

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Connor Road, Dagenham, RM9 5UL

**Inspection dates** 3–4 December 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Leaders and managers know their school very well. Because they regularly check on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements, they are able successfully to identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Pupils behave well. They settle quickly in lessons and show real interest in the subjects they are taught. Pupils say that they feel safe at school because staff help them if they have concerns.
- Teaching is typically good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan their lessons well to ensure that everyone has an equal chance to make good progress.
- Pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, make good progress from starting points which are often low. This is because of good teaching in the school.
- Thoughtful leadership and well-organised teaching and support in the Early Years Foundation Stage classes mean that the youngest children get a good start to school and learn well.
- Governors visit regularly. They have a good understanding of the school, as a result, and provide challenge and support to school leaders and other staff.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Leaders and managers do not always provide detailed and specific advice to teachers following their monitoring, which will help them to improve further the quality of their teaching and pupils' achievements.
- In their planning, teachers do not always set out clearly the challenges for learning for different groups, particularly the more able pupils. This can slow down their learning.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out in response to a complaint made to Ofsted which raised serious concerns. The complaint was deemed to be a qualifying complaint and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector decided that an unannounced inspection of the school would take place to follow up the issues that were raised. Inspectors sought to establish whether:
  - the education provided meets the needs of the range of pupils in the school
  - the quality of leadership in the school and whether the financial resources made available to the school are managed effectively.
- Inspectors visited 12 lessons. On three occasions they were accompanied by a member of the senior leadership team. Inspectors observed pupils at lunch and break time.
- Inspectors met pupils from Year 2 and other year groups to hear them read. A meeting was held with pupils to gain their views about the school. Discussions were held with members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, with school leaders and with teachers.
- Close scrutiny was carried out of school documents, including those which show how the school checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements. School policies and procedures for keeping pupils safe were reviewed. The minutes of meetings of the governing body were scrutinised. Inspectors looked at the school's incident reporting forms and bullying log.
- Inspectors took into account the views of the 42 members of staff who returned their questionnaires, as well as the 28 parents who completed the on-line Parent View survey.

## Inspection team

Bob Pugh, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Evelyn Riley	Additional Inspector
Clementina Olufunke Aina	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-size primary school. In September 2014, it joined a federation with another Catholic primary school in the same borough, which was inspected separately earlier this year. The executive headteacher leads both schools. The interim head of school at St Joseph's has been in post for less than a year.
- More able pupils in Year 6 attend a local secondary school for some English and mathematics lessons.
- The number of pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities is above the national average. The number of pupils eligible to receive the pupil premium is below the national average. This is funding which is made available for pupils eligible to receive free school meals or who are looked after.
- Well over half the pupils come from minority ethnic groups, especially from African backgrounds, and a similar number do not have English as their first language at home.
- The school has very close links with the Catholic parish church which stands at the edge of its grounds.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the expectations for minimum progress and attainment in English and mathematics.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage begin attending on a part-time basis. When they move into the reception class, they attend full-time.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
  - ensuring that leaders and managers provide specific advice on how teaching can be improved when checking on teachers' work
  - making sure that teachers' planning always contains challenge for all groups.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher, head of school and other leaders are ambitious for their pupils. They make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to make good progress, for example by providing additional support for those who need more help with speech, language and communication.
- Financial resources are used to good effect to promote strong achievement for all pupils. As a result, pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics. Many pupils make particularly strong progress in writing.
- School leaders visit classrooms regularly to monitor the quality of teaching and scrutinise pupils' achievements. Sometimes, when feeding back to teachers, their advice is too general and lacks the necessary focus on how teaching can have an even stronger impact on pupils' achievements.
- Professional development has a clear focus on strengthening pupils' learning. Recent training on improving writing has resulted in better progress for everyone in this subject. Teachers' performance management programmes are rigorous because they focus on improving pupils' progress and developing strong subject knowledge.
- Middle leaders are effective. They make good use of the time they are given to monitor how well different subjects are taught. This means that they are able to review strengths and weaknesses and suggest different approaches and resources to help pupils make swifter progress. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good.
- The curriculum is broad and relevant to the needs of all pupils. School leaders ensure that pupils learn well about life in modern Britain in each term's theme, by including work on different faiths and lifestyles as well as teaching about the Catholic faith. When organising fundraising events for good causes, opportunities are taken up for teaching about people who live in different countries. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported.
- Good use is made of funding to support disadvantaged pupils, for example by ensuring that everyone has the chance to attend after-school clubs or residential trips. Sport funding has been used to improve pupils' skills in team games, including fitness training led by a premier league football club.
- School leaders have ensured that all arrangements are in place for keeping pupils safe. All staff and governors have received appropriate training in child protection, with regular updates.
- When pupils attend alternative provision at the local secondary school, they are accompanied by staff from this school. This means that they are safe and well behaved.
- The local authority has provided suitably light touch support for this school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the governing body know their school well. They visit regularly and link with teachers to monitor the curriculum. They have undertaken training which helps them to monitor behaviour and safety and recognise strengths and weaknesses in teaching. They are able to interpret the data provided about pupils' progress. The executive headteacher's reports help governors to implement effective systems for rewarding strong performance by teachers. They have a good record of tackling under-performance. Their training means that they have taken necessary steps to ensure that the school meets requirements for keeping pupils safe. Inspectors confirmed that they have ensured that financial resources are used effectively to promote better achievement, including the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their attendance is good and they show pride in their achievements. They understand the school's values and try hard to live up to them by showing respect for each other and for their environment.
- Exclusions from school very rarely occur. Responsible behaviour is rewarded with house points and pupil of the week certificates. House-captains and vice-captains promote good role models for others as they carry out their duties diligently.
- Over time, pupils learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour; although, sometimes, a few staff do too much for them, or intervene too quickly before pupils have a chance to sort out problems for themselves.
- Pupils settle quickly in class and pay good attention; this helps them to make good progress. Learning is

very rarely interrupted by difficult behaviour. Pupils behave well when they attend the local secondary school for English and mathematics lessons.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe at school and they know who will help them if they are worried or concerned. They know that worry boxes are provided for them to alert their teachers to concerns. Almost all parents agree that their children are safe at school, and this view is shared by all staff.
- Good teaching about staying safe means that pupils can speak with confidence about common dangers. They learn about the need to use the internet safely, as well as to be careful when out and about in the community.
- Pupils say that bullying very rarely happens and there are very few racist incidents, none recorded since the spring term. Pupils are confident that, when problems occur, staff will help them through discussion with everyone who has been involved.
- Pupils remember the messages which they learned about staying safe during anti-bullying week.
- Thorough risk assessments ensure that pupils are kept as safe as possible when they are on residential or other visits.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good in all areas of the school and in all subjects. Good support is provided by teaching assistants. Teachers' expectations are high and teachers make sure that good information is available in classroom displays and information boards to help pupils learn well.
- Sometimes, teachers' planning does not contain enough challenge for all pupils. This means that, on a few occasions, more able pupils are asked to complete the same work as everyone else before moving on to a higher challenge.
- Teachers use questioning to good effect. They follow the school's 'no-hands-up' policy to pose targeted questions for individuals, which means that they have a clear understanding of how much each one has understood. Almost always, teachers use this information effectively, to shape the next stages of the learning.
- Teachers provide many opportunities for improving writing. They encourage pupils to think about how their choice of words can help the reader understand someone's mood. A good example of this was seen when an older pupil wrote about how 'the thunder petrified me' in a story about the weather.
- When they mark pupils' books, teachers provide good feedback about how much pupils have achieved. Because teachers tell pupils about next steps, they are clear about what more they have to do.
- Teachers make sure that pupils understand their own targets for improvement. A younger pupil told an inspector which multiplication table he had to work hard on, whilst another described how she was learning to add punctuation to her written work.
- Because teachers know their pupils so well, they are able to stimulate enjoyment of reading by advising them about appropriate texts. A good example of this was seen when an older pupil confidently read a newspaper article about a sports event. One younger pupil chose to read a story because she had heard about it from others, and another chose a book because it 'looked funny'. Many pupils learn to read with expression, whilst others work hard to observe punctuation.

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- When they join the school, pupils' attainment levels are often very low for their ages. Through the Early Years Foundation Stage, they begin to make progress as a result of good teaching. Data from 2014 show that, by the end Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment overall matches or exceeds expectations in mathematics and writing, although pupils do not make such good gains in reading. Pupils do not meet the national standard in the Year 1 phonic check. This includes pupils who are disadvantaged and those who do not have English as the main language at home.
- The sound building blocks laid in the early years and Key Stage 1 help pupils to make more rapid progress as they move through the school, particularly in reading. Currently, the number of pupils in Year 6 attaining at expected levels, in all subjects, is higher than the national average. The same trend is seen at in the higher Levels 5 and 6. Attainment in grammar, punctuation and spelling is above the national average.
- More able pupils are challenged to make as much progress as possible in English and mathematics. They

attend classes at the local secondary school for these subjects, and teachers from the secondary school sometimes teach at St Joseph's to stretch more able pupils.

- In reading and mathematics, the gap has closed so that the achievements of disadvantaged pupils match those of all others. In writing, their achievements fall very slightly below others at the school. In all of these areas, disadvantaged pupils at this school make rapid progress in comparison with the national picture.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities make good progress from their low starting points. Tracking of their progress and the planning which follows have improved very recently. Targets are sharp and help teachers identify strengths and areas which need further work.
- Pupils enjoy writing and have many opportunities for different kinds of writing. Pupils spoke with pride about having their poems published in a book which was sold at local bookshops. There are many examples of written work around the school, including accounts of visits to places of interest and pupils' hopes for the future.

### The early years provision

is good

- Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good because high expectations are shared by all members of the team. Every child has a key worker and every child is suitably challenged because of good sharing of information. Effective tracking of how much everyone is achieving helps with planning for the next steps. Parents and staff contribute to children's learning journals. These are informative and up to date.
- Children behave well, which shows that they feel safe. This can be seen when they play harmoniously in the outdoor area. Children settle well because of the good communication which exists between the school and parents. Staff visits to children's homes are part of Nursery induction, as well as visits to the school. As a result, children are well prepared and know about the school before they start.
- Teachers make sure that there is a good mix of child-led and carefully-planned learning activities. For example, adults asked lots of questions when children were making Christmas items, to check how much they understood and to help them to concentrate on the task.
- Almost all of the children in the Nursery and Reception classes make progress which is typical for their age, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs or disabilities. In 2014, over 60% of children achieved a good level of development, which is higher than the national average and represents an increase on the previous year at this school. Children make particularly good progress in creative learning and physical development.
- Children are ready for the move into Year 1 because teachers and parents work so closely together to help them develop a range of good skills, such as self-care and speech, language and communication.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	101236
<b>Local authority</b>	Barking and Dagenham
<b>Inspection number</b>	454410
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	404
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Father Stephen Myers
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Bernadette Horton Matt Ashmead (Head of School)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21–22 September 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8270 6480
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