

# St John Fisher Catholic Primary School, Littlemore

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123217
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	359396
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Edwards

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	239
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Father John Hancock
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Hussey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 November 2007
<b>School address</b>	Sandy Lane West Littlemore Oxford OX4 6LD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01865 779676
<b>Fax number</b>	01865 716558
<b>Email address</b>	headteacher.3839@ocnmail.net

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors saw seven teaching staff while visiting twelve lessons or parts of lessons. Meetings were held with governors, senior leaders, teaching staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including the school's self-evaluation, assessment and tracking information, minutes of governing body meetings, arrangements for safeguarding and pupils' work. Staff and pupil questionnaires were also scrutinised along with 91 completed by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- It looked at the progress made by pupils in mathematics, particularly that of the girls.
- It considered the progress made by the more-able pupils in both English and mathematics.
- It looked at the impact of leadership and management in raising the quality of teaching and learning.

## Information about the school

St John Fisher is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average. Pupils come from a wide variety of ethnic heritages and a few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.

Following the retirement of the previous headteacher in July 2010, the school's attempts to recruit a substantive headteacher were unsuccessful. In July 2010, the school entered into an interim arrangement with the headteacher of St Gregory the Great Catholic Secondary School taking the position as executive headteacher, working with the assistant headteacher from the primary school. It is anticipated these arrangements will continue into the next academic year.

The school has Activemark and Bronze Eco and Healthy Schools status.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?****3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

## Main findings

St John Fisher provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Its inclusive ethos creates a sense of family and belonging, and draws together and unites parents and carers from a number of different social, cultural and religious backgrounds. They share a common satisfaction with the school and what it offers their children. One parent commented, 'I believe as a non-Catholic that this school embraces all faiths and treats all children fairly and equally. I see this school as a platform of good choices and excellence.'

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress from their starting point. Throughout the rest of the school, they make satisfactory progress, leaving with levels of attainment that are broadly average. Progress is improving however, but the school has rightly identified that more-able pupils do not always progress as quickly as they should in mathematics and writing. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, the result of improved identification of their needs and very well targeted support and guidance. The few pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language are also provided with effective support enabling them to progress well and take a full part in all aspects of school life. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

Strategies to improve pupils' attendance have been effective so that it is now above average. Pupils feel safe in school and quickly settle to school routines. There is a calm and harmonious atmosphere, which is aided by the pupils' good behaviour both in lessons and during break times. Pupils say how much they enjoy school, particularly activities such as the building of a willow structure which was taking place during the inspection. Their secure basic skills, good social skills and the contribution they make to the school and local community prepare pupils satisfactorily for the next stage of education.

Teachers have good relationships with pupils, who are respectful and respond well to the high expectations of behaviour. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and recent improvements mean that some are ensuring work is planned for different ability groups. However, not all make consistently good use of information to pitch the work at the correct level for all groups of pupils, particularly the more able. Teachers occasionally provide pupils with too much information and this limits the opportunity for them to develop their independent learning skills. The good, creative curriculum is enriched by a very good range of visits, visitors and clubs. Pupils taking part in one of the residential visits during the inspection kept their parents and carers informed through their regular 'blogs' on the school website. A good take up by pupils to participate in sporting and physical education activities and the school's focus on healthy eating contribute well to the pupils' good healthy lifestyles. The school's rapid diagnosis and arrangements for extra support and care where it is needed contribute effectively to the support for those pupils

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and families who need it. There are very effective links with outside partners that help ensure this good level of care.

The executive headteacher and assistant headteacher provide strong, resolute leadership. Self-evaluation is rigorous and there is a determination to improve the quality of teaching further and to accelerate the progress of all groups of pupils. The development of comprehensive systems of tracking and assessment of pupils' progress enable early and systematic interventions to be implemented. This has helped to improve the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The rigour of self-evaluation, improvements to the curriculum and teaching and learning show the school is well placed to sustain further improvement.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Accelerate the progress of the more-able pupils, particularly in mathematics and writing, by:
  - ensuring work is pitched at the correct level and is sufficiently challenging
  - allowing pupils to move on to more challenging activities sooner
  - providing pupils with more opportunities to think for themselves, to use their initiative and to research independently.
- Raise the quality of teaching so it is consistently good by:
  - ensuring teachers make more effective use of assessment information to plan lessons that are at the correct level and appropriately challenging
  - improve marking of pupils' work so that it more consistently identifies the next steps for learning and that pupils then respond to the comments.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**3**

Pupils achieve satisfactorily and their attainment is broadly average. Results in national tests show that by the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment in English is broadly average and below in mathematics. Inspectors' observations confirm this but show that an increasing number of pupils are attaining the expected levels in both subjects. Over the past three years, children's skills and abilities on entry to the school have become lower and are currently well below those expected. Children make consistently good progress in all areas of learning in the Nursery and Reception classes. There is evidence of good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 but, as yet, it is inconsistent and, consequently, more-able pupils are not achieving as well as they should. The development of extended writing sessions has helped to improve the pupils' writing at both key stages, particularly that of the boys. The regular teaching of letter sounds and blends provides the pupils with a secure foundation for the development of reading skills which progress well. Lesson observations confirm that pupils' speaking skills are broadly average and improving, the result of increased opportunities for them to provide extended responses to teachers' questioning. Pupils' computer skills develop well as pupils make regular use of the netbooks for research and the practising of skills. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those

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at an early stage of learning English, enjoy the opportunity to work in small groups and the individual tailored support, and this helps them to make good progress.

Pupils are polite, cooperate sensibly with one another and behave well, both in and out of lessons. Older pupils contribute well to improving behaviour through their role as 'Playground Buddies'. Discussions with pupils indicate they feel that bullying is a rare occurrence and they say they feel safe in school. Parents and carers confirm this, with almost all who responded to the questionnaire saying their children are kept safe in school. There is a good focus on encouraging healthy lifestyles, which has led to the school being awarded the Activemark and Healthy Schools status. Most pupils try to eat healthily and participate well in the good range of sporting activities on offer. They make a strong contribution to the school community through the school council that is working hard to further enhance the school's Eco Bronze status. The pupils are very actively involved in charitable fundraising activities, with school council members leading the planning for an African appeal. Pupils have a good awareness of the different cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds of people in their community and further afield.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

**How effective is the provision?**

Teaching is never less than satisfactory and, as a result of the effective monitoring by the senior leadership, there is now more that is good. All teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and manage pupils very effectively so there are minimal disruptions to

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learning. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and plan lessons accordingly. For example, in a good Year 3 lesson, pupils of all abilities improved their writing skills well when describing their imaginary planet. This was because the teacher made the activity interesting and ensured the pupils were aware of what was expected of them. Teachers are beginning to make good use of interactive whiteboards and other technology to make learning more interesting for pupils and encourage, where appropriate, pupils' use of computers to aid their learning. Teachers are increasingly making good use of the wealth of assessment information to plan lessons, but occasionally it is not always pitched sufficiently high to ensure that the most able progress sufficiently quickly. There are missed opportunities to allow these pupils to find more things out for themselves. Marking is systematic and regular. However, marking does not always identify how the pupils might improve their work and, where it does, pupils are not encouraged to address the comments.

The curriculum caters well for all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. For example, there is a considerable amount of one-to-one support for those pupils who need to catch up in the key areas of reading, writing and numeracy. Visits and visitors provide additional enjoyment for the pupils and enhance the curriculum well. Good information and communication technology provision and good opportunities for music and art add depth and interest to the curriculum. Pupils, some of whom were involved in interviewing prospective candidates for the 'Creative Partnership', really enjoy the increased variety of activities. A wide range of extra-curricular clubs and visits add to pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils gain a good understanding of different cultures and religions. The school organises residential trips for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6, one of which was taking place during the inspection. These provide good opportunities to develop pupils' social skills. Personalised programmes for vulnerable pupils ensure that their personal, social and emotional needs are well met. Their needs are assessed quickly and effective support packages implemented. The breakfast club, managed by the governing body, ensures pupils are looked after well and provided with a healthy start to the day.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The new senior leadership team has quickly become established and combines a determination to drive up standards, ensure pupils are well cared for and to provide an interesting and vibrant curriculum. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning has eradicated unsatisfactory teaching and raised the amount that is good. Other staff with leadership responsibilities subscribe to the vision and are keen to support senior leaders.

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The collaboration is enabling the two schools to share skills, which is leading to improvements in teaching, and to improving transition arrangements. The governors have a range of experience and support the school well. They rightly recognise the need to develop their skills in challenging the leadership to move the school forward. Good attention is given to safeguarding pupils. All the required checks on adults who come into contact with pupils are carried out, and risk assessments are thorough. Procedures for child protection are rigorous, and staff training is up to date.

The school works well to promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination. The achievement of all pupils is carefully tracked and all of the data are now shared with teachers. The leadership has been effective in identifying strengths and weaknesses in teaching; teachers' planning has improved and teachers are using information more effectively to challenge most pupils. However, the leadership has rightly identified the need to challenge the more-able pupils further. Links with parents and carers are good, and this is borne out by the high number of positive responses to the parents' questionnaire. The school keeps parents and carers well informed about their children's education and events at the school, and an increasing number are becoming involved in school activities and events to support their children's education.

The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. It draws together the different faiths and cultures which make up the school and local community and ensures that families get to know and understand one another. The school has developed good links with a school in France and visiting priests from Malawi and Nigeria help to promote pupils' understanding of cultures further afield. There are strong links with outside agencies that help to ensure the well-being of pupils with social and learning difficulties. Partnerships are used well to give pupils opportunities they may not otherwise experience. Links with schools in the cluster and feeder secondary school enable the school to provide training opportunities for its staff. Improvements to date, including tracking procedures, curriculum development and accelerating progress for some groups of pupils, show the leadership is well placed to take the school forward.



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that their attainment on entry to Year 1 is average. Staff work hard to promote their personal, social and emotional development, and relationships between adults and children are very supportive. Children work well together. For example, following the royal event, they were very excited about the forthcoming 'wedding' that was to take place in school and to which parents and carers were to be invited. They were keen to 'write' the invitations and were really excited on the day of their 'wedding'. Staff have identified communication, language and literacy skills as a priority for development, and make sure that they offer children opportunities for speaking and listening as often as possible. Regular teaching of letter sounds and blends helps to provide the children with a good foundation for reading and writing. Activities such as role play are well structured to aid the development of children's language and literacy skills. Classrooms are set up to provide a good range of activities to cover all the areas of learning. The outdoor provision is very well used to provide the children with a full and stimulating range of activities.

Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Planning is well structured and high-quality assessment strategies enable staff to build effectively on the children's previous learning. Teaching is consistently good so that all children make the progress of which they are capable in all areas of learning. There are good links with parents. The leadership is rightly exploring how home visits might be made to encourage parental involvement in their children's schooling at an earlier stage.

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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers responding to the questionnaire was above that seen nationally. Most of those responding are very happy with all aspects of the school. A few expressed their concern regarding the behaviour of some children. The inspectors found that behaviour was good in lessons and around the school. Staff have good procedures for dealing with incidents of inappropriate behaviour and disruptions to lessons are rare.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St John Fisher Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection received 91 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 239 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	67	30	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	64	70	24	26	2	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	50	55	34	37	6	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	56	34	37	6	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	54	59	35	38	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	53	36	40	6	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	48	45	49	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	38	42	43	47	3	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	46	44	48	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	52	35	38	8	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	41	45	49	6	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	54	59	34	37	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	58	64	30	33	3	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



14 May 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St John Fisher Catholic Primary School, Oxford OX4 6LD**

Thank you very much for welcoming us and talking to us when we visited your school recently. Those of you who completed the inspection questionnaire say that you feel safe in school and enjoy the many visits and visitors. We enjoyed watching you learn and play and were very impressed with the willow structure that you were building. This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school and what we have asked the school to do to become even better.

- You go to a happy and welcoming school that provides you with a satisfactory education.
- You say you enjoy school and we saw that in your enthusiasm and good behaviour.
- You have a good understanding of what you need to do to keep you healthy and fit.
- There is a good curriculum with a really wide range of clubs, activities, visits and visitors that make your work more interesting.
- The teachers and staff look after you well. They give those of you who find learning difficult considerable help and support.
- Those in charge of the school are working hard to help it improve.

In order to make your school even better, we have asked your headteacher and staff to do the following.

- Help those of you who find work a little easy to do better in your writing and mathematics by making the activities more challenging and giving you more opportunities to find things out for yourselves.
- Help teachers to make better use of information about how well you are learning when planning lessons and by ensuring they tell you how to improve when they mark your work

You can all help by trying really hard with your writing and mathematics.

Yours sincerely

Paul Edwards

Lead inspector

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