

# St Joan of Arc Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100449
<b>Local Authority</b>	Islington
<b>Inspection number</b>	323283
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 July 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christopher Russell HMI

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)	416
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>	Mr Philip Dixon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Clare Campbell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 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>	Northolme Road Highbury Park London N5 2UX

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 July 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	323283

**Telephone number**  
**Fax number**

020 7226 3920  
020 7704 9220

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Joan of Arc is a primary school that is larger than average. It serves three Roman Catholic parishes. Almost two thirds of all pupils are from minority ethnic groups and almost one third speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is close to the national average. The school offers Early Years Foundation Stage provision in Nursery and Reception classes. The privately run St Joan of Arc Extended School operates from the school's site and offers a range of after school activities.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Joan of Arc is a good school. Many things have improved in the three years since the last inspection and a number of aspects of the school's work are now excellent. Perhaps most notably, all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage are now outstanding, providing children with a superb start to their education. The school also makes an excellent contribution to community cohesion. The headteacher is providing very clear leadership and direction. This is a school that is driving for excellence; it is very well placed to continue its improvement. As one parent wrote, 'The school constantly surprises me with its ongoing improvements. It provides an excellent environment for my two children's education, which is to a consistently high standard'.

Leaders have rightly focused much of their attention on developing the quality of teaching and learning. The large majority of lessons are now good, and there is a significant and increasing proportion of outstanding lessons. However, although clearly improving, the quality of lessons is still a little inconsistent. In particular, activities in some lessons are not always varied enough to match everyone's abilities or sufficiently demanding to challenge the more able pupils fully. Some marking and feedback to pupils provides very helpful pointers to improvement, although the overall quality of marking is variable.

The school's curriculum is developing well. Some good work is being done to link aspects of pupils' learning in different subjects. A focus on the development of pupils' writing has been very well led and is leading to clear improvements in standards.

Pupils are very well cared for by the school. All aspects of their personal development and well-being are now at least good. Pupils are welcoming, confident and courteous. Behaviour, which was good at the time of the last inspection, is now excellent. Pupils are also helped to live very healthy lifestyles; they are committed to healthy eating and enthusiastic about sport and healthy physical activity. Sharply focused work has enabled the school to reduce levels of absence; as a result, pupils' attendance is now above average. The way in which the school sets targets for pupils and tracks their progress has improved significantly in recent years. Better data about pupil progress are enabling the school to target additional support to particular pupils, classes and year groups, and this is helping to boost levels of achievement. Pupils are making good and increasing progress in their learning.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

This aspect of the school's work is now a significant strength. Excellent teaching and close attention to the needs of individuals are enabling children to make rapid progress. Children enter the classes with the skills expected of children their age. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage many are exceeding these expectations. Children's welfare is given the highest priority and all aspects of personal development and well-being are excellent. Perhaps most notably, children have very positive attitudes to learning and enjoy school very much.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has an excellent understanding of the children's needs and puts in place very successful strategies to meet them. Adults support learning extremely well and there is excellent teamwork. Activities are very well planned and children's progress is tracked carefully. There is an excellent balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. Play is purposeful and imaginative, both in the classroom and outdoors.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the overall quality of teaching and learning to outstanding by:
  - working to ensure that all lessons are at least good- ensuring that all lessons provide appropriate challenge for everyone, particularly the more able pupils
  - improving the consistency of marking and feedback to pupils so that they are provided with clearer guidance about how to improve their work.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress as they move through the school, attaining standards that are above average by the time they leave. Children now make outstanding progress as they move through the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Key Stage 1 assessment results have been close to the national average for a number of years. The school's results for the Key Stage 2 national tests have improved in recent years and are above national averages; results in the science tests are particularly high.

Pupils of all abilities and from all backgrounds make similar progress. At the time of the last inspection, pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities were making less progress than other pupils. These pupils now make good progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and feel safe and well cared for. Although bullying occasionally happens, it is relatively rare and pupils are confident that any instances will be dealt with successfully. Pupils take considerable responsibility for controlling and regulating their own behaviour. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils mix well together and they have a well-developed awareness and understanding of different cultures and backgrounds. Pupils enjoy a wide range of opportunities to contribute to the school and local community, for example through the school's active school council. These opportunities help pupils to develop important skills for life, such as teamwork and collaboration.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The quality of lessons is clearly improving. Teaching and learning now have many strengths. In particular, the teaching of key subject knowledge and understanding is rigorous, and relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent. The weaknesses in teaching identified in the last inspection report have improved significantly. Lessons now move at a brisk pace and, in most cases, teachers make good use of resources. The deployment of teaching assistants in the lessons is now a significant strength; they play a varied and very helpful role. Teachers also now typically make good use of interactive whiteboards in their teaching.

However, lesson activities are sometimes insufficiently varied to match the particular learning needs of all pupils sufficiently closely. This is particularly noticeable in the case of the more

able pupils, who sometimes have to complete work that is too easy before they reach more challenging tasks.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum meets pupils' needs well. A recent focus has been on the development of greater integration between subjects and this is beginning to bring greater coherence to pupils' experience of the curriculum. Provision for personal, social and health education is good and supports pupils' personal development well.

The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of additional activities. Opportunities include links with Arsenal Football Club, drama and debating teams, as well as a range of visits. A good range of extra-curricular activities is available, some delivered by a private provider working from the site. A review of these arrangements is currently underway to ensure that opportunities are suitably coordinated and meet the needs of pupils and parents.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are very well cared for by the school. Pupils say they know who to turn to for support and advice. Very close partnership work with a range of agencies ensures that the most vulnerable pupils receive well-focused care and support. Support for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities - a weakness at the time of the last inspection - is now much improved. Safeguarding procedures are secure and meet government requirements. A range of well-considered strategies has enabled the school to increase attendance, improve behaviour and reduce bullying.

Pupils' academic progress is tracked closely and the resulting data are analysed carefully. While these improved data are still quite new, staff are already using the information to make intelligent decisions about when to provide additional support for individual pupils. They are also analysing the performance of whole classes and year groups and, where necessary, making changes to the curriculum or providing extra support. However, pupils are not always given clear and sharply focused guidance about how to improve the quality of their work or reach the next level in their learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Senior leaders form a strong, very effective team. They have a clear and thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, although they sometimes slightly overestimate the quality of lessons. A range of work is being done to strengthen the contribution that middle leaders are able to make to the school's development. Some very useful training has been provided by the school, and the systems and processes that support the school's work in this area have been strengthened. This is promoting much better leadership across the school, although it is not yet consistently strong, in part because some middle leaders are very new in post. Governors provide helpful challenge and support to the school.

The school makes an excellent contribution to community cohesion. Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the needs of the pupils and the local community. A very wide range of relevant

provision has been put in place, with a clear positive impact. This, for example, includes a range of very useful work to ensure that parents from all ethnic groups feel included and involved in the life of the school.



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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 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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
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

<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?	1
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**

13 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joan of Arc Catholic Primary School, London, N5 2UX

Thank you for your help and for taking the time to speak to us during the recent inspection. We really enjoyed talking to you. I am writing to you to tell you about our main findings. We found that the school is good and continuing to improve.

The large majority of lessons are now good and some are outstanding. However, the overall quality is still a little inconsistent. In particular, work is not always closely matched to everyone's needs and is sometimes too easy for some of you. The school has also improved the way in which it sets targets for you and measures your progress. This means that it can provide you with extra support when you need it. The school is also doing good things to develop the curriculum.

The school helps you to make good progress and do well when you take national tests at the end of Year 6. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes now make excellent progress. The school also looks after you well and helps you to develop as young people. Behaviour has improved a lot and is now excellent. You are confident, mature and friendly, and you make a good contribution to life in the school and local community. Attendance has improved and is now above average. The school is being well led and is well placed to continue improving.

In order to help your school improve further I have asked the leaders of your school to:

- Improve the overall quality of teaching and learning to outstanding by:
  - working to ensure that all lessons are at least good
  - ensuring that all lessons provide appropriate challenge for everyone, particularly those of you who find learning easy
  - improving the consistency of marking and feedback to you so that you are given clearer guidance about how to improve your work.

Best wishes from the inspection team.

Yours faithfully

Chris Russell

Her Majesty's Inspector