

Inspection of St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School

George Row, Bermondsey, London SE16 4UP

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 September 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a good school, where pupils from different backgrounds work and play happily together. Pupils feel welcomed here and safe. The school's aim, 'to grow and learn together in a loving and caring environment which reflects the Gospel values', is reflected in all the school's work. Pupils listen respectfully and politely to each other. They said that all staff care about them and help them to do their best.

The school is a very calm place. Pupils learn the importance of doing their best and persevering when they initially encounter difficulties. Pupils rarely miss a day of school. They behave exceptionally well, so that curriculum teaching is rarely interrupted. This is because pupils are supported by staff to engage with their surroundings, form positive relationships with others and enjoy their learning. Bullying is rare and dealt with quickly. Pupils clearly enjoy the many activities on offer at playtime. These activities aim to help pupils keep fit, healthy and active.

School leaders and staff know the school's local community well. They use their knowledge to provide an inviting environment and typically engaging curriculum for pupils. Leaders are in the process of developing the sequence and structure of the planned curriculum in a few subjects.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The acting headteacher, governors and staff strive to provide the best education for all pupils. The top priority for leaders and staff is to teach pupils to read confidently and fluently. Leaders have invested heavily in staff training and resources to support the teaching of early reading. Those who teach early reading are confident and knowledgeable in teaching phonics. Staff quickly help any pupils who find reading more difficult to catch up. The youngest children in Nursery handle books confidently, developing a love of books. Children in Reception and Years 1 and 2 learn phonics knowledge appropriate to their age. A rich diet of carefully chosen books are integral to the school's curriculum offer. Older pupils enthuse about the books teachers read to them in class. They name their favourite authors and the books they have enjoyed reading at home and in school.

Pupils study the full range of national curriculum subjects. Generally, leaders identify what pupils need to know to be successful in the next stages of their education. Programmes of work are typically well sequenced. Pupils build their knowledge and understanding of key concepts as they progress up the school. In the early years, children are encouraged to become confident and successful learners. Pupils display consistently positive attitudes to their learning. Low-level disruption happens very rarely. Pupils listen to their teacher and respond to instructions quickly.

Pupils achieve well overall. Teachers accurately check what knowledge pupils can remember. They use these checks to plan what to teach each pupil next. In some subjects, curriculum plans lack detail about what pupils need to know and remember, to be ready when they move from one key stage to the next. This

includes what key vocabulary pupils need to learn to deepen their understanding of important themes. Leaders have identified this and organised training for staff. Where subject-specific training has taken place already, staff are more confident. In these subjects, curriculum planning is also coherently sequenced and structured. Pupils express what they have learned well.

Leaders have made sure that the curriculum is accessible to all. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve as well as other pupils. Staff understand the needs of pupils with SEND well. Staff adapt the curriculum for pupils with SEND so that they are fully included in the school's activities.

The wide range of spiritual, moral, social and cultural opportunities is a strength. Pupils are taught a great deal through assemblies. For example, they are encouraged to be custodians of the world in which they live and to appreciate the importance of fundamental British values. They are also taught about cultures and beliefs other than their own, including through links with a school in Sierra Leone.

The experienced governing body is ambitious for the school. Members challenge and support leaders well. They use their collective and broad expertise wisely, to explore where improvements can be made. Funding is allocated where it is needed most, supporting the good quality of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Through training and policy updates, leaders make sure that all staff have an awareness of a wide range of risks. Staff take their duty of care seriously. They engage well with external agencies, parents and carers. They gather the necessary information to ensure timely support for pupils. The school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is well planned. It provides many opportunities for pupils to reflect on their personal safety, including when using technology in and beyond school. Older pupils discuss maturely what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate behaviours. Pupils are taught how to report any concerns they may have for their own, or others', safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, planning lacks details about what pupils need to know and remember in the long term to deepen their learning over time. Not all plans build on the learning foundations laid in the early years. The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned and sequenced in some subjects. However, it is clear that leaders have already taken action to plan next year's curriculum and to train staff in how to deliver it. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied. Leaders need to ensure sufficiently detailed curriculum planning which builds on the learning in the early years is in place in all subjects.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	100832
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	10199335
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	336
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sister Anne-Marie Niblock
Headteacher	Aileen Byrne (Headteacher), Thomas Hoyes (Acting Headteacher)
Website	www.stjosephsgeorgerow.org
Date of previous inspection	8 January 2007, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- At the time of the inspection, the headteacher was on maternity leave. The substantive deputy headteacher was acting headteacher.
- In autumn 2019, the governing body was asked to stand down and an interim management board was put in place by the Diocese and the London Borough of Southwark. On 9 January 2020, following a systematic review, the interim management board was reconstituted as a full governing body, in accordance for the first time with the articles and instrument of governance. The governing body did not initially choose to conduct elections for parent and staff governors while it was stabilising and consolidating. Since September 2021, the governing body has been actively filling remaining vacancies and has now a full complement of foundation governors. Further appointments are planned for the coming term.
- St Joseph's is a voluntary-aided Catholic school. It is situated in the Cathedral Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark and is maintained by Southwark local authority. Its denominational education and collective worship are inspected separately under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.
- The school received its most recent section 48 inspection in February 2017.

- The school's next section 48 inspection is due by February 2025. Section 48 inspections usually take place every three to five years but have been suspended during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. These inspections restarted in September 2021 and the school's first section 48 inspection will be within eight years of the last, rather than the usual three to five years interval.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club on site for pupils who attend the school.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, including the acting headteacher. Meetings were held with three governors, including the chair of the governing body and representatives from the Diocese and the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects. These included: art and design, design and technology, geography and PSHE.
- In considering the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements, inspectors scrutinised the single central record. Inspectors looked at records relating to the safeguarding of children. They held discussions with a range of pupils, staff and leaders. Playtimes and lunchtimes, and their supervision, were observed. Inspectors also considered records of the training staff receive relating to safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with members of staff, including those responsible for behaviour and attendance at the school.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the day, to gain their views of the school. They reviewed the 19 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 19 additional free-text comments. Inspectors also took account of 59 responses to the pupil questionnaire. They considered the views of staff through discussions during the course of this inspection.

Inspection team

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