

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Macklin Street, Drury Lane, London, WC2B 5NA

Inspection dates 26–27 February 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- This outstanding school is characterised by pupils joyfully singing, 'We are living, we are learning,' during an act of worship. It is indicative of leaders' commitment to ensuring pupils have the very best opportunities and experiences to help them learn.
- Exceptionally well-targeted plans for school improvement ensure that every pupil receives the support that they need in order to achieve as well as they can. Highly ambitious leaders and governors drive them.
- The excellent relationships that exist at all levels underpin the outstanding behaviour at the school. Pupils explain how well they all get on together and take pride in caring for, and looking after, one another. This means that any poorer behaviour or bullying, should it occur, is dealt with very effectively.
- Parents and carers hold the school in very high regard. They are proud of the school and the education that it provides. Parents who spoke to inspectors believe that the school is very well led and managed. One parent told inspectors, 'Coming here is the best thing that has happened to our family.'
- Pupils achieve exceptionally well at the end of Key Stage 2, from low starting points. They make rapid and sustained progress throughout the school.
- Teaching is exceptionally well organised. Teachers plan learning that is closely matched to the abilities of all groups of pupils.
- Additional adults make a very effective contribution to the learning of groups of pupils inside and outside the classroom. Small group and individual support is effectively used to accelerate the progress of any pupils who appear to be falling behind.
- The highly effective curriculum is rooted in a strong belief that pupils learn best from first-hand experience. Teachers plan creatively and imaginatively. The curriculum is enriched with visits to local areas of interest and visitors to the school. Music is a particular strength.
- The headteacher has ensured that the school has become a hub within the community. Local businesses have been recruited to provide additional support for learning. It is not uncommon to see pupils reading in the corridor to a local businessperson or lawyer.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 14 lessons or parts of lessons and an act of worship. Many of the lesson observations were joint observations with the headteacher and senior leaders.
- The team observed behaviour around the school, in the playground and in the dining hall.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher to discuss the progress that groups of pupils make throughout the school. They analysed the school's information on pupils' attainment and progress.
- Meetings were held with other senior leaders, staff and three governors. The team also met with the local authority representative.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers through informal discussions at the start of the inspection and the 17 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. The team received and analysed 19 staff questionnaires.
- The team listened to pupils read and interviewed two groups of pupils.
- Inspectors looked at a large sample of pupils' English and mathematics work in their books.
- Inspectors looked at documents including those relating to the monitoring of teaching and learning, minutes of governing body meetings, plans related to the use of the sports funding, records relating to behaviour and attendance, planning for school improvement and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Adam Higgins, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jeremy Loukes	Seconded Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Joseph's is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The majority of pupils are from White British, Black African or any other White backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is above average. The funding for this school applied to pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and who are supported by school action is below average; the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for pupils.
- A small breakfast club runs every morning in the school hall.
- The headteacher is a Local Leader of Education. She has provided leadership support to a number of other schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all pupils receive feedback about their work, which tells them how they can improve it, and provide them with time to act on it.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- All groups of pupils, including the most able and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, make exceptional progress at this school. The achievement of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including pupils who speak English as an additional language, is outstanding.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding make similar progress to other pupils in the school in all subjects. By the end of Key Stage 2, these pupils perform better than all pupils do nationally. By the time that they leave the school, there is almost no difference between the performance of these pupils and their peers in school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make outstanding progress. Most children enter the nursery with skills and abilities that are below those normally expected for their age. This is especially the case in literacy and communication. They make rapid and sustained progress because adults ensure that learning is interesting and exciting.
- When children start in the Reception class, they have already started to catch up. They continue to make exceptional progress because teachers monitor their learning closely and ensure that activities closely match children's learning needs. As a result, when they start in Key Stage 1 the majority are working at the level expected for their age.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in reading. In 2013, the result from the national reading check for Year 1 pupils indicated that an above average proportion of pupils met the expected standard. The school places a great emphasis on the development of early reading skills and the teaching of phonics (linking letters to the sounds that they make). The teacher with responsibility for developing this area of expertise ensures that adults are highly trained and confident when teaching reading. Exceptionally, the school has made strong links with a number of local companies. They have used these links to ensure that children from families who do not speak English at home, can read more frequently with local businesspeople during school time.
- Pupils write well and for a range of audiences. From the moment that they start at the school, children are encouraged to write with a purpose. They quickly develop fluency and acquire a varied and interesting vocabulary, so that by the time they reach Years 5 and 6 their writing is interesting, carefully structured and of a very high quality.
- Pupils make superb progress in mathematics because lessons are planned with interesting activities that are closely matched to their abilities. The support provided by additional adults is carefully planned for, to ensure that any pupils who risk falling behind are identified quickly and helped to catch up.
- At the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is well above average. All make good and the majority better progress in all areas.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding because teachers regularly check on pupils' understanding and continuously adjust their plans to ensure that pupils make accelerated progress in lessons. Their high expectations ensure that pupils know that they are expected to work hard and produce work of a very high quality. Pupils know that teachers will not settle for anything less than their very best efforts.
- Well-trained teaching assistants work with the most and the least able pupils. There is no difference between the high expectations of teachers and teaching assistants. Consequently, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive good support to enable them to make rapid progress. They know that they must try their hardest when working individually or in small groups and that this time is as valuable as that spent in whole class lessons.
- In most classes, pupils' work is marked with precision and gives clear guidance about how to improve. Occasionally, pupils are given time to respond to these comments. Pupils say that

feedback about how they have done helps them to get better at their work. Where this happens regularly, pupils' books show that earlier mistakes are not repeated. This is not consistent throughout the school.

- Pupils know their targets in English and mathematics and say that these help them to understand what it is they need to work on, if they are to complete their work to a high standard.
- In many lessons, teachers use questions effectively to probe pupils' understanding and to correct misconceptions.
- From the time that they start in the nursery, leaders have ensured a relentless focus on the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. From a young age, pupils are expected to respond to adults using grammatically correct full sentences. This means that by the time they reach Key Stage 2, pupils confidently converse with adults and their peers. For example, on numerous occasions during the inspection, pupils from all key stages stopped inspectors to introduce themselves and initiate conversation. Pupils are developing outstanding social skills that will stand them in good stead for the next stage of their school careers and the world of employment.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are enormously enthusiastic about their lessons and demonstrate this in their positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils say that the best thing about their school is the learning and that they would not change anything about the school.
- In nearly all lessons, pupils willingly demonstrate the new skills and knowledge that they have acquired. They are highly attentive and engaged. There is no low level disruption in lessons.
- In the playground and around the school, pupils are polite, kind and respectful. They take turns and understand the need to share equipment and the play space, because of the uniquely small nature of the school's outdoor play areas.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying. They say that there is none at their school because the teachers have taught them how to get along with each other. The school's systems for recording and reporting any incidents are thorough. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils understand the potential dangers posed to them outside school, such as those presented by crossing roads and 'stranger danger'. They explain confidently how they are taught to manage these risks.
- Pupils believe that adults work hard to keep them safe. Themed weeks on e-safety have ensured that they know how to keep themselves safe when using computers and the internet.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and carers interviewed and those who responded to Parent View say that their child is happy, safe and well looked after at the school. Staff agree that pupils' behaviour at the school is excellent and that leaders manage it effectively.
- Attendance at school is just above average. There are robust procedures for supporting families where attendance falls below average. The school personalises its approach to helping each individual pupil attend school. For example, some alarm clocks have been purchased and distributed, to help encourage some latecomers to get to school on time.

The leadership and management

are outstanding

- 'Rigorous, relentless and robust' is the mantra of the headteacher; and that is exactly what you find in leadership at all levels, at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School. The headteacher is passionate about personalising the learning for each unique child at the school. Consequently, this is a highly inclusive school, in which all pupils are treated equally and make outstanding progress.
- The exceptional headteacher has built a leadership team with an excellent range of skills, which they use to admirable effect, to drive improvements. Leaders articulate a vision for the school

which, when combined with the passion of the headteacher, ensure that for each individual pupil, progress is rapid and sustained in all subjects.

- An outstanding senior and middle leadership team confidently supports the headteacher. The members share her vision and high ambitions. Leaders use a variety of methods to check teaching and learning in classrooms. Each leader is an expert in his or her own area and knows how to improve the quality of learning. Leaders skilfully intervene to support less confident or experienced colleagues and challenge them to improve their performance.
- The performance of teachers is extremely well managed. The systems used by leaders to make checks on the quality of teaching and learning are well planned and proportionate to the progress that pupils make. Teachers' pay is directly linked to how well their pupils learn.
- Rigorous procedures have been designed to monitor and check on the progress made by pupils, including those supported by activities funded through the pupil premium. The outcomes of these checks are routinely reported to governors.
- Leaders have worked with a local sports centre to use the sports funding to assist in identifying those pupils who would benefit from increased opportunities for physical activity. This work is closely monitored by governors, to ensure that the spending is targeted appropriately.
- The curriculum has many interesting themes, with a strong focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils benefit from good teaching in the arts and humanities. Visits to local areas of interest and visitors to the school strengthen these areas. Music is a particularly strong aspect of the curriculum. For example, during the inspection, the choir was rehearsing for a performance at The Royal Albert Hall and the hand bell club was rehearsing for a school mass and a concert. During the day, snippets of Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* could be heard and enjoyed, throughout the school. Pupils can learn to play an instrument, take part in performances and join in with a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is exceptionally well planned for and promoted
- The local authority has provided appropriate support to the school, in proportion to its success.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors use their expertise and skills from a wide range of professions and experience to challenge the school to improve, for example in ensuring that they manage the school's limited financial resources to provide the very best education that they can. They receive detailed information about how the pupil premium and sports funding have been spent and can speak authoritatively about its impact. Their frequent visits to the school have a clear focus, which enables them to ask searching questions of school leaders. They work as a strong cohesive team with a relentless drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning. They receive regular reports from the headteacher so that they can keep an eye on this aspect of the school's work. Their visits enable them to check for themselves the accuracy of the information that they receive. They know about the targets that are set for teachers to improve their practice and understand that salary progression is linked directly to pupils' progress. They have been instrumental in developing strong links with local businesses and organisations for the benefit of pupils. These links have also been drawn upon to ensure succession planning for future governors. Governors have a good understanding of data and how the school's performance compares with other schools. They have made sure that it has made rapid gains to become an outstanding school. Governors ensure that safeguarding requirements are securely in place, meet statutory requirements and are rigorously applied.

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	100041
Local authority	Camden
Inspection number	431280

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julian Fulbrook
Headteacher	Helen Tyler
Date of previous school inspection	21–22 January 2009
Telephone number	020 7242 7712
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