



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Name of School:	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Headteacher/Principal:	Nicola Doherty
Hub:	South East London Hub
School type:	Primary
MAT (if applicable):	N/A

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Effective
Date of this Review:	05/02/2020
Overall Estimate at last QA Review (if applicable)	Requires improvement
Date of last QA Review (if applicable)	01/04/2019
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	21/12/2017

1. Context and character of the school

St Joseph's is a one-form entry primary school, with two classes in Years 4 and 6. It serves a culturally diverse area of Deptford, where there are high levels of deprivation. Most pupils live locally but others come from Catholic parishes further afield. Currently, there are no White British pupils. Around half of the pupils have a Black African background, with the next largest group being Black Caribbean.

The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average, in addition there are several pupils with vulnerabilities who are not eligible for the pupil premium. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is above average, including pupils with communication and speech and language difficulties.

The school has three pupil leadership teams - the school, faith and eco councils. The eco-council has three subgroups for re-cycling - air-pollution, habitat and food waste.

Well-established links with a local store mean that leaders regularly receive items such as bread and fruit, which they pass on to parents. They also receive food bank vouchers from the Lewisham food bank and distribute these discreetly.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The unswerving determination of the headteacher and senior leaders to bring about improvement is evident in the good headway made since the previous review. Returning staff and new appointments have strengthened the teaching team. Effective teaching strategies have been shared widely and support staff are deployed more efficiently. Leaders have sustained a positive climate for learning, where staff are committed to ensuring that all children grow in confidence, learn to develop their resilience and enjoy the challenge in new learning.
- Governors are sharply focused on raising standards. They give clear direction and are increasingly accessible to staff and parents. The Rapid Improvement Board, which includes governors, the headteacher, the director of Lewisham Learning, a member of the local SEND team and school improvement partner, works proactively. This has led, for example, to establishing links between subject leaders and other schools.
- Leaders have made judicious appointments to strengthen middle leadership. The leaders of English and mathematics, for example, provide excellent role models for colleagues and additional training for staff. As a result, pupils' progress has accelerated. A focus on ensuring strong subject knowledge and pedagogy across the curriculum is paying dividends and contributing to improving standards. In mathematics, for example, pupils' books reflect an increasing emphasis on variation and on numerical relationships, rather than rote procedures.

- Links with the community are extensive. They include links with the Moonshot Centre, which runs courses in African dance and Tai Chi, and the Jimmy Charity, which helps pupils to explore the neighbourhood shops to find which are part of its 'safe haven' initiative. At the Ahoy Centre, located at the nearby Deptford Creek, pupils, in addition to sailing and rowing, can learn to cook and sew.
- A wealth of enrichment activities includes visits to the London, British, Science and Ragged School Museums. Visitors, such as a local storyteller and players from local basketball, hockey and cricket teams, broaden pupils' horizons. After-school clubs offer pupils experiences in athletics, dance, drama, and sports. The school choir is looking forward to performing at the Tower of London and Catford Town Hall.
- Pupils demonstrated a very secure understanding of British values as they discussed what they learn from the weekly assemblies led by the personal, social and health education coordinator. They have a strong sense of rights and responsibilities, and willingly serve on the school, eco and faith councils.
- The well-being of pupils and staff has a high priority. Pupils identify a 'go to' person and are supported by weekly sessions with arts therapists and visits by an outreach learning mentor. Teaching assistants have a flexible timetable, so they are often on hand before and after school to help with teachers' workload.

2.2 Leadership at all levels - Even better if...

- ...middle leaders sustained their efforts to ensure the curriculum enabled pupils to develop their knowledge and skills progressively
- ...leaders explored ways of celebrating their success in helping pupils to overcome challenges.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Excellent relationships underpin the positive climate for learning. Teachers are skilled in managing behaviour and motivating pupils to try hard. For their part, pupils are lively, enthusiastic learners. Discussing their favourite pieces of work, one commented, 'I like it because I used similes and metaphors'. Another said, 'I like maths problems because they allow me to use different strategies'.
- The school's context is at the forefront of curriculum planning. Many pupils have limited experiences outside their immediate neighbourhood, so there is an emphasis on devising activities that stimulate their interest in the wider world. Comprehensive reviews of each subject have resulted in clear guidance for teachers about progress in knowledge and skills. This work is ongoing, but the impact on accelerating pupils' progress through each year is already evident during lessons and from their workbooks.

- Assessment systems are well established and highly efficient. They enable teachers to refine planning daily and group pupils flexibly. Teaching assistants, for example, support targeted groups by 'pre-teaching' to enable all pupils to participate fully in subsequent lessons.
- Phonics teaching in the younger classes is well structured and the development of reading skills is carefully monitored. The use of rich, challenging texts across the school is paying dividends. Older pupils said reading widely helps them to develop rich vocabulary and improves their spelling and grammar. They discussed the impact of reading on their writing and proudly showed reviewers extracts from their current work. These included, 'The rain came down like a battering ram on a metal door', and, 'As the darkness falls on them, they realise they are far from safety...'
- In the most successful lessons, teachers' subject knowledge shines through. They skilfully target questions to draw out pupils' existing knowledge and deepen their understanding. During a mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher skilfully promoted pupils' understanding of functions and operations.
- As children enter Reception, their language and number skills are low. As a result of highly effective provision, underpinned by adults' understanding of how young children learn, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception is broadly in line with the national average. A legacy of staff changes, long-term absences and some weak teaching, meant that pupils did not always build well on this promising start. Attainment by Year 6 last year fell to below the national average at the expected standard across the board. Pupils are now progressing well in lessons and their workbooks indicate that standards are rising. There remains a lot of catching up to do, but better progress is being made through each year group. Current pupils in Year 6 are on track to reach standards that more closely match recent national averages.
- Pupils' mathematics workbooks showed a clear progression in learning across the school and demonstrated increasing fluency in number. This was evident, for example, as pupils in Year 3 used their instant recall of number facts when tackling problems involving multiplication.
- The quality of work across the curriculum is improving. This is evident, for example, in pupils' work on historical sources in Years 2 and 5. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are making good headway in scientific enquiry. Pupils are enjoying using roll-up keyboards, samba drums and steel pans, which are contributing to their musical skills. Pupils' skills in art are developing well. They said they enjoy art, especially when linked with English, as it 'makes the subject come alive'.

3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes - Even better if...

- ...the more able pupils were more frequently challenged.
- ...lessons were routinely structured to achieve an effective balance between teachers' introductions and pupils' learning actively.

...pupils' achievement in the foundation subjects were captured to enable the impact of the provision to be evaluated.

4.1 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well

- There is a sense of collective understanding among staff of the varying needs of pupils and how they all share the responsibility for ensuring pupils do as well as they can. The deputy head and special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) work in close partnership to ensure all pupils who need additional support are identified. Each pupil has a personal learning plan which indicates small-step targets. Progress towards these targets is closely monitored and the impact of support strategies is evaluated to identify what has the most impact. Every morning the SENCO touches base with teachers to check on how things are going and to make any necessary adjustment. Parents appreciate the support provided and staff maintain close links with them.
- Teaching assistants are skilful and establish warm relationships with pupils. They work mostly within classrooms to enable all pupils to learn together. When appropriate, they modify or scaffold tasks so that pupils make similar progress to their classmates. When most pupils were finding multiples of large numbers, for example, an assistant worked with four pupils on a similar but slightly simpler task.
- The school's extensive programme of enrichment activities has a significant impact on the engagement and self-esteem of these groups of pupils. They have the same positive attitudes to learning and behave just as well as other pupils.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils differs little from that of other pupils and they frequently outperform their peers. Some are among the most able. For example, after reading *Rose Blanch* by Innoceni and Gallaz, one wrote, 'The guilt will engulf you and haunt you for all eternity with being culpable for the deaths of enslaved foreigners'.

4.2 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if...

...there were more consistency in the support provided during lessons for different groups of pupils.

5. Area of Excellence

None submitted.



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6. What additional support would the school like from the Challenge Partners network, either locally or nationally?

Leaders would like to explore ways of enhancing the strategic role of middle leaders.

This review will support the school's continuing improvement. The main findings will be shared within the school's hub in order that it can inform future activities.