

# St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 100041             |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Camden             |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 323218             |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 21–22 January 2009 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Nicola Davies      |

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.

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| <b>Type of school</b>  | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>   | Voluntary aided                                    |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>   | 3–11   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>  | Mixed  |
| <b>Number on roll</b>  |  |
| School (total)   | 215  |
| 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  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>   | The governing body                                 |
| <b>Chair</b>   | Father Chris Vipers                                |
| <b>Headteacher</b>   | Miss Helen Tyler                                   |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 19 June 2006                                       |
| <b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>                              | Not previously inspected                           |
| <b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>   | Not previously inspected                           |
| <b>School address</b>  | Macklin Street<br>Drury Lane<br>London<br>WC2B 5NA |
| <b>Telephone number</b>  | 020 7242 7712                                      |

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| <b>Age group</b>         | 3–11               |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>  | 21–22 January 2009 |
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a one-form entry Roman Catholic primary school in Covent Garden with an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The school serves four local parishes and pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Half of the pupils are bilingual and a few are at early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average and mostly relate to difficulties in acquiring basic skills. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average.

Since the time of the last inspection, the school has appointed a permanent headteacher who took up post in September 2007.

There is an after school and breakfast club on the site which is run by Camden Play Service.

## 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 pupils with a good education. Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds benefit from being educated together, forming close friendships and enriching each other's learning. The school's Catholic ethos, combined with the good spiritual, moral, social and cultural guidance and support, mean that pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school, respect their teachers and, along with their parents and the local community, help the school in any way they can.

The school has recovered well from a challenging period of instability. As one parent noted, 'Since the school has had a permanent headteacher the children have been more settled and the standards of the school have improved vastly'. Academic standards have risen and are broadly average by the end of Year 6. In addition, the good 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. This system has also helped strengthen the quality of teaching, the curriculum, the quality of care provided, and pupils' achievement, all of which are now good. Staff are encouraged to make links between pupils' learning in different subjects and aspects of this work very well. For example, staff use information and communication technology very well across the curriculum to enthuse, inform and stretch pupils. The school has rightly identified that other links within the curriculum are not yet systematic enough, and staff have the implementation of a 'creative curriculum' earmarked as their 'next step'. Similarly, the school is aware that, on occasions, activities in lessons are not pitched at different levels in order to provide achievable challenges for all pupils, and so it has further work planned to ensure that teaching consistently matches the good and outstanding practice already in place.

Key to improvements at the school has been the appointment of the headteacher and permanent senior staff who lead and manage the school well. Many parents expressed their approval, one in these terms: 'It's great St Joseph's has now got a management structure that can lead the school forward'. This team has already accomplished much and provides the school with its good capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children entering the Nursery have a range of skills and experiences. Their skills, particularly in communication, language and literacy are generally below those expected for their age. For most, this is their first experience of education outside of the home and for others, it is their first experience of an English-speaking environment. Staff spend time talking to them and their families and helping them feel at ease. This means that they settle quickly and happily into the EYFS. Children are well cared for and develop good relationships with adults and with other children. Staff plan well to make sure the children benefit from a stimulating mix of play and more formal activities directed by adults. This helps children to learn well. For example, during the inspection, Nursery children playing with Russian dolls repeated in their play the mathematical language that they had heard the adults using. Good use of technology and exciting areas for role play are two ways that speaking and listening skills are encouraged well. This helps children who are new to learning English. In the Reception class children delighted in their role play activities in the very well-equipped 'fire station' while others enjoyed digitally recording their memories of their recent trip to a real fire station.

The outdoor space available to children is currently also used by pupils at the school during breaks and lunches. Since the last inspection, Nursery and Reception staff have made very good use of the local open spaces and have worked together to share and maximise their use of the school's outdoor space. Staff are aware that there is more to be done to extend the outdoor curriculum and have further developments planned following the scheduled creation of a dedicated EYFS outdoor area. Staff have worked well to share information and approaches across the EYFS and have been well led and managed by the coordinator. Together they have created a clear and effective EYFS where children make good progress. Although not all children reach expectations for their age by the time they join Year 1, a higher proportion of children are now reaching the expected milestones. Overall, attainment at the end of the EYFS is a little below average.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Accelerate progress across the school by ensuring that opportunities for learners are consistently well matched to their needs.
- Implement planned development of the EYFS and school curriculum.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards at the end of Year 2 are generally average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards at the end of Year 6 had fallen to below average at the time of the last inspection. They have since improved and in 2007 were a little above average overall. Results in 2008 are similar. The school is very aware that, in the past, not all pupils have made consistent progress. Addressing this issue has been a successful focus of its work. Information from the detailed tracking system shows that most pupils make good progress in reading and writing and mathematics. The next focus of the school's work is to ensure that rates of progress are more consistently good across all classes and subjects. There are no significant differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils, such as boys and girls or pupils from different backgrounds.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils behave well, and are both confident and courteous. They enjoy coming to school and their lessons. Pupils are conscious of their responsibilities in school and in the wider community. For example, they make a good contribution to school life through the wide variety of responsibilities they hold. Similarly, older children talked with enthusiasm of their work in the community, including art and film projects, to help reduce anti-social behaviour. These help pupils develop a good awareness of safety issues and they talk about safety with insight. The many opportunities they have to work in teams and in partnership with adults from local faith and business communities help prepare them well for secondary school and their future beyond school. Pupils take a keen interest in healthy living, diet and exercise. They enjoy the exercise at playtimes and the active school council is keen for the school to invest in more equipment to enhance this. The strong Catholic ethos of the school means that spiritual, moral and social development are good.

The school has worked successfully to improve the unsatisfactory level of attendance reported at the last inspection. This is now just a little below average as parents appreciate more clearly the links between attendance and achievement.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The very positive relationships between adults and pupils, and interesting activities, help pupils to enjoy learning, work hard and behave well. Skilful planning provides a clear direction for lessons. Pupils are fully aware of the expected learning outcomes which, in the best lessons, are tailored to their ability levels. This is not yet fully consistent and, on occasions, opportunities are missed to provide activities which challenge and support pupils at different levels. Effective use of questioning, technology, and visual aids helps pupils to learn in different ways. This was evident in a literacy lesson where, having watched a video of a volcanic eruption, pupils produced their own 'word sounds' to provide sound effects. Most lessons are marked by the challenge and high expectations set for the pupils by the teachers. Teaching assistants give good support, so that all pupils can be equally included in all activities. Teachers use assessment well to inform their planning and to help pupils progress onto the next stage of development. Pupils are very well involved in this process.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

Throughout the school, a strong focus is placed on literacy, and the involvement of pupils in musical activities is a further strength. The curriculum is successfully adapted to meet the needs of most pupils. For example, recent training for staff has raised awareness of the needs of pupils who are bilingual or are new to learning English. The school provides a good range of creative activities to promote pupils' enjoyment of learning. Two successful examples include the recent project to create stained-glass windows with a professional artist and a cross-curricular project about St George and the Dragon. There is a strong programme of curriculum enrichment through visits and visitors, using the rich resources around the school. However, when working in a cross-curricular way, planning does not always identify the ways in which learning in one subject can be applied systematically to activities in another. Staff have rightly earmarked this aspect of the curriculum for further development to complement the strong programme of extra-curricular and enrichment activities.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school has good arrangements in place for the safety of the pupils and, as a result, they feel safe and are confident that they can approach adults with any concerns they may have and know that they will be listened to and supported. The school meets all the government's safeguarding requirements. Effective strategies have been employed to bring about an improvement in attendance. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well provided for as a result of improved identification and monitoring procedures although parents are not yet consistently well involved in this. Assessment is being used more effectively to provide challenging targets for pupils and for the rigorous monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is good; they provide praise and encouragement as well as advice on how to improve. Pupils are well informed about their progress towards their individual subject targets.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The outstanding headteacher has a clear view of school development and has put many new and effective systems in place to aid school improvement. She has very high expectations and has established a senior leadership team well able to drive improvements forward. Together with the whole staff they have brought about a sustained improvement in pupils' progress across the school. Processes for rigorously monitoring pupils' performance have been established, as have thorough systems and procedures to raise attainment. The school evaluates its strengths and weaknesses honestly and thoroughly. This means that its self-evaluation correctly identifies the areas for development and shows clearly how the school intends to achieve these. The school is very proactive in acquiring finance to fund initiatives that enhance the school's development. Links with parents, local businesses and communities are strong and, together with links further afield, help pupils to develop a good understanding of communities locally and globally. Consequently, community cohesion is good.

Governors fulfil their supporting role well and demonstrate a good insight into how the school works. After a period of instability, they are beginning to ask more challenging questions in their shared aim to raise standards, but this is still at an early stage of development.



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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 |
|---|----------------|

### 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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 3 |
| 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 |

<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.

## Personal development and well-being

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good are 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 |
| 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

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>       | 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 |

## Leadership and management

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 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  | 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  |

**Annex B**

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

05 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School, London, WC2B 5NA

Thank you for helping your inspectors when we came to your school. It was very thoughtful of you to send us a card to welcome us. Thank you to all of you who gave up your time to talk to us and to tell us about your school. Thank you for the lovely music and singing which floated through to the room where we were working and made our inspection a musical experience.

We judged that St Joseph's is a good school. You do well in your studies because you are taught well and are keen to learn, and this helps you to make good progress. All the adults look after, care for and guide you well. This means that you develop into the well-behaved, courteous and confident young people you are.

We could see how proud you are of the school and, like your parents, are pleased with all the things happening. Talking to your teachers and looking at your work, we agreed with their ideas to develop links between subjects to make a more creative curriculum. This would mean that you can really make the most of your time in the classroom, and for the youngest of you, will give you more opportunities to learn outside. We have also agreed with your teachers that they should continue to make sure that they plan different activities in lessons so that your work is just right for you.

The adults have made lots of changes to the school since inspectors last visited you. These have been successful and we have judged that the school will be able to go from strength to strength.

With best wishes for your continued success.

Yours faithfully

Nicola Davies

Lead Inspector