

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

The Broadway, Barking, Essex IG11 7AR

Inspection dates

13–14 September 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive headteacher's strong leadership has been a major factor in the school's improvement since its last inspection. She has created a strong ethos where striving for the best is the ambition of all.
- Leaders work closely with individual teachers to improve their practice. As a result, pupils' overall progress has improved as teaching has become consistently good.
- Governors have the skills and understanding to challenge leaders to maintain the drive for improvement.
- The local authority and the federation have been close partners with the school on its journey of improvement.
- Children make good progress from their starting points in all areas of learning across the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Pupils' attendance is consistently higher than the national average.
- Most pupils are keen to learn, particularly now that they say they find teaching more interesting.
- Pupils behave well. They are kind to each other and show great respect to adults.
- Leaders and governors make sure that pupil premium funding is enabling disadvantaged pupils to make good progress.
- Several teachers are new to teaching phonics this year and do not have the same level of expertise as had been developed in the previous team.
- Teaching in mathematics does not always challenge pupils, particularly the most able, to apply their skills and deepen their understanding of new ideas.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunity to plan and carry out experiments and investigations in science.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - providing urgent training in teaching phonics for new teachers and monitoring its impact rigorously
 - ensuring that teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils, particularly the most able, to deepen their understanding of new mathematical ideas
 - providing regular opportunities for pupils to undertake practical experiments in science.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive headteacher is passionate about improving the pupils' learning to meet her ambition that every pupil gets the very best the school can provide. Senior leaders contribute successfully to this aim being met.
- The executive headteacher's continual and unrelenting drive to improve teaching has met with much success since the last inspection. Leaders have been particularly effective in quickly turning staff new to the school into effective teachers. This has been achieved by providing support and training sharply focused on individual need.
- With a large number of new staff this year, leaders recognise that the challenge they face is to bring new teachers quickly up to the quality of those who have left. Training, support and guidance have already begun to meet this challenge.
- A rigorous training programme has strengthened subject leadership since the last inspection. Most subject leaders now contribute significantly to driving improvement in their areas of responsibility. Staff changes mean that some leaders are new in post this year. They are about to embark on their leadership training programme.
- A major factor in the improvement of teaching and the strengthening of leadership has been the sharing of expertise within the federation. In addition, the local authority has supported the development of new teachers and given an external view of the school's progress through regular reviews of its performance.
- Leaders have adapted the curriculum and assessment procedures to meet the demands of recent national changes with some success. There is a very sharp emphasis on literacy, including the development of writing across subjects. Less emphasis has been placed on promoting the pupils' investigation skills in mathematics and science. These skills are consequently not developed sufficiently to support deepening their understanding of new ideas.
- Sports premium funding is used well to develop staff expertise and to provide opportunities for pupils to participate in competitions. Pupils greatly value this alongside a wide range of other additional activities. As a result, pupils develop interests and skills they might otherwise not have the opportunity to experience.
- Pupils are helped to understand the values underpinning British society. Special events, religious education and the personal, social and health education programme all promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The progress of pupils is checked rigorously. This enables leaders to tailor additional resources to meet their individual needs closely. Pupil premium funding is deployed largely to provide additional staff support. This leads to disadvantaged pupils making good progress.

Governance of the school

- Governance has become stronger since the school's last inspection. The governing body has adapted its procedures well so that it can act cohesively across the federation.

- Governors check the school’s performance carefully and use their knowledge to ask searching questions of school leaders. Governors are fully aware of what has been done to improve teaching and where further action is needed.
- The governing body plans strategically across the federation following support from the local authority.
- An external review of the impact of the pupil premium has shown governors that it is being spent well. They have acted upon suggestions about how it could be even more effectively used.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The executive headteacher and governors have created a school culture in which safeguarding the welfare of the pupils is seen by all as of paramount importance. Regular training and updates keep staff vigilant of possible concerns.
- Leaders work closely with parents to identify potential problems. This, and weekly meetings of the safeguarding team, means that leaders have a clear understanding of the circumstances that might make pupils vulnerable. Appropriate action is taken as a result so that pupils are supported and kept safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The concerted programme of staff training has resulted in consistently good teaching across the school.
- In most cases, secure subject knowledge leads to confident teaching that engages pupils and holds their attention. Even at this early stage of the school year, teachers have established clear expectations and routines so classrooms are calm and learning is purposeful.
- Effective training has led to a skilled and carefully deployed team of teaching assistants. They make a considerable contribution to learning, particularly for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. Teaching assistants adapt materials, make sure that pupils focus on their work and know when to stand back so that pupils have to think for themselves.
- Writing is taught well. The different methods used to introduce each new unit of work stimulate the pupils’ imagination. Pupils plan and edit their work so that it improves, supported by valuable feedback through marking.
- Staff training and effective changes to grouping played a significant part in improved progress in phonics last year. The executive headteacher knows that training has to be repeated as many of the team are new to phonics teaching this year. Several teachers lack precision when teaching letter sounds and are unsure of the correct terminology.
- Mathematics teaching ensures that pupils learn to use formal methods accurately. Teaching is less effective in challenging the most able to explore ideas in greater depth and extend their understanding. This slows their progress. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to apply their skills in problem-solving or practical situations.

- Science teaching focuses well on ensuring that pupils learn facts. Research is undertaken, such as when Year 6 pupils found out about Charles Darwin. Less emphasis is placed on pupils undertaking practical scientific experiments and investigations. This means that they are not sufficiently prepared for learning in science at secondary school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils live by a strong moral code in school. They develop a very clear sense of what is right and what is wrong. Pupils understand the school rules, the expectations placed on them and the consequences if these are not met.
- Pupils show great respect and consideration for others. This is promoted through the school ethos and its motto 'In partnership we care, share and achieve.' As one pupil said, 'Basically we learn we are all the same; we are all humans.'
- Pupils wear their new uniform neatly and with pride. They take care over their work and try their utmost to present it neatly.
- Pupils are aware how to stay safe and know that they should report any concerns to teachers. They have a very clear understanding of internet safety and can explain how they follow rules at home as well as in school.
- Bullying is not a concern for pupils. They understand the different forms it might take and how quickly teachers deal with it. They also know that name-calling is hurtful and do their best to make sure it does not occur.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are very polite and courteous. They move sensibly around the school, and automatically hold doors open for adults and each other. They play together happily and energetically at lunchtime, enjoying the many activities available to them.
- Pupils generally try hard to complete work they are given. This is not always the case, as some are not enthusiastic learners and do not always challenge themselves by selecting harder work.
- Pupils listen carefully to their teachers. They can often be seen bursting to answer questions even though they know there is a 'no hands up' rule.
- Attendance is consistently above average with virtually no persistent absence. This has been achieved partly by working closely with identified families causing concern. The executive headteacher emphasises the importance of attendance at induction events and celebrates high attendance in newsletters.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- School assessment information and the pupils' books from last year show that progress is now good across the school and across subjects. Consequently, attainment is broadly average and rising.
- Pupils' writing becomes more creative and interesting as they move through the school. They write in a wide range of styles from poetry to fantasy stories. Handwriting becomes neat and cursive as pupils move through the school.
- Progress in phonics has risen over the last year. The large majority of Year 1 pupils reached the standard expected of them in the screening check. This was a considerable improvement over recent years.
- The most able key stage 1 pupils read accurately, fluently and with expression. The most able Year 6 pupils are passionate about reading. They read widely and are encouraged to challenge themselves at home and in school. Additional support for weaker readers is helping to develop their skills and confidence.
- Disadvantaged pupils make at least similar progress to other pupils nationally with similar starting points. This includes the few most able disadvantaged pupils. This is leading to differences in attainment diminishing by the end of Year 6. The effective additional support they get often leads to them making more rapid progress than other pupils in the school.
- The progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language is at least as good if not better than other pupils in the school. Pupils of Black African heritage make similarly good progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress. Their needs are accurately assessed. Their progress is carefully tracked and support programmes skilfully delivered.
- The most able pupils make good progress in reading and writing. Their progress is less strong in mathematics and science as they are not challenged sufficiently and do not have the opportunity to develop skills of investigation and experimentation. This does not prepare them well for secondary school.

Early years provision

Good

- Strong leadership has led to much improvement in all aspects of the early years. The outside areas have been transformed into exciting, safe and accessible learning areas. Teaching is now good. This prepares children well for learning at key stage 1.
- The most able children are quickly identified so that adults know who they are and give them extra challenges. They make good progress, with several working beyond expectations for their age by the end of Reception.
- Teachers and support staff focus sharply on developing language by carefully explaining the meaning of new vocabulary. They question children closely and get them to talk about their learning. Adults work well with children by suggesting how they might extend their learning or by standing back to watch as they explore new ideas.

- Children behave well. Successful induction activities mean that almost all have quickly settled into school routines. Most children are confident to speak to an adult they know, and are starting to form strong friendships with each other.
- Children quickly learn how to work well together. One child was seen patiently helping three others to put on their high-visibility jackets so that they could work with construction materials.
- Children also become quickly absorbed and persevere with tasks. Four children were observed amicably sharing the design and building of a railway track. They concentrated on this for a considerable time.
- Action has begun to raise the attainment of boys which has lagged behind girls, although it is too early in the term to assess its impact.
- Parents value staying to work with their children when they start in a new class. Communication booklets keep them informed about daily events. Parents also engage with their children's learning through regular homework and by supporting their reading.

School details

Unique reference number	101235
Local authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	10011909

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	384
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Stephen Myers
Headteacher	Bernadette Horton
Telephone number	0208 270 6474
Website	www.stjobarking.co.uk
Email address	office@st-jobarking.bardaglea.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 July 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This school is above average in size compared with other primary schools. Pupil numbers are rising as it completes its expansion to two forms of entry.
- The school has experienced considerable staff changes this year. This includes 10 new teachers.
- The school is part of a hard federation with a local Catholic primary school. The federation has a single governing body and is led by an executive headteacher.
- Almost all pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The majority are of Black African heritages.
- Over three quarters of pupils speak English as an additional language. This figure is high.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by funding through the pupil premium is broadly average.
- Children in the early years provision attend the Nursery part time and the two Reception classes full time.
- The school provides childcare before and after school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards. These set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 25 lessons. School leaders accompanied inspectors to 11 of these. They looked at work in pupils' books from the last academic year.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff and two members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. A telephone conversation was also held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 11 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire and written contributions from nine parents. Inspectors also talked with a small number of parents as they brought their children to school at the start of the day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Martin Beale, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Helena Mills	Ofsted Inspector
Sean Flood	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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