

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102334
Local Authority	Havering
Inspection number	335879
Inspection dates	15–16 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Gordon Ewing

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	424
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Gregory
Headteacher	C P Jones
Date of previous school inspection	16 June 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They visited 25 lessons, observing 14 teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, governors, members of staff and groups of pupils. Informal discussions were conducted with some parents. Inspectors observed the school's work, including the systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress, pupils' work in their exercise books and teachers' planning and marking. Inspectors took account of separate questionnaires completed by 240 parents and carers, 34 staff and 50 older pupils.

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

- how much progress children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage from their starting points
- the rates of progress that pupils make in English and mathematics and especially girls, boys and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities through different parts of the school.
- how effectively leaders at all levels monitor the quality of teaching and ensure that assessment information is used effectively so that all pupils achieve as well as they can, particularly for more able pupils.

Information about the school

St Joseph's is a large primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is very low. The largest groups of pupils are those from White British backgrounds. A very small minority of pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is smaller than that found nationally; predominantly these pupils have moderate learning difficulties.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Joseph's is a good school, which has many outstanding features. Effective leadership at all levels ensures that every pupil experiences a caring, spiritual and stimulating learning environment. The team spirit across the school is palpable and parents and carers, and pupils speak very highly of all that the school offers. As one parent commented, 'It has a great ethos and the children are very happy.' Inspectors agree wholeheartedly.

Children in the Reception classes swiftly develop excellent attitudes to learning that prepare them really well for the challenges ahead. In particular, they rapidly establish independent learning skills by taking on responsibilities for tasks and making good choices when presented with different activities. However, for older pupils, there is insufficient focus on the development of thinking and study skills that are essential to create confident and independent learners. In Years 1 to 6, achievement is good and attainment is high by the time pupils leave Year 6. Although attainment dipped in 2009, this was because there was a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in this year group, including those who joined the school at times other than at the start of Year 3. Pupils' high endeavour and outstanding behaviour contribute significantly to their success as learners and as members of a very cohesive and vibrant community. Pupils' response to the school's comprehensive strategies to promote healthy lifestyles and to developing responsible citizens for the future is outstanding.

Pupils' good achievement is the result of a number of key factors, which include:

- good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching that engages pupils so that they make effective strides in their learning
- high levels of attendance
- very positive relationships between adults and pupils strengthened by the teachers' detailed knowledge of each pupil's needs
- a vibrant and enticing curriculum that greatly enriches pupils' experiences
- outstanding care and support for every pupil.

Systems to assess and track how well pupils are doing are robust, but the information gathered is not always used to best effect in adapting day-to-day learning activities to closely match pupils' individual pace of learning. Teachers' marking is positive, praising and summative, but guidance given to pupils on how to take the next step in their learning is inconsistent. Teachers set targets but these are not consistently reviewed at appropriate intervals and some pupils do not know these targets with confidence.

The school's strategies to promote equality of opportunity have outstanding impact and

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any gaps in the performance of different groups are identified and reduced swiftly. Senior leaders monitor the school's work systematically but their view of the quality of teaching is, at times, generous. Effective systems of self-evaluation underpin improvement planning which is comprehensive and detailed. In recent times this has led to significant improvements in pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics. The school's track record over a number of years of maintaining high attainment demonstrates that St Joseph's has a good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the way in which teachers use assessment data to plan learning activities so that they are tightly matched to pupils' day-to-day learning needs by:
 - undertaking focused and systematic lesson observations each term to monitor how teachers use assessment data to adapt their day-to-day planning of lessons so activities are closely matched to pupils' needs
 - ensuring that when teachers mark pupils' work they give frequent and focused guidance about how to improve their skills and regularly check on how well pupils are achieving their targets
 - sharing existing good practice through staff training sessions and, by September 2010, through teachers coaching and supporting each other.
- By September 2011, improve pupils' thinking and study skills so that they become confident and independent learners by:
 - sharing existing good practice
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to exercise choice in their learning and in evaluating their own progress and that of others
 - ensuring pupils experience more opportunities to research their own learning by using a range of study skills, including those involving new technologies.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils' outstanding attitudes to learning and their strong moral and spiritual compass are the foundations upon which the school's success is built. As one pupil rightly judged, 'Learning is fun and we all get on so well.' They work together collaboratively and demonstrate perseverance and determination even when, on the odd occasions, teaching is laboured and poorly paced. They display sensitivity to the needs of others and listen with patience when pupils share ideas or critique the work of their peers. In an outstanding Year 5 lesson, pupils worked enthusiastically in drawing up their own success criteria around a task to recount a story from another's viewpoint. They demonstrated great empathy in their role play and constructively evaluated each other's work with precision and understanding.

Pupils develop a diverse range of skills at school and absorb much from the stimulating learning environment in which they work. The few pupils with special educational needs

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and/or disabilities make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress because they are fully engaged in the lesson activities and support from teachers and teaching assistants often enables them to make significant strides in their learning.

Pupils evidently really enjoy their time at school. All aspects of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. They demonstrate outstanding knowledge of how to stay safe and in leading a healthy lifestyle. They are really proud of their school and their own contribution to its improvement, for example in improving school meals and in increasing the number of classroom based laptops for research-based tasks. They contribute significantly, through charity events and curriculum activities, to their local community and to communities as far afield as East London and India. Taking into account their high levels of attainment, their strong sense of social responsibility and their outstanding attitudes to learning, pupils are extremely well prepared for life's future challenges.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching, though good overall, varies considerably. Particular strengths of

¹ 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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teaching are teachers' subject knowledge and their effective questioning to encourage pupils to think carefully about their ideas and vocabulary. Teaching assistants, frequently well deployed, boost the impact of the teaching through sensitive support to individual pupils. This worked particularly well in a Year 3 lesson when the able teaching assistant used visual prompts and sensitive guidance to strengthen pupils' use of powerful words in their adventure writing linked to the story of The Wizard of Oz. The quality of teachers' marking and the setting of pupil targets are inconsistent across the school. As a result, some pupils are not confident about how to take the next step or in judging their own progress over time. In some lessons, pupils are actively encouraged to assess the work of their peers and to suggest ideas on how work can be improved. However, this very good practice is not a common feature in most lessons.

Pupils are exposed to outstanding enrichment opportunities ranging from sport and music to French and Italian. They greatly appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits open to them; as one pupil reported, 'I love the trips and activities.' Links with outside agencies and local schools considerably enhance pupils' personal, social and cultural development.

Parents and carers overwhelmingly agree that pupils' safety has a high priority and that their children are looked after very well. Induction programmes for new pupils and transition arrangements within and beyond the school are of high quality. Child protection procedures are robust and systems to safeguard pupils and staff are exemplary. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive strong support, which helps them to make similar rates of progress to their peers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The calm and purposeful leadership of the headteacher pervades the school. She is well supported by an able deputy headteacher. Their partnership plays a key part in ensuring that pupils' achievement is good and their personal development and well-being are outstanding. The common sense of purpose and direction across the school is strong and staff are fully committed to realising the school's mission statement. Consequently, there exists a positive climate where everyone is striving to make St Joseph's even better. Recent steps to share leadership across the staff have a positive impact and middle leaders are increasingly taking on responsibility for some aspects of monitoring and evaluation. The governing body fulfils its legal responsibilities and is influential in

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determining the strategic direction of the school. It is beginning to establish robust systems for directly evaluating the effectiveness of the school and using the outcomes to inform and drive the strategic priorities for improvement. Engagement with parents and carers is good. The school acknowledges that some parents and carers take the view that improving communications between home and school is a priority. Steps are being taken to create a new forum to improve the school's response to the concerns of parents and carers. The school promotes community cohesion with vigour and purpose. The implementation of its action plan is having a clear and unequivocal impact on community cohesion within and beyond its local community.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good provision for the Reception classes ensures that children achieve well across all areas of learning and develop excellent levels of independence. Children are enthusiastic about learning and discuss their learning with confidence. Their behaviour is often outstanding. Adults have a secure knowledge of every child and the shared practice across the two classes ensures that children interact well and develop very good social skills. The learning environment is generally well equipped to support learning, though the outside area, while appealing, lacks the same levels of stimulus and range of teaching aids to support the kind of high quality learning that is found inside. Accurate observations and assessments are used to match learning activities to children's needs. Leaders provide a good focus on the progress of pupils and clearly aspire to improve outcomes further. All adults share a common vision and work well as a cohesive and

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effective team. Systems to evaluate the impact of the Early Years Foundation Stage are increasingly robust and recent initiatives to track progress are beginning to have a positive impact so that greater precision is being brought to improvement planning. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader provides effective leadership for her team. Her good understanding of the curriculum, and her clear vision for the future, indicate that children in Reception are in secure hands.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

The responses of the overwhelming majority of parents and carers were very positive about their child's overall experience at school. They agree that their children really enjoy school, feel very safe and are greatly encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles.

A very small minority of parents and carers were of the view that the school did not always take account of their suggestions and concerns. The inspection team found some convincing evidence that the school regularly seeks the views of parents and carers but does not always respond swiftly and effectively to the issues raised. It is clear that the school wants to do more to involve parents and carers in shaping the future of the school and is taking steps to establish a forum for parents and carers so that their views and concerns are more effectively addressed. A very small minority of parents and carers were of the view that the school did not always take account of their suggestions and concerns. The inspection team found some convincing evidence that the school regularly seeks the views of parents and carers but does not always respond swiftly and effectively to the issues raised. It is clear that the school wants to do more to involve parents and carers in shaping the future of the school and is taking steps to establish a forum for parents and carers so that their views and concerns are more effectively addressed.

A similar very small minority of parents and carers were of the view that the school did not always deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. The inspection team found no evidence to support this view.

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 Primary 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 240 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 424 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	170	71	65	27	2	1	3	1
The school keeps my child safe	179	75	58	24	1	0	1	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	101	42	119	50	15	6	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	134	56	97	40	7	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	154	64	81	34	4	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	132	55	88	37	17	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	125	52	103	43	9	4	2	1
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)	116	48	99	42	5	2	4	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	138	58	89	37	8	3	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	115	50	97	40	13	5	5	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	98	41	113	47	14	6	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	144	60	81	34	9	4	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	167	70	65	27	6	3	1	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



17 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Upminster, RM14 2QB

It was a privilege to visit St Joseph's and to observe you at work. You made us feel very welcome and you spoke really positively about school life.

You reported that St Joseph's School has many qualities and we totally agree. Like you, almost all parents and carers are really happy with the school. In particular, we liked these things about St Joseph's.

- Your behaviour is outstanding and you all get on really well together.
- You work hard, show perseverance and determination so that you make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress in your learning.
- You feel really safe and secure and thoroughly enjoy lessons. Your attendance is outstanding. Well done!
- Your headteacher and her senior team have a good partnership that has helped the school to continue to maintain high standards.
- You are really well cared for and you are confident that all adults are there to help should you have any worries.
- You have plenty of exciting things to do in lessons, after-school clubs and the numerous visits offered to you.

It is clear that everyone at St Joseph's wants the school to be even better and to achieve this we have asked the staff and governors to:

- improve the quality of assessment and teachers' planning so that all of you receive accurate and up-to-date learning targets, as well as good advice about how to take the next steps in your learning
- ensure that you are given more opportunities to develop key study skills so that you become increasingly confident and independent learners.

We wish you all every success in your future education and life.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Ewing

Lead inspector

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