

St Joseph's Catholic Infants' School

Pitman Street, London SE5 0TS

Inspection dates 3–4 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From low starting points, pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 2 in 2013, pupils reached standards that were above those of all pupils nationally.
- The executive headteacher and head of school provide strong leadership. They know the school well and with the effective management of teachers' performance, have ensured teaching is good.
- Teachers explain things clearly and pupils learn at a good pace in a stimulating learning environment.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are very well cared for and feel safe. They enjoy coming to school and their attendance is high.
- The curriculum provides a range of interesting topics for pupils to learn about and is supported by specialist teachers for art, music and Mandarin and a strong focus is given to developing pupils' skills in science.
- Reading is strength of the school and the focus placed by senior leaders on improving how reading is taught has ensured pupils now reach higher standards than before.
- Parents and carers are very positive about the school and praise highly the work of teachers in helping their children succeed in their learning.
- Members of the governing body are keen to develop their skills so that they can continue to provide a high level of support and challenge to the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- During lessons and when marking pupils' work, teachers do not consistently provide pupils with clear guidance on how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Occasionally, the activities teachers give pupils in mathematics do not enable them to practise and apply what they have learnt sufficiently well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons, of which four were conducted jointly with senior leaders. In addition they made five shorter visits to lessons to focus on specific aspects. They listened to pupils reading and scrutinised pupils' work.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and examined a range of documentation including the school's own performance data, records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching, an analysis of its strengths and areas for development, governing body minutes and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Discussions were held with groups of pupils, the executive headteacher, the head of school, subject leaders, teachers, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors considered 27 questionnaires completed by members of staff.
- The views of parents and carers were sought at the beginning of the school day and the inspection team took account of 22 responses from Parent View, the Ofsted online survey.

Inspection team

Mirella Lombardo, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Micheal Elson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school has been in a federation with St Joseph's Catholic Junior School since 2012 and the executive headteacher is headteacher of both the infant and junior schools.
- The school is smaller than most primary schools.
- The vast majority of pupils come from a minority ethnic heritage, the largest group being of pupils of Black African origin. Almost all pupils speak English as an additional language.
- Almost one third of all pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and pupils with a parent or carer in the armed forces), which is above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is higher than the proportion seen nationally.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above the national average.
- The school does not make use of any off-site alternative provision for its pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and improve pupils' achievement by:
 - checking more regularly on pupils' understanding during the lesson and providing them with feedback that helps them know how well they are doing in their learning
 - making sure teachers' marking consistently provides pupils with comments on how they can improve their work
 - ensuring the activities teachers give to pupils in mathematics consistently enable them to practise and apply what they have been learning in the lesson.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the Reception classes with skills and experiences that are well below the levels typical for their age, in particular in the areas of communication and language development. Some children have not been either to a nursery school or a pre-school setting. Good teaching and a stimulating learning environment ensure that they make good progress so that by the time they leave Reception the majority of children reach a good level of development and enter Year 1 with levels of skills, knowledge and understanding just below the expected levels.
- Consistently good teaching and the more effective use of how leaders check on the progress children make have ensured that by the end of Year 2, pupils make good progress and reach standards that are above average in reading and writing and mathematics.
- Following an analysis of pupils' achievement at the end of the 2011/12 academic year, the school recognised the need to improve the progress of the most-able pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. It has provided them with extra support in lessons and put in place more effective systems to track their performance. In 2013 those pupils who are most able achieved above national expectations in mathematics and well above national expectations in reading and writing.
- Early and accurate identification of children's particular needs and a wide range of extra support enable disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to make the same rate of progress as other children in the school.
- Leaders have been successful in meeting the needs of an increasing number of pupils who come to the school at the early stages of learning English. By the end of Year 2 these pupils reach standards that are above national expectations, especially in reading, because of the very effective individual support they receive from specialist language teachers.
- Following the below average results in the 2012 national phonics (the sounds that letters make) check, the school has taken effective action to improve pupils' progress in this area. Teachers and teaching assistants have been well trained and there is a clear focus on promoting reading in the school, which has ensured that in 2013 pupils performed well above average in the national phonics screening check.
- Progress in reading is good and many pupils, including the less able, said they enjoyed reading and using the school library. Pupils show greater confidence in using their knowledge of the sounds that letters make because of the improvements in the teaching of reading.
- Pupils use their writing skills well in their topic work, for example in Year 2 pupils described their feelings in recounting the story of Rosa Parks, and following discussions about being the best you can be, pupils wrote about the achievements of Olympic athletes.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium benefit from well-tailored, small-group activities provided by the additional funding. This has helped to improve their progress, especially in reading.
- In its commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity, the school has improved its systems for tracking the progress pupils make and supports them with additional help where necessary. As a result, all groups of pupils achieve well.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good because teachers explain the learning clearly and make sure children know what they are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson. The pace of learning is good and pupils work well together.
- Classrooms and outdoor areas provide a stimulating and well-resourced learning environment, which support the development of pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics. For example, in the Reception outdoor areas, the 'superhero training booth' targeted at boys provided opportunities to develop both number and writing skills by counting energy stones and writing about adventures.

- Teachers' planning is detailed and includes clear guidance to teaching assistants on their role in the lesson so that they are able to make good contributions to pupils' learning, especially for those pupils with special educational needs.
- The teaching of writing to pupils in small-group work is effective because pupils are encouraged to check their work themselves and because there is a strong focus on developing vocabulary. For example, pupils in Year 2 were asked to check if their work was made up of 'golden sentences' to ensure they had included all the features relating to the learning they had been doing. Other pupils in Year 2 working in a small group on understanding the value of digits in numbers were encouraged to say the numbers correctly to distinguish between similar sounding numbers. They completed a postcard to their teacher at the end of the session and this helped to remind them of their learning.
- The teaching of phonics is good because it is taught daily in discrete sessions which are fun and engaging. Pupils of all abilities are challenged to practise writing new words. For example in a Year 1 class, the teacher asked the most-able pupils to think up funny sentences using the new sounds they had learnt while other children helped the puppet to read.
- Most parents and carers who responded to a school survey believe their children are taught well and receive appropriate homework. Parents and carers have been invited to sessions on how reading is taught in the school, which they say have been useful.
- Activities in lessons are often purposeful and interesting and sustain pupils' learning. However occasionally in mathematics the activities pupils are given by teachers do not enable them to practise and apply what they have been learning. This means opportunities for pupils to learn more in the lesson are missed.
- Teachers generally ask questions in lessons to check that pupils have understood the learning. However, the strategies for this are not consistently effective throughout the school. Sometimes feedback given to pupils is focused on praising children for their responses and does not always help them to know how well they are doing in their learning so that they can improve further.
- Teachers mark pupils' work frequently but they do not regularly give them advice on what they need to do to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is good. They clearly want to do their very best for their teachers and demonstrate good attitudes to learning. For example, Year 2 pupils spoke about how they enjoyed doing the homework set by their teachers.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 show good manners and consideration for others. In Reception classes, teachers and other adults encourage children to share, take turns and work together and children respond to this well.
- Parents and carers praise highly the work of the school. They say that behaviour is good and that the school provides a safe environment for their children.
- The school's work with parents and carers and the high priority given to attendance and punctuality have ensured that attendance levels continue to be above the national average.
- Most pupils have a good understanding of bullying and told inspectors that they had learnt about what you should do if bullying happens.
- Pupils say they feel very safe at school and are beginning to have an understanding, appropriate to their age, of how they can keep safe, but less so when applied to keeping safe on the internet. Leaders recognise this and have activities planned for children and parents and carers to address this aspect of safety.
- The school keeps records of incidents that describe the nature of any incident but leaders have only just begun to analyse these records so that they can learn more from them.
- Pupils are very willing to take on responsibilities, for example taking part in the school council.

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders and governors are ambitious for the school. They have used the working partnership with the junior school to good effect in providing staff with opportunities to work with colleagues in Key Stage 2 and support pupils moving onto their next stage of learning.
- The executive headteacher and the head of school know their school well. Their own evaluation of teaching is accurate. Many teachers have improved their teaching because they have been provided with focused support from colleagues within the school, received regular training and have been set clear targets for development.
- The school checks on the progress of all pupils and the systems that are in place enable leaders to identify when pupils are falling behind. This, together with regular meetings with teachers on the performance of pupils in their class, has ensured that pupils achieve well.
- Subject leaders new to their post have been supported well in their roles and are beginning to use data more consistently to ensure that achievement in all year groups is good, to identify the priorities for development in their subject area and the training needs of staff.
- The curriculum provides a range of interesting topics for pupils to learn about. There is a strong focus on developing scientific skills and the school has received The Primary Science Quality Mark-Silver Award in recognition of their work. Pupils also benefit from specialist art teachers and 'Art Week' events. Leaders are keen to develop the range of clubs the school offers, as currently only classrooms can be used for lunchtime and after-school clubs and this limits the range of clubs that can be offered in the space available. Opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology in lessons to support learning are less developed.
- The school has plans in place on how it will use the new school sport funding to increase the opportunities pupils have to take part in physical education and sports activities, for example, working with the local secondary school to make use of its facilities and specialist coaches and increasing the range of after-school clubs it provides.
- The local authority provides light-touch support for this good school and recognises the high quality of leadership and management of the senior leaders. The local authority has provided training and specific support for teachers and teaching assistants in the teaching of reading. It has provided training for governors on data analysis and developing the challenge aspect of their role, as part of a local authority-wide programme.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know about the standards in the school and how well the school is doing compared to all schools nationally. This has been supported by their involvement in the local authority training programme. They have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching in the school from the regular updates they receive from leaders, from their involvement in performance management processes and from their regular visits to the school. They know what is being done to reward good teaching and to tackle any underperformance by staff. They have a good understanding of how extra government funding is being used to support eligible pupils. Governors also have a good understanding of the management of teachers' performance and how targets are aligned to the school development plan. They have undertaken training on performance management including pay policy development, safer recruitment and to keep updated on curriculum developments. All statutory arrangements with regard to safeguarding are securely in place.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	100854
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	425641

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lisa McMunn
Headteacher	Elizabeth Williams (Executive Headteacher), Sheila Kirrane (Head of School)
Date of previous school inspection	November 2009
Telephone number	020 7703 9264
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