

# Catherine Junior School

Brandon Street, Leicester, Leicestershire LE4 6AZ

## Inspection dates

7–8 March 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The ambition and determination of the headteacher are tangible in her pursuit of excellence.
- The headteacher has successfully used the different talents of staff to build a highly effective leadership team, which has secured the commitment of all staff, to equip pupils with the skills to succeed. This has helped to secure rapid and continuous improvement across the school.
- Governors have a clear and detailed knowledge of the school and community. They use their range of skills effectively to challenge leaders, and contribute to the continual drive to improve.
- The local authority has been highly effective in providing tailored support, particularly in terms of recruitment, and in guidance for effective training and collaboration.
- Leaders have rigorously ensured that teaching is at least good across the school. There are examples of highly effective practice which are used astutely to raise standards.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points, with them making particularly strong progress in writing and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make the same good progress as others.
- Pupils are impeccably behaved at all times. They show pride in doing their best, Pupils care for each other and their respect for each other's cultures and beliefs is exemplary.
- Pupils are keen to learn because the school's curriculum is based around topics that they find interesting and relevant.
- Pupils said that they feel safe and cared for well. They trust adults to listen and support them. They solve minor problems for themselves.
- Parents and carers also believe that their children are cared for well.
- Leaders have not secured as consistently strong progress for pupils in reading as they have in writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not all have equally deep subject knowledge to enable them to adjust their teaching to swiftly move on pupils' learning.
- Leaders' recent improvements to the way in which pupils' progress is tracked are not fully embedded.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that teachers develop pupils' written comprehension skills better.
- Enable more teachers to adopt the best practice evident in the school in adapting the tasks they set in lessons to enable pupils to make the strongest progress.
- Ensure that leaders further refine their analysis of assessment information to sustain and build on the significant improvements to teaching and pupils' outcomes.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- The headteacher is unwavering in her determination to secure the best for every pupil. She has a deep understanding of effective teaching, the staff and the community. She has tenaciously sought out effective solutions to shape the root-and-branch change that has transformed the school to a point where it now shows many examples of excellence. She has used her clarity of vision and ambition to intelligently combine proven approaches and resources in a way that works for the pupils.
- The headteacher's strong partnership with the highly effective acting deputy headteacher has been fundamental to the effective implementation of rapid and sustainable improvement. The acting deputy headteacher has considerable skills and expertise in effective support for vulnerable pupils. Both lead by example and have proven the school's motto: 'Together, we can do it.'
- The headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have used extremely well the effective guidance from the local authority and local schools, as well as other sources of high-quality training. They have made particularly effective use of the expertise of the best internal staff, to build leaders' confidence and skills. Consequently, in a short time, the headteacher has built a highly effective senior and middle leadership team.
- Leaders frequently check on how well teachers are promoting and assessing pupils' learning. This information is then quickly used to give teachers precise feedback, and to provide the focus for personal and whole-school training. This has secured rapid improvements in teaching, especially in literacy and mathematics. Leaders are particularly strong exemplars of effective teaching.
- Leaders have a detailed understanding of the abilities of staff and have made careful decisions about their deployment during ongoing change. They have used this knowledge to make sure that new staff, especially newly qualified teachers, receive a thorough induction and tailored support from their most highly skilled colleagues. This ensures that teaching is consistently good or better, and is contributing effectively to the good or better outcomes for current pupils.
- The high quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is clearly evident in pupils' keenness to improve their work and the exemplary way in which pupils support and care for each other. All staff are extremely effective in modelling and promoting high expectations and aspirations for every pupil. The central tenets of the 'Catherine Code', including being resilient, collaborative, motivated and thoughtful, have generated a culture of shared endeavour between pupils and staff.
- The promotion of fundamental British values is also woven through school life. Pupils are very well prepared to be confident, active citizens. Pupils have a deep respect for the diversity of beliefs and cultures within and beyond their school. Pupils were heartfelt in telling an inspector that 'we are all equal but different'. Pupils take on roles across the school with confidence and pride, such as reading champions, play buddies and pupil leaders. Leaders are rightly committed to ensuring that pupils have accurate information and can explore controversial issues with their trusted teachers.
- The overall curriculum is carefully planned to engage, enthuse and prepare pupils to

progress confidently to secondary school. School leaders put the importance of communication and looking outwards at the heart of learning. Pupils enjoy a range of interesting visits and visitors to support and extend their learning. During the inspection, an artist was working with Year 5 pupils. They designed sculptures for the school grounds, to remind future pupils to do what they could to battle global plastic pollution.

- School leaders are encouraging parents' and carers' participation in their child's education by offering a wide range of helpful and accessible information. There is frequent communication about how their child is doing, invitations to events to share learning and regular opportunities to use the welcoming new library with their children. Parents of older pupils in particular commented upon the school's significant improvement in recent years.
- Leaders use the additional pupil premium funding highly effectively. Although the main priority is to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, the school recognises that pupils' well-being is the essential platform for their achievement. The school has invested heavily in creating a responsive and skilled team, which quickly and successfully supports pupils to get back on track. Teaching assistants are well trained to provide effective support for vulnerable pupils. Leaders also ensure that these pupils have every chance to participate and be successful in all aspects of timetabled and extra-curricular activities. Leaders also ensure that additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is used well.
- Leaders use the physical education and sport funding to very good effect. They ensured that teachers worked alongside expert coaches and received effective training to improve their teaching and coaching skills. Pupils take part in a wide range of sports, including successfully competing in various tournaments. The specialist sports staff provide further positive role models for healthy choices around the school, as well as varying the range of regular sports.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors share and contribute effectively to leaders' determination that the school will continue to improve.
- Governors have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, particularly the relentless drive to improve the quality of teaching and progress for all pupils. Minutes of governing body meetings and governors' reports illustrate their ability to ask school leaders searching and challenging questions.
- The governing body is well organised and uses effectively governors' skills and expertise to add value to overall leadership. The governors assiduously test out and scrutinise the wide range of information that they receive. This allows them to hold school leaders effectively to account to improve outcomes for all pupils.
- Governors have a thorough understanding of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding, and the use and impact of the pupil premium and physical education and sport funding.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There are clear procedures for

reporting concerns, which are understood by all staff. Staff and governors receive relevant training and updates, including on radicalisation and extremism. They all contribute to a culture of vigilance, as pupils' well-being is central to everything they do. Staff who provide welcoming before- and after-school care have the same diligence in ensuring that pupils are safe and looked after well.

- Governors and the local authority are diligent in checking that procedures are appropriate, including the rigorous vetting of staff suitability before appointment.
- Leaders keep clear and secure records to ensure effective and timely work with external agencies. They are tenacious in following up concerns, to ensure that children and families have support when needed.
- The culture of safeguarding in the school was evident when pupils told inspectors that they were listened to and felt safe. Teaching pupils how to keep safe is woven into their learning across the curriculum. They told inspectors about important school safety procedures which they practice, such as 'in vacuation', to help protect them in school.
- Parents who spoke with inspectors and responded to questionnaires are overwhelmingly confident that their children are safe, happy and looked after well. They also appreciate workshops and information provided by the school, to help them keep their children safe, including online.
- Case studies and records show leaders prioritise effectively the importance of the early identification and removal of barriers for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Governors and school leaders have invested in a range of provision, including a learning mentor, counsellor and attendance officer. A pupil told an inspector that the help he has received has made him 'feel strong in my heart'. Leaders are quick to follow up on any concerns and to then put in place appropriate support. Detailed records show that timely support contributes well to the at least good progress for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Leaders' robust and focused drive for excellence has been effective in the significant improvements to teaching and learning.
- Teachers use well the school's assessment and tracking systems to inform their planning. As a result, all pupils are progressively taught the reading, writing and mathematics skills appropriate for their age. However, not all teachers have sufficiently deep subject knowledge to adapt their teaching to pupils' different needs within lessons.
- The teaching of reading is effective. Teachers' use of effective questioning consistently extends pupils' language skills and understanding. The school's project-based curriculum framework consistently uses high-quality books containing aptly challenging texts to stimulate learning. For example, older pupils were gripped by their memorable study of 'Macbeth'. Through discussion, pupils improve their responses to more probing questions. However, despite pupils reading widely, teachers have not fully effectively promoted pupils' understanding of the meaning of what they read.
- Writing is taught effectively across the school. Teachers make strong connections between reading and creative writing, which add to pupils' enjoyment of writing and the

quality of their work. The school's chosen approach, to 'imitate, innovate and invent', is consistently implemented. Pupils are keen to write and adeptly identify the improvements they make in their work. Teachers promote well the accuracy of pupils' spelling and have high expectations of pupils' correct use of grammar and punctuation in all their written work. Some teachers skilfully draw on their deep subject knowledge and detailed assessment of pupils' attainment to help them successfully improve their writing.

- High-quality training and investment in effective resources have improved the quality of teaching in mathematics. Teachers make good use of resources and effective questioning to help pupils master place value, fractions and algebra. Teachers often pose questions to identify appropriately whether pupils are confident or not in, for example, their understanding of mathematical concepts. This helps teachers either to move learning on for pupils who are secure in their knowledge or to provide further explanation for those who need it.
- Teachers effectively plan teaching assistants' work. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils receive support which successfully promotes their good academic and personal progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils told inspectors that their school is a 'supportive, friendly place to be'. They explained that the 'Catherine Code' is important because 'if you follow the rules, you feel positive and proud'. In an assembly, pupils were maturely considering the resilience needed to take on a new challenge. They explored the idea of 'setbacks' and 'not giving up', in relation to Year 4's 'first steps' in learning to play a brass instrument. They were inspired by the acting deputy headteacher's forthcoming personal challenge, to climb Mount Kilimanjaro.
- The school places particular importance on giving pupils the confidence to have a say in their own learning. Pupils were observed confidently using red, yellow and green cups, as a means of signalling to teachers their level of confidence or need for support. Pupils responsibly encourage and support each other's learning. For example, one of the reading champions explained how he organised a rota to ensure that everyone knew what they were meant to do.
- Pupils work well together across the school, listening respectfully to teachers and each other. Pupils consistently take pride in their work and celebrate their own and each other's successes. This is visible in displays, through assemblies, in books and within the classroom.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and feel very safe in school. They know who to speak within school if they have any worries. Pupils said that bullying is rare, but were clear on what to do if it did occur.
- Parents who spoke with inspectors and responded to Parent View, and/or to school questionnaires, were highly positive about the support that their children receive. They are understandably confident that their children are happy and safe.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are very courteous and considerate towards each other and adults, including visitors in the school.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. In a discussion with an inspector, they told her that their teachers motivate them. They explained that they learn by their mistakes because, 'we don't have to hide when we get things wrong. We show our teacher and get things right.' Pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is impeccable.
- Pupils enjoy receiving rewards and celebrating achievement. Attractively presented displays reinforce and illustrate the pride and care continually shown by pupils.
- Pupils take full responsibility for their actions and choices, due to the ingrained ethos of respect and active citizenship. Pupil leaders, carrying out their duties as lunchtime buddies and anti-bullying ambassadors, showed they had been carefully taught how to approach and talk to their peers. School sanctions, where required, are considered fair and are well understood.
- Attendance has improved to be currently in line with the national average. The number of pupils achieving 100% attendance has risen sharply, as leaders successfully enthuse pupils to be in school and to value the importance of good attendance in helping them to do well academically. Persistent absence has fallen. Leaders are mindful of balancing a respect for the customs that are important to the local community with stringent action to establish the importance of school attendance.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Good

- In all year groups, pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are now improving, some rapidly. School leaders are relentless in their determination that pupils are equipped with skills to prepare them well for a successful transfer between year groups and to secondary school.
- Highly effective teaching in upper key stage 2 led to Year 6 pupils' strong progress in 2016 and 2017 in writing and mathematics. This was a significant improvement from 2015, when the school's outcomes were below the government's floor standards.
- Year 6 pupils' outcomes in reading have improved considerably since 2015, and in 2017 progress for all groups was in line with national average. However, leaders have not been as successful in accelerating progress in reading. From low prior attainment at the end of key stage 1, particularly that of boys, they made expected progress, but no better.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in their books and in lessons. Work in pupils' books shows that they are currently making strong progress in writing, including their use of accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling. Pupils' progress in mathematics, across all year groups, is also consistently strong. The most able pupils make particularly strong progress in deepening and applying their mathematical understanding in upper key stage 2.
- Inspectors heard pupils read from across all year groups. Pupils had a consistently

positive attitude to reading. Actions to improve fluency in reading and to extend pupils' range of vocabulary were clearly having a positive impact on their ability to read with confidence, intonation and understanding. This was consistent with pupils' willingness to read from their work within classrooms.

- There are shortcomings in pupils' ability to write in response to more complex questions about texts they read, for example to infer meaning and an author's choice of language.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding in other subjects demonstrates good teaching throughout the curriculum. Interesting and thought-provoking questions stimulate pupils' curiosity. Pupils' awareness of local history and geography is a strong feature. For instance, pupils relished the opportunity to ask questions of the curator at the Richard III visitor centre. Pupils' presentation in topic books shows equally high expectations and opportunities to apply their writing and mathematics skills.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities make at least good progress. There is a significant proportion of pupils in each year group who are new to English. However, the majority of these pupils rapidly gain language skills to tackle learning. Effective pre-teaching and language support is in place in classrooms to support these pupils' continued good progress.

## School details

Unique reference number	120003
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10041557

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

Type of school	Junior deemed primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	511
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kaushik Parekh
Headteacher	Jennie Nurse
Telephone number	01162 625896
Website	<a href="http://www.catherine-jun.leicester.sch.uk">www.catherine-jun.leicester.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@catherine-jun.leicester.sch.uk">office@catherine-jun.leicester.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	8–9 March 2016

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced significant staff changes, including changes to leadership and management roles. The headteacher has been formally in post since January 2018, having been promoted from deputy headteacher to acting headteacher in December 2016.
- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, the largest group being of Indian origin.
- A large majority of pupils speak English as an additional language. A relatively large group of pupils join the school with little or no English.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average.
- In 2017, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the

minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club, which are both managed by the governing body.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 25 lessons. Some of these lessons were visited jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed an assembly.
- Inspectors and senior leaders looked at samples of pupils' work covering a range of subjects, abilities and year groups.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils and spoke informally with pupils during lessons, lunchtimes and breaktimes. Inspectors also heard some pupils read.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils at playtime and lunchtime and as pupils moved around the school.
- Inspectors held a number of meetings with the headteacher, acting deputy headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders, and newly and recently qualified teachers.
- The lead inspector met with eight members of the governing body, including the chair. The lead inspector also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day. They also considered the 36 responses from Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including responses made through the free-text service. Inspectors also considered responses to a recent parent questionnaire undertaken by the school.
- Inspectors considered the 33 responses from the pupil survey and the 35 responses from the staff survey.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation, including the school improvement plan and the self-evaluation summary, safeguarding procedures and records, and minutes of meetings of the governing body. Inspectors examined the school's website and checked on the publication of specified information. They also considered the school's current information on pupils' progress and achievement, attendance records, behaviour logs and external reports on the work of the school.

## Inspection team

Mandy Wilding, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Dale	Ofsted Inspector
Dorothy Stenson	Ofsted Inspector

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