

# St Elphege's RC Junior School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 102996             |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Sutton             |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 308189             |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 10–11 January 2008 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Madeleine Gerard   |

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

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|---|--|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Junior   |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Voluntary aided                                      |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 7–11   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed  |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |  |
| School                                    | 231  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                                   |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mr T Tamplin   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Mrs F Hawkes   |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 6 May 2003   |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Mollison Drive<br>Roundshaw<br>Wallington<br>SM6 9HY |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 020 8669 4130  |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 020 8669 1949  |

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|--------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Age group</b>         | 7–11               |
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average size junior school. The majority of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Black African and White Traveller of Irish heritage are the largest groups. The percentage who speak English as an additional language is well above average. The school has been through a period of instability with several leadership changes over recent years. In September 2006 the school federated with the adjoining infant school. The headteacher of the infant school was appointed headteacher of both schools which also share the same senior leadership team and governing body. Almost all pupils join the school from the infant school.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school. The headteacher has set a clear direction for the school based on raising standards and achievement. Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory following a period of falling standards and weaknesses in teaching. Pupils join the school with a range of skills but overall standards on entry to Year 3 have been improving year-on-year and are well above average, particularly in writing. Over recent years, rates of progress in Years 3 to 6 had been slower than in the infant school. Standards, while broadly average, had declined. Since their appointment, senior leaders have worked successfully together to bring about needed improvements, so that progress is now satisfactory. They have imported successful tracking methods from the infant school in order to check up on how well pupils are making progress. This ensures teachers are now aware of what their pupils should be achieving. Monitoring of teaching and learning has provided clear feedback to teachers, helping them to improve their practice and raise standards. This year, more pupils are working above the expected level. Nevertheless, assessment data is still not used consistently to plan challenging work for all pupils. While targets set are generally sufficiently ambitious, those set for potentially higher attaining pupils are not always challenging enough.

Pupils enjoy being at school. One pupil commented, 'Everyone has friends here.' Another pupil said, 'This is a happy school: the children are happy and this makes the teachers happy.' Links with the local parish church, as well as opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility, support pupils' strong spiritual and moral development, good social skills and their growing self-confidence. As a result, they behave well in and out of classrooms and have positive attitudes to learning. Parents confirm this. One said, 'We are very glad to have chosen this school for our daughter: she is growing into a happy, confident and successful learner.'

The curriculum is satisfactory. Strong emphasis is given to developing basic skills although pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and apply their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in all subjects. High teacher-turnover has been well managed to ensure that staff work closely together. Through good teamwork, all staff are playing an important part in moving the school forward. Pupils are involved in reviewing how well they are making progress but marking does not consistently make it clear what pupils should do to improve their work.

The care and support of the pupils and their families are at the centre of the school's work and make a strong contribution to pupils' good personal development. One parent commented, 'All the staff are kind and supportive to both parents and children.' Parents praise the school, appreciate the work of the staff and many made a point of writing to affirm their confidence in the headteacher. The administrative team make a valuable contribution and are considerable assets to the school.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teachers plan appropriate work to meet the needs of all pupils, especially the more able.
- Make more effective use of assessment information to set consistently challenging targets for all pupils and pinpoint what they need to do to move up to the next level in their work.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to practise and apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in all subjects.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement is rising and is now satisfactory, although standards are still only average because of slow progress in previous years. Pupils' current work shows that they are now making good progress in literacy and numeracy and more pupils are working above the expected levels for their age. Steps taken to raise attainment in science have reversed a decline in standards at the end of Year 6. However, because there has not been a school focus on this subject, fewer pupils than average attained the higher level. Pupils who have English as an additional language respond well in lessons with most achieving at least as well as other pupils in their class. More able pupils do not always make good progress because some of the tasks they are set are not at a high enough level. Pupils who struggle with literacy and numeracy receive additional support which helps them make satisfactory progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They are confident staff will help them quickly if they experience difficulties. Pupils show a good awareness of different cultures making the school racially harmonious and inclusive. Attendance is satisfactory. Despite the school's good systems to encourage regular attendance and punctuality, some pupils miss too much school, which limits their progress. The school council is active and its views are valued. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility. For example, older pupils help pupils from the infant school at break times. Pupils are involved in recycling and show a good understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and regular exercise. The pupils' satisfactory progress in basic skills combined with their well-developed social skills, prepare them soundly for the next stage in their learning.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and consequently pupils make generally satisfactory progress. Pupils enjoy discussing their work in pairs but there are some missed opportunities to keep pupils actively involved in their learning and they have to sit for long periods listening to the teacher. Consequently, pupils are sometimes less engaged and the pace of learning slows. Work is not consistently well matched to pupils' ability because planning does not always identify what the next steps are in pupils' learning, particularly for those who are capable of reaching higher levels. Committed teaching assistants are usually effective in ensuring that all pupils take part in class. Teachers mark work thoroughly and involve pupils in considering how well they are making progress. However, assessment information is not always used effectively to plan tasks or used to guide pupils in their learning during the lessons.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

Although the curriculum meets statutory requirements, opportunities are sometimes missed for linking subjects to enable pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and computing skills across a range of subjects. As a result, time is not always used effectively to ensure all pupils make good progress. The provision for personal, social and health education is good and has a good impact on pupil's personal development. A range of popular extra-curricular activities including cookery, choir and a variety of sports enhances learning and enjoyment as well as positive attitudes to keeping fit and healthy. Provision for computing has been enhanced with portable laptops and pupils now have some opportunities to develop and use their computing skills. Highlights include opportunities for all pupils in Years 4 and 5 to learn the cello or violin and residential visits for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Good links with local secondary schools provide additional support for teaching sports and modern foreign languages.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Pastoral care is good. Home-school relationships are developed well through weekly newsletters and workshops to support parents in helping their children's learning at home. One parent commented, 'It makes you feel you want to get involved which is gratefully acknowledged.' There are appropriate procedures for child protection and robust systems to assess and deal with risks. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils have and refer to individual targets. Nevertheless, these are not consistently helpful in prioritising what pupils should do to move up to the next level in their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher is a good leader and has successfully united the staff who share her vision for the school. Improvements to the school buildings, such as the new staffroom, ensure teaching staff are working as a team. The strong features of leadership and management in the infant school, such as monitoring the quality of teaching as well as systems to track pupils' progress, are helping the school to identify where improvements are needed and are beginning to bring about change for the better. For example, strong leadership in literacy is resulting in more consistent planning, teachers are more rigorous in teaching pupils the skills that they need and pupils are now making good progress. This shows the school's adequate capacity to make the necessary improvements. Even so, improvement in science has not been similarly rapid and much remains to be done to raise attainment and ensure all pupils make good progress. Governors have a sound understanding of their strategic role in the school's development and are developing their ability to hold school leaders to account.



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

|  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| <b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b> | <b>School Overall</b> |
|--|-----------------------|

### Overall effectiveness

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b> | 3   |
| 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  | 3   |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 3 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress                              | 3 |

### Personal development and well-being

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                           | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 2 |
| How well 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 | 3 |

### The quality of provision

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>          | 3 |
| <b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b> | 3 |
| <b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>   | 3 |

<sup>1</sup> 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**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 3   |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3   |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards  | 3   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 3   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can                     | 3   |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money  | 3   |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 3   |
| 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

24 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Elphege's RC Junior School, Wallington, SM6 9HY

Thank you for making us so welcome and for helping us when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we found.

St Elphege's Junior School is a satisfactory school and these are its strengths:

- You all behave well and most of you enjoy school.
- You get on well with each other and with the adults.
- All the staff work hard to make sure everyone is well cared for and looked after.
- You know how to keep yourselves safe and how to lead a healthy lifestyle.
- Mrs Hawkes and the staff are working together to make the school better.
- Your parents and carers like the school a great deal too.

There are a few things we have asked the school to improve and I am sure you will want to help them to do this:

- Use the information the school collects about how well you are doing to make sure you are making good progress all the time.
- We have asked that you are always set work that is at the right level of challenge for you, especially for those of you who could do harder work. You can help by telling the teachers if the work is too easy or if you finish quickly.
- We have asked your teachers to give you more opportunities to practise your reading, writing, maths and computing skills in all subjects.

You can help by coming to school regularly and on time. I hope you continue to enjoy your time at St Elphege's Junior School and wish you all the best for the future.

Madeleine Gerard

Lead inspector