

John Henry Newman Academy

Grange Road, Littlemore, Oxford OX4 4LS

Inspection dates

7–8 June 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Until recently, leaders had not driven necessary improvements fast enough. The government's floor standards (minimum expectations for reading, writing and mathematics) have not been met for the last two years and, although attainment is improving, are unlikely to be met again this year.
- Teaching is not yet good. Although improvements have been made in some classes, there continue to be weaknesses in some classes and some subjects.
- Teaching of mathematics is not as good as it needs to be. Some teachers' mathematics subject knowledge is not strong enough.
- In writing, pupils do not have enough opportunities to write longer pieces of work and do not build up stamina over time.
- Middle leaders have not been held fully to account for improving learning in their areas of responsibility. This has begun to improve but is in the early stages.
- Recent changes have ensured governors now know their roles and priorities, but these changes have only just begun to bring about improvements.
- Progress is accelerating in some classes and year groups, but not enough pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 are working at the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not always use the information they have on pupils' learning to plan activities and tasks that build on what pupils already know and meet their differing needs. This is particularly the case with the most able pupils.
- Teachers do not always identify and act quickly when pupils have misconceptions in their learning; this is especially the case in mathematics.
- Very few pupils reach the higher levels because the work provided for the most able pupils is not challenging enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils are taught about British values and demonstrate tolerance and respect for others.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good; this is helping them make better progress in lessons.
- Pupils feel safe and cared for, reflecting how seriously the school takes pupils' welfare.
- Children in the early years achieve well because of good teaching and the happy and stimulating environment. This provides them with a good start to their education.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - further embedding recently introduced leadership strategies so improvements continue
 - holding middle leaders more fully to account for improving learning in their areas of responsibility
 - making sure the newly formed governing body continue to use their skills and understanding to hold leaders to account for school improvement.

- Improve teaching in key stage 2 so it is good or better by:
 - ensuring that teachers consistently make the best use of information about pupils' performance to plan learning and activities that build on what pupils already know
 - making sure that pupils' misunderstandings are recognised and addressed, especially in mathematics
 - providing effective challenge for the most able pupils so that activities enable them to extend their learning and thinking
 - making sure pupils have opportunities to write longer pieces and build up the necessary stamina for writing
 - making sure all teachers have sufficient mathematical subject knowledge to teach place value and problem solving effectively.

- Increase progress and attainment in key stage 2 so that:
 - more pupils are working at the expected level for their age in reading, writing and mathematics
 - pupils who need to catch up make accelerated progress to do so
 - the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels is in line with or above other schools nationally.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, leaders have not driven improvements in all areas as quickly as they needed to. As a result, Year 6 pupil outcomes will be too low again this year. Significant improvements have been made to behaviour management, but until recently the same focus was not consistently applied to teaching and outcomes. With the support of the executive headteacher, leaders have now introduced effective leadership strategies to increase the pace of change, but there is more to do.
- The principal and other leaders are committed to improving the school, now rightfully focusing on developing teaching and improving outcomes. The school's vision of 'love, courage, community, celebration' is embedded within the school community and all staff are committed to doing their best for the pupils. However, in the past there was not a sharp enough focus on checking pupils' achievement so weaknesses were not identified and tackled as quickly as they needed to be. This, together with less effective monitoring of teaching, led to a legacy of underachievement.
- Senior leaders now check teaching and accurately identify exactly what teachers need to do to improve learning. They provide written feedback so that teachers are clear about their priorities for development. As a result, teaching has improved in many classes but there continue to be weaknesses in key stage 2. Middle leaders have received training from the academy trust to enable them to become more accountable. Recent work to support teaching is positive but this is in the early stages and has not yet resulted in the necessary accelerated progress for pupils who have fallen behind. The school recognises the importance of ongoing training for its middle leaders so they can continue to help improve teaching in their area of responsibility.
- Useful targets linked to pupils' progress and attainment are now in place. As a result, teachers and leaders are beginning to be held more fully to account for school improvement.
- New assessment systems enable teachers to set individual targets for pupils' achievement. Leaders and teachers meet to discuss how well pupils are getting on and what need to be the next steps for pupils' learning. In the past these meetings were not sharply focused on individual pupils' progress so that some pupils did not catch up to where they needed to be. Now leaders' and teachers' meetings are more timely and increasingly focused on pupils' progress. Consequently, more pupils are now catching up to the expected standard.
- Opportunities for personal development and the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development form a strong part of the school's curriculum. Opportunities to learn about and discuss these areas are the focus for assemblies and worship. For example, pupils were discussing the moral stance that Muhammad Ali took when he refused to fight in the Vietnam War. The curriculum is appropriately enhanced with events such as World Book Day and Black History Month. These help pupils develop respect for others and encourage them to think for themselves. British values are appropriately explored through special events and ongoing programmes, such as the school's 'Values versus Violence'. Such programmes, in which every child participates, encourage pupils to consider and make the right choices in their everyday lives.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to participate in sport, both in and out of the school day. The school offers a number of extra-curricular clubs, including basketball, football and cheerleading. Leaders use sports funding effectively to provide greater opportunities for pupils to participate in sport, while developing teachers' expertise.
- The academy trust has provided good-quality support for the principal, who has benefited from working alongside the executive headteacher. Middle leaders are receiving useful support so they are beginning to fulfil their roles more effectively. Governor training is helping the governing body to hold leaders fully to account for school improvement.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body has very recently been reorganised, with half the governors new to post, including the new chair of governors. All governors now have a good understanding of the strengths of the school, how well pupils are doing and what needs to improve. However, because the governing body is so new, there is little evidence of its impact on school improvement so far. The academy trust's detailed plan for training and developing governors is positive, but is in the early stages.
 - As a result of support from the academy trust, procedures for staff appraisal are now detailed and effective. There is a clear link between teachers' performance and salary. Additional funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well targeted; it is currently helping to improve attendance and support families, and ensures that these pupils now do as well as all other pupils in the school.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are extremely effective. The school takes safeguarding very seriously. All staff receive regular and timely training in child protection and safeguarding. Recording and monitoring of safeguarding issues and concerns are meticulous. Leaders and governors regularly monitor processes to ensure they are effective. Policies and procedures are carefully reviewed and safer recruitment procedures are robust, so that staff are properly vetted.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- Teaching over time has not been good enough. As a result some pupils do not have the basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics and are below the standards expected for their age.
- In key stage 2 teaching is variable across classes and year groups. Some pupils do not achieve well enough and this inconsistency in teaching has led to pupils not making the required progress.
- In early years and key stage 1, teaching is stronger. Teachers build systematically on previous learning of basic skills so that pupils make better progress and achieve standards expected for their age. They are now trying to develop more opportunities to challenge the most able pupils so that they can reach higher standards and make even more progress.
- Teachers' planning of lessons and activities does not always build on what pupils already know. This means that sometimes the work is too easy or too hard and pupils do not then make progress in their learning. Tasks and activities are sometimes not closely matched to the ability of the pupils so that progress slows.
- Some aspects of mathematics teaching in key stage 2 need to improve. Teachers' subject knowledge is not as strong as it needs to be in a few areas, such as place value and problem solving. In key stage 1 and the early years, teachers focus well on developing basic skills.
- The teaching of writing is variable. Most teachers focus on developing pupils' vocabulary. They model vocabulary choices and pupils follow their example by being more creative in their writing. This is helping pupils when writing in other subjects, such as science or topic, where some of the vocabulary is less familiar. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length. As a result, they do not develop stamina for writing as they move through the school.
- The teaching of reading is improving throughout the school. Pupils are using their phonics skills (sounding out letters and sounds) effectively to help them read new unfamiliar words. The new whole-school approach provides opportunities for pupils to read in school every day, to read at home every night and to be rewarded for doing so. As a result, pupils' attitudes to reading are positive and their progress is improving, with some pupils having caught up to where they should be within the last year. In key stage 1 allowing parents to come in and read with their child for 15 minutes every day before they go home is another way that reading is being developed effectively.
- In all subjects and across the school, challenge for the most able pupils does not enable them to explore their understanding and deepen their thinking. This is particularly the case with mathematics, where pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop reasoning skills.
- Since September 2015 the school has adopted a new system for recording and checking how well pupils are doing in reading, writing and mathematics. This allows teachers to identify gaps in pupils' learning. Training on how and what to assess has enabled teachers to have a clearer understanding of what pupils know and what they need to do next. Targets for progress are now shared with pupils and reinforced through comments in their workbooks.
- Marking is beginning to help pupils to improve their learning. Most pupils now know what it is they have to do in order to make their work better. Pupils are developing the way they respond to this advice by writing a follow-up comment.
- In some lessons, teachers do not correct pupils' misunderstandings quickly enough, resulting in the same mistakes recurring. This prevents pupils from making progress and causes confusion when they try to apply their understanding. This is particularly the case in mathematics, for example, where the work in books shows pupils repeatedly making the same mistakes when adding fractions.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support during lessons, offering the right balance between questioning and providing answers when working with pupils who need extra help.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They have good attitudes to learning and enjoy taking an active part in lessons, particularly when teachers encourage them to discuss their ideas. As a result, the progress they make in their learning is increasing. This is supported by improving attendance, which is now close to the national figure.
- Improving handwriting and presentation, as seen in pupils' books, shows that they care about their work and want to do their best.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunities that the school offers. They particularly like visiting a local secondary school where they can participate in a number of different sports, such as swimming and tennis.
- They enjoy their role as school councillors and class mentors and are eager to take on more roles of responsibility. These opportunities contribute well to pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying and they say that instances are rare. If it does happen, pupils say that adults at the school deal with it quickly and effectively. The majority of parents agree and there were a significant number who had no experience of bullying whatsoever.
- Pupils told inspectors they feel safe at school because, as one child explained, 'our teachers and helpers care for us'. Pupils have a developing understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet and know how to keep themselves healthy through a good diet and regular exercise.
- Pupils' welfare is given a high priority. Each pupil is encouraged to discuss any concerns they might have and has a specific member of staff that they know can help them.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is now good and has improved significantly since the previous inspection, with fewer fixed-term exclusions and recorded instances of unacceptable behaviour reduced by three quarters.
- Pupils now understand the importance of good behaviour. They have a clear understanding of how the school's behaviour policy works and appreciate that good behaviour is rewarded. Pupils' good behaviour contributes to the calm atmosphere that now exists around the school. Pupils are orderly when moving around the school; they are polite, inquisitive and eager to talk about their school.
- Pupils say that behaviour in class and on the playground has improved and the majority of parents agree. Some pupils at the school sometimes show challenging behaviour, but pupils say that this is well managed by staff so that it does not interfere with their learning.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- In 2015, the school failed to meet the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Attainment of the current Year 6 pupils is below the national expectation; however, a large majority have made accelerated progress over the last year. Work in books shows the significant improvements many pupils have made this year. However, even this amount of progress has not enabled them to achieve standards expected for their age.
- Other pupils in key stage 2 are not working at the expected standard and need to make accelerated progress to catch up. In key stage 1 achievement is better. Currently, most pupils make expected or more than expected progress and are working at least at the expected standard.
- Outcomes are improving overall in reading, writing and mathematics but there are too many pupils in the school who are not yet achieving the necessary standards for their age.
- By the end of Year 2 pupils achieve the same in reading, writing and mathematics as other schools nationally. They make better progress and achieve standards appropriate to their age. Many make good progress in their writing, where their wider use of vocabulary is evident, as is their use of a developing range of punctuation. In number there is a focus on the basic skills associated with number, such as addition, subtraction and counting in tens. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop reasoning skills through more challenging problem solving and this is an area for development.
- A number of pupils in key stage 2 do not achieve the standards expected for their age and have fallen behind. Recently some have begun to make accelerated progress but this is not consistent across classes or year groups. As a result pupils who are not at the expected standard are not catching up quickly enough.

- Younger pupils build on the good start they receive in early years to good effect. They benefit from the well-structured provision for learning their letters and sounds. In 2015 the proportion of pupils who met the expected level in the phonics screening check was equal to the national figure.
- The most able pupils are not reaching the standards of which they are capable. There are not enough opportunities to challenge pupils' thinking and develop depth in their understanding. As a result, too few pupils reach the highest levels by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disability are now making similar progress to all other pupils due to improved provision and a number of new initiatives enabling them to be supported more effectively and catch up if they are falling behind.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making accelerated progress overall in reading, writing and mathematics. They are now reaching standards that are similar to those achieved nationally.

Early years provision

is good

- The provision in the Nursery and Reception classes has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. This positive beginning ensures that children make a good start when they join the school.
- Good leadership in both settings, supported by good teaching and based on a sound knowledge of how children learn best at this young age, ensures that children make good progress and achieve well.
- Procedures for settling children in are well developed and appreciated by parents. One said, 'my son just loves coming in; the staff are excellent, so caring, they know everything about him'. As a result, children settle in quickly, are able to make friends and develop self-confidence.
- From starting points that are typically well below what would be expected, children make very good progress within both settings. This has resulted in improved outcomes for pupils at the end of the Reception Year. The proportion of children now achieving a good level of development is well above the national average, so that most children are ready for the challenges of Year 1.
- Nursery and Reception staff have a good understanding of the importance of developing early language and communication skills with the children and take every opportunity to do so. They skilfully provide tasks and opportunities that enable pupils to develop their vocabulary and improve their language skills. An example of this was when children were able to handle the pet rabbit and were asked how it felt. Once they had come up with appropriate vocabulary such as 'fluffy', 'warm' and 'wriggly', they were challenged to put the words into a sentence. 'Our rabbit feels fluffy and warm and lives in our class', was the response from one child.
- Short, focused phonics sessions are effective in developing reading skills and promoting good attitudes. The opportunities for children to develop their writing skills are plentiful, giving children the confidence to 'have a go' and develop their writing.
- Teachers provide children with a wide range of interesting and fun activities. These capture children's interests and help develop good attitudes to learning. Staff in both settings work together, sharing expertise and knowledge, so that the transition from one setting to another is easy for children to undertake. Both Nursery and Reception classes have good routines, high expectations and a consistent approach to managing behaviour.
- Children have good opportunities to develop early number skills, ranging from forming numbers with their fingers in foam, to able pupils grouping animals into sets of three and then finding a total.
- Assessment is used effectively to make sure that tasks and activities are well matched to the children's needs. Extra help is given to those who need it and the settings provide good opportunities to develop the learning of higher-achieving children.
- Parents are encouraged to support and help their child's learning. They are given opportunities to visit early years and see what their children are learning.
- While the Reception outside area is large and well resourced, leaders recognise that its use requires further development, so that the high-quality activities that children undertake in the classrooms are replicated outside. This will help to further develop children's opportunities to learn through play.
- Staff identify exactly what helps each child to learn. They provide effective support and build up their confidence, so that all are able to learn and make progress. As a result, the gap in attainment between disadvantaged children and other children is narrowing. The settings work effectively with outside agencies to ensure that, if a child finds it hard to learn, they have the necessary support.
- Staff are suitably qualified and experienced, ensuring that all welfare requirements are met effectively and that children are safe, happy and well cared for.

School details

Unique reference number	138774
Local authority	Oxford
Inspection number	10012338

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	School sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	374
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kathryn Byron
Principal	Jackie Ranger
Telephone number	01865 772 495
Website	www.jhnacademy.co.uk
Email address	principal.2000@jhnacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 June 2014

Information about this school

- John Henry Newman Academy is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- It is a sponsored school, which is part of the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST).
- An executive headteacher joined the school in January 2015 and now supports the school two days a week.
- Most pupils are of a White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is close to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority), and pupils who have special educational needs or disability is well above the national average.
- The school did not meet the government floor standards in 2015, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school has a 39-place Nursery.
- The school runs a breakfast club each morning and an after-school club each evening.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons across the school, including nine joint lesson observations with senior leaders.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, members of staff, pupils, parents, members of the local governing body and representatives of the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST).
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour, school improvement planning, assessment information, monitoring of teaching, minutes of the governing body and school trust reports and school policies.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally during the day and observed them during playtime, lunchtime and at breakfast club.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read from Year 2 and Year 6 and met formally with a group of pupils to discuss their learning, behaviour and safety. They looked at pupils' books, displays of pupils' work and the school's assessments of the progress made by pupils.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through meeting a group of parents, together with 19 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View.

Inspection team

Bill James, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Alan Jenner	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Cale	Ofsted Inspector

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