

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Lawton Avenue, Carterton, OX18 3JY

Inspection dates 4–5 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress in their learning in reading, writing and mathematics and their achievement is good.
- Teaching is good in all year groups and occasionally outstanding. There are good relationships between adults and pupils, and teachers make learning challenging and exciting.
- Children benefit from a good start to their education and personal development in the Reception class.
- Pupils' behaviour in and out of school is good and sometimes excellent. They have confident attitudes to their learning, and they and their parents and carers report virtually no bullying in school.
- Pupils are well cared for and safe. They also are caring, lively and very proud of their school. Pupils new to the school are helped to settle very quickly.
- The school provides a good range of learning experiences for pupils, and older ones contribute well to the running of the school, through their perceptive lesson observations.
- The school is strongly led by a determined headteacher who is well supported by an ambitious team of leaders, staff and governors.
- The governing body has successfully led the school to academy status. Governors are active in promoting improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Not enough teaching is outstanding in order that all pupils are able to make outstanding progress.
- Teachers are inconsistent in encouraging pupils to take care and pride in the presentation of their work, especially their writing in all subjects.
- Teachers' questioning skills are variable, and sometimes opportunities are missed to encourage pupils to give extended answers about their learning. There is insufficient dialogue between pupils and teachers about pupils' learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons taught by five teachers, including two that were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, deputy headteacher, managers, four governors and the Principal of the Dominic Barberi multi-school Academy, to which the school belongs.
- The inspector observed the school's work. He examined the school's checks on how well it is doing, the school's improvement plans, safeguarding arrangements, health and safety records, school policies, a range of pupils' work and information about their progress.
- The inspector took account of 36 responses to the online survey (Parent View), and two letters from parents and carers.
- The inspector examined 11 questionnaire responses from members of staff.

Inspection team

Rodney Braithwaite, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school was granted academy status in April 2013. When its predecessor school, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- The proportion of pupils who come from a number of minority ethnic heritages is higher than average, the largest being Polish. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than average, a small number being at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is higher than average. This is additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and children of service families. Presently nearly a third of children are from service families.
- The proportion of pupils who join the school at other than the usual times is much higher than average.
- The school is organised into mixed-age classes. Children and pupils are arranged into classes and sets for Reception and Year 1, Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club. In addition there is a privately managed after-school club on the school site, which was not observed during the inspection.
- The school is a member of the Dominic Barberi multi-academy of seven Catholic schools in Oxfordshire. It is also a member of the Carterton cluster of local schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to move pupils' achievement to outstanding, ensure that there is more outstanding teaching by:
 - encouraging pupils to take more care and pride in the presentation of their work, so that they do not make careless mistakes, especially in their writing across all subjects
 - improving teachers' questioning skills so that pupils in all classes have more opportunities to gain confidence in developing their thinking skills and giving longer answers about their learning
 - using marking more effectively to establish a two-way dialogue with pupils about their learning and how they can improve.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children make good progress in Reception, especially in their communication and language skills, and personal and social skills. A significant proportion of children start school with low understanding of English, a few being at the early stages of learning the language.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in all year groups. School data, the work in pupils' books and observations of lessons during the inspection give firm evidence that most pupils make the progress expected of them and some make good progress. An increasing number are reaching standards above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- All groups of pupils make similar progress. This includes those from minority ethnic heritages in the school, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The significant proportion of pupils who enter the school at other than the usual times achieve particularly well because the school is quick to analyse their specific needs and introduce individual learning programmes for each pupil. In one year group, for example, only one pupil in the cohort had started the school in the Reception Year.
- Achievement, although good, is not yet outstanding because the full effect of newly introduced strategies for improving attainment in writing and mathematics has not yet been felt. Good teaching is not outstanding enough at present to enable many pupils to make exceptional progress.
- Pupils' progress has accelerated since the school became an academy. Pupils in Year 1 and 2, for example, were observed gaining rapid understanding in sorting, classifying and organising various objects, including sweets, into sets, which was challenging their thinking and numerical skills.
- The pupils who are supported through pupil premium funding reach levels very similar to those of other pupils in English and mathematics. There is little gap between their attainment and that of other pupils. A small number make progress better than other pupils. Their progress is a direct result of well-planned extra teaching, resources and support, often on a one-to-one basis.
- Pupils are keen readers and a number commented on how much they enjoy reading. Pupils in Year 6 are enthusiastic in following up their learning in class by reading authors they have been introduced to, such as Anthony Horowitz and JRR Tolkien, or topics in their learning such as The Trenches, World War II.
- Pupils are benefiting strongly from the school's consistent teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) in all year groups. A high number of pupils reached above average levels in the phonics screening check in Year 1 recently.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good and occasionally outstanding. The best teaching has high expectations and challenges pupils strongly to think for themselves, as well as developing their basic skills of language and numeracy.
- An example of this was observed in Year 5 when pupils were challenged to produce poems based upon dramatic images and use their knowledge of similes, metaphors and alliteration. Pupils also showed their increasing understanding of literacy when explaining that the word 'gritty' needed two 't's because 'it is a short vowel word'.
- Teaching is consistently good or better in the Reception class. In well-planned learning children were observed working in groups on writing simple sentences in a phonics lesson. Others were recognising and practising using words with 'th' and 'sh' sounds, while others were familiarising themselves with the names of letters of the alphabet.
- This intense and sometimes complicated organisation is present throughout the school, and

helps pupils to work frequently in small groups focusing on particular learning needs.

- Teachers work closely with well-qualified and effective teaching assistants in providing this wealth of learning intervention groups for a wide range of needs. Better learning programmes more suited to pupils' particular needs, and improved progress data, are resulting in realistic learning targets and success criteria in all years.
- These key teaching provisions by the school enable disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, pupils with English as an additional language and pupils new to the school to make progress similar to that of their peers.
- Teachers' questioning skills are variable, and sometimes do not encourage pupils to think enough about their learning, or they are only giving one word answers with little explanation of how they arrived at their conclusion.
- Marking is inconsistent. Some marking gives a balanced mix of praise and hints for improvement, although not all does. There is little evidence of pupils entering into discussion, verbally or in their books, with their teachers about their learning. Marking is sometimes insufficiently demanding with regard to pupils' presentation of work, and occasionally careless spelling and grammar when writing in subjects other than English is not corrected.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school, as school councillors explained, 'We want to represent the school, to see what happens in different classes and help.' Pupils in Year 6 commented, 'There is nothing negative in this school.'
- They talk enthusiastically about their learning like the creation of vinegar volcanoes in science, making wooden sculptures about the Industrial Revolution, and a residential adventure trip to Hill End.
- Behaviour in lessons is good with only rare lapses of concentration, usually if pupils do not understand their learning. The school has much evidence, including letters from members of the public, of pupils' excellent behaviour on trips or when swimming. Similarly behaviour at lunchtimes and on the spacious school field is lively but responsible.
- Pupils are especially proud of their recent lesson observations in all classes. Eleven pupils in small groups have watched lessons and then commented about their conclusions in assembly. Staff and pupils alike say that this has helped to improve both learning and behaviour.
- Pupils feel safe and act safely in school. This is confirmed by staff and parents and carers, one of whom commented, 'My children literally run to school every day, to a school where they feel safe and are happy to attend.'
- There are good relationships between pupils from a wide range of backgrounds. Older pupils explain how pupils who have English as an additional language learn English well because the school is so supportive.
- Pupils report little or no bullying of any kind in school, and older pupils especially have a good understanding of the dangers of the internet and mobile phones.
- There has been only one exclusion recently, and no reported racial incidents. Inclusion is promoted well, and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively, resulting in a happy and welcoming school environment.
- There are good links to external professionals and services which support the school in meeting the needs of pupils whose circumstances make them the most vulnerable.
- Attendance and punctuality have improved considerably this term and are now average. The school's promotion of zero-tolerance to frequent absence for reasons other than illness has been very effective.

The leadership and management are good

- The school is led decisively by a headteacher who is keenly aware of the challenges to learning for many pupils in the school. She leads a well-motivated team including a capable deputy headteacher and other leaders who share the same aspirations and ambitions for their pupils.
- The school has an accurate view of its work, and its improvement plans are showing considerable success in raising pupils' achievement and attendance, and improving teaching.
- Meeting the training needs of staff is a key part of the school's self-evaluation and planning for further improvement.
- Leadership is not outstanding however because leaders realise that there is still more to be done to raise the quality of teaching and correspondingly the achievement of pupils.
- Management is shared effectively across the school, so that, for example, the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has full autonomy and accountability in providing for the learning and personal and social needs of the children.
- Senior leaders and subject leaders all have regular opportunities to monitor their subjects throughout the school. This helps to drive the improvements seen recently in, for example, reading and mathematics. It also ensures that all teachers across the school provide equal opportunities for all pupils with no discrimination. This demonstrates the school's capacity to make further improvement
- School leaders are developing a wide range of learning opportunities across all subjects. This is a feature of pupils' musical and cultural education. This was seen during the inspection during the 'enrichment' afternoon, when pupils and children divided into family groups to enjoy and learn dance, various creative artistic activities and gardening, where Reception Year children were helped by older pupils from Year 5.
- These activities are typical and very positive in helping to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- The school is working increasingly closely with its academy organisation of schools, and is receiving constant support and guidance. The school works closely with the local Carterton schools cluster and also buys in expertise from external sources including the local authority.
- The school makes good provision for pupils who wish to use the well-managed daily breakfast club.
- A large majority of parents and carers are very appreciative of the school and its staff. One parent or carer commented, 'As a non-English speaker my child has been very well supported. I definitely recommend the school because parents are involved in many ways.'
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have worked diligently to ensure a smooth transition for the school to academy status. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Although several of its members are new, the Chair of the Governing Body is ensuring that all are sharing the considerable responsibilities of continuing improvement and development of the school. Governors are taking many training opportunities so that they can play their part fully in school self-evaluation and analysis of performance data. Governors carefully monitor the spending of the pupil premium, always concentrating on pupils' outcomes. They have a good knowledge of teaching quality in the school, and of the school's performance when compared to schools nationally. They are now beginning to relate this to the position of staff on pay scales. The governors ensure that safeguarding through the school's good practice meets national requirements.

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

Unique reference number	139532
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	422157

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pauline McCormack-White
Headteacher	Breda Bowles
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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