

# St Joseph's Catholic Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100854
<b>Local Authority</b>	Southwark
<b>Inspection number</b>	335605
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	George Logan

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>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	177
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Father David Gibbons
<b>Headteacher</b>	Cheryl Holdsworth
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	0 September 2006
<b>School address</b>	Pitman Street Camberwell London SE5 0TS
<b>Telephone number</b>	0207 703 9264
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work, records of their progress, lesson planning, playtime activities and the school's self-evaluation documents, including records of teaching and the main improvement plan. Inspection questionnaires were received from staff and from 79 parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well pupils make progress, particularly in Years 1 and 2
- how consistent and effective the teaching is across the school
- the impact of school leaders and governors and how well they know their school
- whether the school, governors in particular, are meeting their obligations in relation to community cohesion.

## Information about the school

This is an average-sized infant school, with six classes. It serves an ethnically diverse area. All but a few pupils come from minority ethnic groups. Pupils of Black African heritage form the largest single group. Three-quarters of the pupils do not speak English as their first language. At least 25 different home languages are represented. More pupils are entitled to free school meals than in most schools. An above-average and increasing proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The majority of these have speech and language issues or autism. The number of pupils with higher levels of need, including physical disabilities, has been increasing. Almost all children join the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception classes. The school shares a building with its partner junior school.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

### Main findings

This is an outstanding school. It has effectively sustained the many strengths evident when it was last inspected. It is a diverse and harmonious community which, in a very challenging inner urban area, works exceptionally hard to meet the social, developmental and academic needs of its pupils in a secure and nurturing environment. High quality pastoral care and support underpins pupils' excellent behaviour, good attendance and consistently positive attitudes to learning. The school supports pupils' personal development extremely well. As a result, pupils very much enjoy school and feel very safe there. They have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles.

Achievement is good. Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with very limited skills. Many lack fluency in English. However, consistently good teaching ensures that they make good progress in Reception. That said, there are some missed opportunities to extend children's speaking skills through better modelling of language. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning is sustained well in Years 1 and 2. Although overall standards at Year 2 are broadly average, many pupils are further advanced than this. Outstanding teaching ensures that progress gathers pace in this phase, and it is particularly good in Year 2. A key factor in the school's success is the intensive support given to pupils with additional learning needs. The progress of pupils with English as an additional language is meticulously tracked, with home language support where necessary. Trained counsellors effectively support pupils with social or emotional needs. Overall, the curriculum meets pupils' needs and engages their enthusiasm well. Cross-curricular opportunities are strongly developed, particularly in writing. Beyond the classroom, the school offers many visits and enriching experiences. Good partnerships with specialist secondary schools and arts organisations significantly enhance pupils' opportunities in drama and physical education.

Teachers use high quality assessment systems very well to plan lessons and to guide them in providing additional support. They carefully check pupils' understanding. Marking is thorough, providing clear guidance as to what pupils must do to improve. Early Years Foundation Stage staff recognise that they are still developing their skills in data analysis.

Outstanding leadership and management have ensured that there is a strong shared vision for the school's development. The monitoring of teaching is incisive and effective and the school attracts high quality staff. Self-evaluation is accurate and sustains continued improvement effectively. Governors are involved in this process and have a good understanding of pupils' progress. As a result, governance is good. The school's sustained success and the drive and ambition of leaders and staff indicate that the school's capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build upon the existing strengths of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision by:
  - ensuring that there is a systematic and consistent focus on the development of children's speaking skills
  - developing staff confidence in the analysis and interpretation of performance data.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

<b>1</b>
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The school is highly successful in promoting both pupils' personal development and their academic progress. Pupils greatly enjoy school. They are enthusiastic, have excellent attitudes and work very well, both independently and in groups. Pupils build very well on their previous learning as they move through the school. Staff are attentive to individual needs, deploying additional support effectively. The comprehensive programme of intensive basic skills small-group support for pupils at risk of falling behind and for those at an early stage of learning English is a cornerstone of the school's success. As a result, learning is outstanding for all groups.

Standards have fallen slightly in the last two years but are broadly average in Year 2. However, this marginal decline directly relates to the admission, often in Year 2, of an increasing number of pupils with significant special educational needs. For all but this very small group, overall standards are above average. This underlines the extent of the progress pupils make from the time they join Reception. The school is currently prioritising writing, in order to raise standards still further. Typically pupils with English as an additional language achieve at least as well as the others. Black African pupils, the most numerous ethnic group, do significantly better than is the case nationally.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They feel very safe and have great confidence in the adults around them. Although a little anxious about the playground, they feel that behaviour is generally good (though inspectors consider it outstanding). Their very well-developed social skills and very positive personal qualities, together with their secure academic skills, ensure that pupils are well prepared for their future education. Pupils contribute well to the school through the school council, an effective forum for their views. Although they have good opportunities, through themed weeks and collections, to engage with cultures and communities internationally, there are fewer chances to experience other areas of the United Kingdom with different ethnic characteristics.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Teaching is never less than good and is often outstanding. This ensures that pupils make rapid progress from a low starting point. Although introductions are sometimes a little long, most have a brisk pace and challenge pupils extremely well. Relationships are a significant strength. In a very successful Year 1 literacy lesson, pupils practised their skills in writing sentences. They knew clearly what was expected of them, sustained their attention well and worked at a good pace. Skilled use of pupil targets and time limits secured high quality learning and exceptionally good progress. The teacher used the final minutes of the lesson to evaluate pupils' learning. Assessments are used very effectively to check pupils' progress. Very good use is made of individual learning targets and pupils can evaluate how well they have done. There is evidence of high quality marking, particularly in writing. While there are fewer written comments in other subjects, teachers' responses are often given orally for this age group. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils who need additional help.

The curriculum promotes very effective learning in literacy and numeracy, with good cross-curricular writing opportunities in science, religious education and the humanities. Information and communication technology skills are systematically developed. Partnerships with specialist secondary schools have successfully supported curriculum development in art and physical education. Provision for pupils identified as gifted and talented is developing, particularly in mathematics. There is exceptionally good provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education, underpinning pupils' often outstanding personal development. The range of enrichment activities, visits and visitors is extensive, although there are relatively few extra-curricular clubs.

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Staff care for pupils extremely well and there are outstanding links with parents. Pupils speak of their school with pride and feel that they receive really good support. The school works tirelessly with outside agencies to support vulnerable pupils who have identified learning or welfare needs.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The strength of the shared vision which underpins the school's success is as evident in the commitment of the site manager and administrative staff as it is among teaching and support staff. Although illness has depleted the small leadership team, the headteacher's ambition and drive have successfully sustained the pace of improvement. She has a very clear view of the school's role in providing key basic skills which represent life opportunities for its pupils. A central strength is the balance so skilfully struck between support for pupils' personal development and for their academic progress. Monitoring of the school's work is extremely rigorous. Where weaknesses are identified, very effective action is taken promptly to mitigate the impact. This has been evident recently in initiatives on writing and on speaking skills. Self-evaluation is well founded and thorough. Tracking systems are constantly reviewed and improved. Much time is given to attracting the right staff, offering strong subject leadership, alongside effective pastoral support. Thus the headteacher ensures consistency and quality in all aspects of the school's work.

The governing body encompasses a good range of expertise. It is representative of the main ethnic communities in the school. Governors have a good knowledge of pupils' learning. They ensure that statutory requirements are met, including the school's good procedures for safeguarding pupils. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and are committed to shaping its future direction, driving through improvement. They successfully hold school leaders to account. Appropriate plans exist for the continued development of premises and resources, so reducing the school's considerable under-spend.

The school engages well with local community interests and with parental needs. Potential discrimination is tackled resolutely and the school's considerable commitment to the diverse needs of its pupils ensures that equality of opportunity is outstanding. The school understands community cohesion issues well. However, governors have not yet fully evaluated the impact of the school's provision.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter Reception with a very limited range of skills and knowledge. Most have had some pre-school experience, but many have limited knowledge of spoken English and restricted social experiences. Children settle in quickly because of the good induction arrangements. They are well cared for, have really good relationships with staff and feel safe and secure. They are enthusiastic about learning. Though a little boisterous at times, they behave well. Effective teaching helps children, including those with additional learning needs, to make good progress. The school has successfully developed the outdoor area and this was used imaginatively as the scene of a 'Bear Hunt' during the inspection. During sessions where children choose their own activities, staff are sometimes slow to intervene in order to move learning forward. On entry, many children have poorly developed speaking skills, either in English or any language. Opportunities are occasionally missed to extend children's speaking skills further. By the end of Reception, children have made progress which is at least good and most are close to the expected levels. Progress is particularly good, and outstanding for many, in developing their knowledge of sounds and letters and in their physical development. Leadership and management are good. The monitoring and recording of progress is rigorous and this information is used well to guide planning. Staff recognise that they are building confidence in the analysis and interpretation of performance data.

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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Virtually all parents and carers hold strongly positive views of the school. There were several written comments, almost all positive. A typical response said, 'The staff are friendly, funny and down to earth. I couldn't ask for more.' Another said, 'All is perfect.' The less favourable comments related to playground supervision and to staff awareness of special educational needs issues. The team considered these points carefully. Playground observations suggest that the school provides an appropriate level of supervision. Collisions do, however, occur, because of the restricted space available, particularly at lunchtime. The report indicates that the school has a very good awareness of special educational needs issues and supports these children particularly well. Overall, the consensus suggests that this is a very caring school where pupils are extremely well supported in their personal development. Inspection findings endorse parents' and carers' positive views.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Joseph's Catholic Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 79 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 177 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	62	79	16	20	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	58	73	20	25	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	59	75	19	24	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	60	29	37	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	49	62	29	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	55	70	23	29	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	56	30	38	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	35	44	34	43	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	54	28	35	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	48	35	44	2	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	35	39	49	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	48	61	25	32	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	54	68	24	30	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



19 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Infant School, Camberwell SE5 0TS

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and spending time in your lessons. We found that yours is an outstanding school, just as it was when we last visited.

Our main findings are these.

- You attend well, behave extremely well and work very hard.
- The links with the local parish are well developed.
- The teaching is excellent and this helps you to make really rapid progress.
- Standards are average in Years 1 and 2, although most of you actually do better than that.
- Children in Reception make good progress, especially in their knowledge of sounds and letters and in their physical development.
- The school makes sure that you are cared for outstandingly well.
- You conduct yourselves very safely and have an excellent understanding of how important it is to eat healthily.
- The curriculum is good and, although there could be more clubs, you get to go on a really good range of visits and have very interesting visitors to school.
- Those of you who need extra support are extremely well provided for.

We are asking the school to make the following change so that you do even better:

- The grown ups/adult helpers working in Reception classes will need to help you more with speaking and listening and to look closely at all the information they have to see how well you are doing.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

George Logan

Lead inspector

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