

St Joseph's RC Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101539
Local Authority	Brent
Inspection number	376588
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Jacqueline Marshall

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	279
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Rodgers
Headteacher	Pamela Gibney
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 October 2006
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 21 lessons, observed eight teachers and held meetings with groups of pupils, staff, school leaders and representatives of the governing body. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's documentation and policies, including those relating to safeguarding, data on pupils' progress, attendance figures and the school's improvement planning. They scrutinised pupils' work and evaluated 133 questionnaire responses received from parents and carers, 95 from a sample of pupils and 19 from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of the school's strategies for improving the learning and progress for all pupils, including those from different ethnic backgrounds and higher-achieving pupils in English.
- The use leaders, staff and pupils make of assessment information to provide support and challenge for pupils' learning and to maintain high standards.
- The effectiveness of all leaders in checking, reviewing and taking actions to improve attendance and build strong partnerships with parents and carers.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized junior school. The pupils come from predominantly Asian Indian, Black African, Black Caribbean, White British and other White and Asian British families as well as from a range of other minority ethnic backgrounds. Two thirds of the children speak English as an additional language and, of these, the large majority who join at times other than when transferring from the infant school arrive with little or no English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average and represents a range of needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. Most pupils join the school from St Joseph's RC Infant School. The two schools are part of a hard federation and share a governing body and executive headteacher. There have been a number of staff changes over the past 18 months, with over a third of teaching staff new to post during this period. The school has received a number of awards, including Healthy School status.

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. Since the last inspection, staff and the governing body have worked exceptionally hard to improve the overall effectiveness of the school and have successfully ensured consistently high standards by the time pupils leave in Year 6. Because of the school's very strong focus on its religious ethos and pastoral care, pupils and their families are extremely well supported and the school provides tremendously high levels of care, guidance and support. Parents and carers praise the extremely good levels of communication between the school and home that enable them to know just how well their children are doing. They are keen to develop their partnership with the school even further but as yet there are only limited opportunities for them to share their suggestions and contribute actively to improving the school. All staff, across the federation, work especially closely together to ensure that pupils achieve outstandingly well in their learning and develop as exceptionally mature and caring individuals. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Throughout a period of staff changes there has been a high priority placed on improving teaching and pupils' learning. Senior leaders and the governing body have an exceptionally clear view of the school's performance and look constantly for ways to improve pupils' attainment with the result that there has been a steady improvement in the numbers reaching the highest levels. The school has focused very effectively on systematically developing pupils' writing. They have been particularly successful in engaging and encouraging pupils to write through the wealth of experiences provided in the curriculum. The school has successfully built upon the good pastoral care seen at the previous inspection and on their personal development so that both are now outstanding. These improvements, along with the school's constant striving to look for ways to improve based on the leaders' extremely accurate self-evaluation, show the school has an excellent capacity for further improvement.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding because with exceptional teaching the school adapts its stimulating curriculum particularly well to ensure that every individual's needs are met and pupils are thoroughly engaged in their learning. Although there is a small degree of variability between different classes, all groups of pupils make extremely rapid progress, from their starting points when they join in Year 3 to when they leave in Year 6. All staff know the pupils' abilities extremely well. This is because of the highly effective checks regularly made on their progress and the considerable skill with which the school adapts and targets the well-focused support

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it gives individual pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Encourage parents and carers to become more actively involved in all aspects of school life by providing increased opportunities for them to work alongside staff and governors to build on the school's effectiveness.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Across the school pupils achieve extremely well in their personal and social development. Their behaviour is exemplary, both in lessons and at play, where they show considerable support for one another regardless of age, gender or ethnicity. Pupils have exceptional moral and social skills, and their spiritual and cultural awareness is excellent. They are exceptionally considerate of each other, valuing and celebrating each other's differences. This helps to make the school very safe and welcoming. Attendance is high and demonstrates pupils' considerable enjoyment in learning. Their ability to work really well together as a team as well as initiatives such as the highly successful mentor scheme between older and younger pupils are key factors in their extremely strong development of workplace skills. Pupils contribute extremely well to the school and wider community. This is demonstrated well through their significant involvement in how the school is run. They participate enthusiastically in the school council with additional healthy school and sports councillors; they willingly take on responsibilities such as playground monitors, peer mediators and learning mentors. Their understanding of how to stay safe and lead a healthy lifestyle is excellent. This is reflected in the Healthy Schools status and demonstrated particularly well by the high take-up of physical activity in the many available clubs and sporting activities as well as making the most of the expert coaching they receive during lessons. Pupils of all ages talk confidently about the benefits this can bring and are quick to explain the healthy choices they make in what they eat and do.

Pupils also achieve extremely well academically. They are clear about their learning and frequently talk with confidence about their work, sharing their ideas willingly. During a literacy session, pupils in Year 6 were keen to talk to their partners and share their ideas about how to improve a sentence through the use of clauses, phrases and a range of vocabulary. They confidently contributed their own suggestions about how the writing could be improved based on the agreed success criteria as well as their substantial knowledge of what makes a text more interesting to read. Pupils of all ages talk eagerly about what they have been learning and know just what to do to improve. Attainment in the Year 6 national tests over the last three years has been consistently high. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve equally well, showing the same eagerness to learn and to be successful. Consequently, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those from different ethnic backgrounds, make the same excellent progress.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
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
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?

Pupils say they find their activities exciting and challenging. Along with the rich and varied range of visits and visitors who share their expertise with pupils, the extremely creative links between subjects help to stimulate and foster pupils' considerable interest and provide further opportunities to extend their learning. The programme of out-of-school activities for pupils is strong. Clubs very effectively promote pupils' positive relationships and encourage healthy lifestyles. All staff play their part in delivering this rich, stimulating and engaging curriculum.

Some of the key features of the outstanding teaching seen across the school are: the very good relationships adults have with children; the particularly well-targeted use of highly trained additional adults both in class and in leading small groups; very effective behaviour management; and the highly effective questioning adults use to extend and challenge pupils' learning. In a Year 4 numeracy lesson, pupils of all abilities were targeted extremely well, ensuring they developed their understanding of mixed numbers and proper and improper fractions very effectively. Pupils worked enthusiastically as the teacher used misconceptions from the previous lesson to build on pupils' knowledge and confidence. Consequently, their understanding of how to change from one type of fraction to the other grew rapidly, with the most able using inverse operations confidently to check their own work. Assessment is especially thorough and is used very effectively to plan the next steps in pupils' learning and help them understand the next small steps needed to improve. Pupils are actively

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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encouraged to check their own work using the highly successful 'steps for success' that are shared in each lesson. These are also used particularly effectively as pupils mark each other's work with 'two stars and a wish', identifying where they have achieved well and providing ideas for how to get better.

Pupils' welfare and personal, social and health needs are catered for extremely well because the school works exceptionally closely with parents and carers as well as with outside agencies where needed. The school's exceptionally effective efforts to support their whole-school community are evident in many ways. For example, the impact of their work with pupils and families who might otherwise find it difficult to access education is evident in pupils' increased attendance. Workshops involve parents and carers successfully in improving their understanding of the curriculum as well as developing their own literacy and numeracy skills. The school ensures different groups and individuals, such as higher-achieving pupils and those at the early stages of learning English, are very well targeted, enabling them to learn effectively.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
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 executive headteacher, supported exceptionally well by the two associate headteachers in the federation as well as other senior leaders, provides a particularly clear vision for how the school can move forward. Despite the recent changes, there is a tremendously positive spirit and a real team atmosphere of 'can do' amongst the staff. As part of the school's extremely effective development planning, leaders at all levels are positively encouraged to take on responsibilities and are fully involved in analysing the school's results and checking teaching to see where it is most effective and where improvements are needed. As a result, leaders have a very clear understanding of the school's overall strengths and weaknesses. The governing body play an impressively effective role in checking how well the school is doing, ensuring that pupils' achievement and enjoyment in learning continue to be the school's main aims, with the result that the school provides outstanding value for money. These, along with outstanding links with other partners, are additional factors contributing to the school's considerable success. Well-established links with parents and carers to keep them informed are highly valued, though opportunities are less well established for them to be more hands-on in helping the school to achieve its goals.

All staff play their part in ensuring that safeguarding procedures are rigorous,

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constantly checking to ensure exemplary practice is maintained across all areas. Similarly, the governing body are extremely conscientious is making very regular checks on the school's procedures and systems. With new staff joining the school, very effective and regular staff training ensures everyone in the school is particularly vigilant in identifying any issues. The school's promotion of equality and diversity is excellent. Staff ensure that there is no discrimination between groups so that all children have opportunities to flourish individually and achieve exceptionally well. Pupils are encouraged to play their part fully in the school and local and wider community, and leaders have been particularly effective in promoting community cohesion across all these levels as well as developing strong links with other schools in the United Kingdom and further afield.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
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

Views of parents and carers

The return rate of questionnaires from parents and carers was above average for this type of school. All those who responded commented on how much their children enjoyed school and that the school keeps their children safe. The overwhelming majority of the responses were positive and almost all of the written comments expressed considerable satisfaction with the school. Typical comments about the school included, 'This is a place where my child works hard, is challenged in their learning and feels comfortable in their environment', 'We feel lucky our child is being educated in St Joseph's', 'My children grow with respect, trust and confidence', and 'My child will have the same wonderful experience as my other children did'.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Joseph’s Junior 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 133 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 279 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	107	80	24	18	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	112	84	21	16	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	88	66	43	32	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	82	62	49	37	0	0	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	95	71	36	27	0	0	1	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	90	68	40	30	1	1	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	87	65	42	32	1	1	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)	77	58	50	38	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	70	53	57	43	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	79	59	48	36	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	67	50	54	41	4	3	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	90	68	37	28	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	103	77	29	22	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 all 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 8 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



30 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph RC Junior School, Wembley HA9 6BE

Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work when we visited your school. We were pleased to hear how tremendously you enjoy coming to school and that your teachers plan lots of interesting things for you to do and get involved in. You get on extremely well with one another and your behaviour around school is super. You have an excellent understanding of how to be safe and lead a healthy lifestyle. We agree that there are many interesting clubs and activities to get involved in. We understand why you think the adults are very good at helping to make you feel really safe and cared for.

You and your parents told us that your school is outstanding, and we agree. The curriculum planned for you meets your needs extremely well. Teachers help you to make excellent progress in your work and achieve high standards. The leaders in your school run it exceptionally well. They know just what needs to be done to make your school better. Even though your school is extremely effective, we have asked the leaders at your school to work on one thing.

- Make sure all the adults, including your families, work together to find ways to keep improving and making your school such a great place to learn.

You can all help by continuing to be kind and considerate to one another. Thank you again for helping us with our work.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Marshall
Lead inspector

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