020 8567 6293
Fax number	020 8840 0278

Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a popular two-form entry Roman Catholic school in Hanwell. The school population is diverse. Around a third of pupils are of White British heritage and others are from a wide variety of other heritages including Polish, Irish, Caribbean, West African and Filipino. A higher than average proportion of pupils are bilingual and around one in five of pupils are at earlier stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is average as is the percentage of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the normal time of admission. However, this varies considerably within different year groups. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is a little lower than average.

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 provides its children with a good education. The strong Catholic ethos creates a real family within this school. Pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding. Pupils thrive physically, academically, emotionally, and spiritually through the excellent guidance, support and care provided by the school's hard working and dedicated team of staff. One parent wrote, 'Great school, excellent leadership and a committed team; there is a caring and respectful atmosphere. My child loves it!' This was a view communicated by many other parents and pupils' outstanding enjoyment was borne out by the inspection findings. Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds benefit from being educated together, forming close friendships and enriching each other's learning. As another parent wrote, 'The varied ethnic mix at St Joseph's enriches the school and children's social and personal development'. Creating and maintaining such a lively and harmonious community is just one way that the school fulfils its mission to 'build God's kingdom here and now'.

Since the previous inspection, academic standards have risen and are above average by the end of Year 6. In addition, the excellent system for tracking individual pupils' progress and setting targets for them to achieve means that the staff are now confident that their pupils are making good progress. Key to these and other changes has been the very successful team approach to school improvement. Managers, teachers and support staff work together very successfully in 'Every Child Matters' teams to identify weaknesses and put improvements in place. This system, together with a focus on helping individual pupils to reach their potential, has led to the outstanding quality of care, guidance and support and pupils' excellent personal development. It has also strengthened the quality of teaching, the curriculum and pupils' achievement, all of which are now good. Work in subjects such as science, history and geography does not always closely match the particular needs, abilities and interests of groups of pupils, nor link pupils' learning well in one subject with their activities in another. Staff have rightly earmarked this aspect of the curriculum for further development to complement the already well planned and taught basic skills and the strong programme of extra-curricular activities. The school's track record of making and sustaining improvements across many areas of its work is one reason why its capacity to go on improving is outstanding.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children join the Foundation Stage with the skills that are generally expected of three and four-year-olds, although for a significant minority this is their first experience of an English speaking environment. Bilingual staff and a wide range of opportunities to use English in their daily activities help these children to quickly develop their English language skills. Staff work very closely with parents and each other to ensure that all children settle quickly and happily. As a result, children confidently enter their classes, eager to learn and to explore the wide range of activities. Across the Foundation Stage, children's personal and social development is very good. Children show very good levels of independence and concentration from their early days in both adult- and child-led activities. Staff keep comprehensive records of the gains children make which show that most make good or better progress, often exceeding the expected levels for their age. A recent focus on the development of early reading and writing skills is paying dividends in both children's enthusiasm for, and attainment in, reading and writing.

Both Nursery and Reception classes include opportunities for learning in the spacious and well-resourced outdoor areas. A recent move to give Nursery children more independence in choosing whether they learn indoors or through the outdoor curriculum has been successful. Plans are in place to extend this by providing Reception children with independent access to the outdoor areas and to make activities available in all weathers so as to further enhance children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide well matched opportunities for individuals and groups of learners across the curriculum.
- Implement plans to extend outdoor learning in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

By the end of Year 6 pupils attain above average standards and pupils make good progress each year. There is a marked improvement in the standards which older pupils have reached over the past three years and the progress demonstrated by Year 6 pupils in the most recent tests was very good. Staff track individual pupils carefully and quickly identify pupils who may not be reaching their potential. This has led them to accurately identify a need to continue to improve standards in Key Stage 1. Well organised support, often in small groups, helps pupils who find reading, writing or mathematics difficult to make good progress. Similarly, the school's bilingual staff cater well for pupils who join the school at early stages of learning English and they too achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. Their spiritual and moral development springs from the school's Catholic ethos and is enhanced by marking the major events of many other faiths. Culturally, the school embraces and celebrates its diversity and seeks to contribute to the wider local community; for example, the school choir has a repertoire from around the world and regularly performs at choral concerts and visits local residential homes. Pupils are very proud of their school and enjoy school life enormously. They know that they are valued and appreciate their diverse learning environment together with the harmonious relationships they have with each other and the staff. As a consequence, their behaviour is excellent. Attendance is good and has risen year on year since the previous inspection. Pupils are right to feel safe and secure in their school. They are confident and outgoing and enthusiastically take part in the extensive range of activities provided to keep them healthy and to achieve their full potential. Pupils' sense of self-worth is further extended through the many roles and responsibilities with which they are entrusted. For example, they represent each other in the school council where their views are listened to and acted upon by the school. Their good standards and excellent attitudes to learning prepare them well for their transfer to secondary school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Particular strengths in teaching lie in the high expectations which staff have of their pupils and their excellent relationships with them. Well-trained teaching assistants make a very good contribution. All of this, combined with pupils' excellent attitudes in lessons means pupils try hard and learn well even when, on a few occasions, teaching is only satisfactory. Skilful questioning is used to draw out ideas from pupils. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson all pupils were effectively engaged and excited about writing problem sums about fractions. Strong rapport with pupils generated a secure environment where pupils investigated and tried out new ideas with confidence. Teachers provide frequent opportunities for discussions and paired work. This means that all pupils are involved and engaged, have opportunities to clarify their thinking and share their ideas. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) well to engage and influence pupils' learning. In lessons where teaching is only satisfactory, the pace of work is slower and expectations are not high enough. Teachers mark their pupils' work frequently and pupils know what they need to do to further improve further. Teachers make good use of assessments when planning lessons and regularly set realistic and achievable 'next steps' for pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils benefit from a lively, interesting and well taught curriculum. Subjects such as English, mathematics and ICT are planned and taught well. This helps pupils make good progress in these subjects and their achievement is well tracked through the rigorous assessment system. A very well planned programme of visits and visitors adds extra enjoyment and makes a good contribution to pupils' outstanding moral, spiritual, cultural and social development. Additional activities are a strength of the school. For example, the free 'drop off' club is popular with parents and children and the Irish and Polish clubs are very popular. Such activities add a great deal to pupils' learning. Another successful example is the 'Let's Pretend' club for the youngest children. This encourages the development of children's language skills and means they make the most of the well-equipped role-play areas during school time. The school has successfully extended the outdoor curriculum for younger pupils through the new outdoor areas for Year 1.

The school has rightly identified that its next steps are to develop areas of the curriculum such as science, geography and history. There is further work to be done to ensure that the curriculum in these subjects is well matched to the interests and needs of groups of pupils. This includes, for example, boys, pupils with particular gifts and talents or those learning English as an additional language.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Child protection, health and safety, and risk assessments are clear, comprehensive and extremely robust. Pupils and their parents talk positively of the constant help they get and the efforts made to support them whenever they face any difficulty or worry. Both personal and academic monitoring is extremely well managed. The tracking and support arrangements for vulnerable

pupils and those experiencing learning difficulties are especially strong and are evidenced by the good progress that these pupils make. Parents spoke of their appreciation of the way the school involves them in every way possible, one commenting that, 'the total support for the children and their families is just fantastic'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

A parent wrote that, 'The head is a passionate and persuasive leader who has improved all aspects of school life' and the inspection findings reflect this. His inspirational leadership is complemented and enhanced by the well-informed deputy headteacher and the very capable senior and middle managers. Monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorous. Within their 'Every Child Matters' teams, managers employ a good range of strategies such as scrutiny of planning, focused observations, demonstration lessons, and additional training to monitor and improve teaching and learning. This is supported by the analysis of performance data by each team. Links between pupils' progress and improvement strategies are clearly made in the school improvement plan. While the tracking is excellent for individual pupils, it is not always collated for groups of pupils. Consequently, the plan does not explain sufficiently which groups of pupils will be supported and by how much they are expected to improve.

The governors provide good support to the school and are developing their role as an effective critical friend. The school has been particularly successful in securing additional funding which is then used very well to support pupils. Its success, allied to the pupils' good achievements, means that the school provides excellent value for money.

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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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	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?	2
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 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 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	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

13 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Saint Joseph Roman Catholic Primary School, London, W7 3HU

Thank you, your parents and all the adults at your school for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited recently. Your headteacher had written about how proud all the staff are of you, your behaviour and your achievements. We were delighted to see that this was all true. We saw that the school takes excellent care of you and that you all take very good care of yourselves and of each other. We were very impressed with this, which seemed to us one way in which you and all the adults at the school work to 'build God's kingdom here and now' like it says in your mission statement. So, well done to all of you.

With your help and that of your teachers and parents we made a lot of judgements about your school. Overall we judged that St Joseph's is a good school. We also noted that some things about the school were better than good or 'outstanding' as we say. This includes the way you behave in lessons, with each other and around the school and how mature and confident you become. This happens because everyone at the school works together to look after, guide and help each one of you. You do well in your studies because you are really keen to learn and the school helps you to make good progress from wherever you started from.

Talking to your teachers and looking at your work, we agreed that it would be a good idea for them to think about subjects like science, history or geography as we think they can improve how they plan to teach you these subjects. We have also asked the school to make sure the children in the Nursery and Reception classes can make the most of your great outdoor space, including being able to learn outdoors when it is pouring with rain as it was when we visited.

The adults have made lots of changes to the school since inspectors last visited you. These have been very successful and we have judged that they have an 'outstanding' capacity to carry on improving and getting done all the things they want to do. So don't forget to say well done to them too!

With best wishes for your continued success.

Nicola Davies

Lead Inspector