

St John's Catholic Primary School

Wingfield Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 9EA

Inspection dates 9–10 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership, with strong support from leaders across the school to bring about improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Pupils make good progress and this continues to improve because the teaching is good.
- Teachers always want pupils to do their best and make sure lessons are interesting, so pupils learn well.
- All pupils enjoy school and take part in lessons with enthusiasm.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, they feel safe and say that any bullying is very rare and dealt with effectively.
- Pupils have a lot of respect for each other.
- The governing body is clear on the areas for development and has worked collaboratively with the school to bring about changes.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small proportion of the teaching in Key Stage 1 requires improvement, by making sure that all pupils have work that matches their needs.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to work independently in Key Stage 1 to find things out for themselves.
- Pupils in some classes do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their writing skills in all topic areas.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teachers and teaching assistants teach 31 lessons, nine of which were joint observations with the headteacher and this included looking closely at pupils' work. Observations also included small groups of pupils being taught independently. An assembly was also observed.
- The inspectors heard pupils read from both Year 2 and Year 6, a meeting was held with two groups of pupils including the school council representatives and break times were used to talk to pupils around the school.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers, governors including the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. These meetings included discussions about the analysis of data, documented information and records provided by the school, including records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching, tracking pupils' progress as well as documents relating to safeguarding children.
- The start and end of the school day were used to meet with some parents.
- The inspectors took account of the responses of 45 parents to the online Parent View questionnaire during the inspection, as well as evidence from the school's recent parent survey.
- The inspection team also considered the 25 questionnaires completed by school staff.

Inspection team

Sarah Jones, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Faysal Mikdadi

Additional Inspector

Heather Barraclough

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St John's Catholic Primary School is a larger-than-average sized primary school.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language are above what is found nationally, with Polish the largest group at the school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, additional government funding for looked-after children, those known to be eligible for free school meals, and for children from service families, is below average.
- The school meets the current government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school provides a number of after-school activities which include gardening club, cricket, art and online mathematics.
- The school is particularly proud of pupils' sporting and musical achievements within local competitions.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - making sure that work is always set at the right level for all pupils, especially in Key Stage 1
 - providing opportunities for pupils to work independently and take responsibility for their learning, especially in Key Stage 1.
- Improve achievement in writing by:
 - making sure pupils across the school produce extended pieces of writing in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Reception class with knowledge and skills that are generally below what would normally be expected for their age. Progress is improving and is fastest in mathematics and reading. Progress in writing is beginning to improve, as this is an area the school is focusing on. Progress is good because teaching is good and pupils enjoy learning and the challenges presented to them.
- Progress is faster in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1 because work is set more precisely at the right level for pupils in Key Stage 2. The school is using its internal tracking system to support teachers to set targets for pupils and plan lessons that meet all their needs and give sufficient challenge whatever their ability or age.
- Pupils have good mathematical skills. They carry out mental calculations well and show their working for mathematical problems accurately in their books.
- Pupils' literacy skills are improving because reading and speaking activities are beginning to be included in more subject areas. The school has not provided enough opportunities for pupils to create longer pieces of writing to develop their skills and apply the knowledge they have gained across different subjects. This is now an area of focus.
- Pupils read well. They link sounds to letters effectively and like the fact that this helps them read difficult words. They use their reading skills well when doing research. This was observed in a Year 6 geography lesson: when researching a range of chosen countries one group had completed some extensive work on India and the Taj Mahal.
- The more-able pupils generally make good progress because teachers and teaching assistants make sure work is demanding and adapted to their particular needs.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds who speak English as an additional language make good progress in line with the others, as their learning needs are assessed to provide effective support and this enables them to settle quickly within a supportive learning environment.
- Less-able pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Sensitive, well-organised support from teachers usually enables these pupils to gain confidence in their own ability and promotes their learning well.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium make good progress at the same rate as other pupils. Pupil-premium funding is spent on a range of support including one-to-one tuition and additional teaching-assistant time to support literacy and numeracy work. This means that there are no gaps in attainment between eligible pupils and the others.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching over time is generally good, with some outstanding teaching observed in English and mathematics. Frequently the pace of lessons is brisk, so that learning is rapid and pupils acquire new skills. Effective discussions towards the end of lessons review what pupils have learned and this helps them understand how well they are doing.
- Teamwork throughout the school is excellent. Teachers keep support staff very well informed and there is a high level of professionalism among the staff. Teachers are keen to learn from one another and the senior leadership team are highly effective role models who have helped teachers improve their teaching to become good or better.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and expertise, which they use effectively to provide a wide range of activities that promote pupils' skills well in literacy and numeracy.
- In the majority of Key Stage 2 lessons, teachers use what they know about pupils' progress well to make sure that work is matched to all pupils' abilities. For example, in a music lesson, the teacher provided a range of instruments for the pupils to play and opportunities for the pupils to experiment with sounds and create a piece of music, with the whole class involved, very successfully.

- In a small proportion of lessons the teaching requires improvement in Key Stage 1. In these lessons teachers make less effective use of questioning and opportunities for pupils to work independently.
- Teachers regularly check the progress made by disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and adjust their work so that they make good progress. For example, in a mathematics lesson on money, all pupils made good progress and grew in confidence as a result of the teacher's careful questioning and challenge which encouraged their independence.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning by supporting pupils in lessons and in small groups that are withdrawn from classes for particular help.
- Warm relationships and consistently applied routines help children settle well in Reception.
- Teachers encourage the pupils to work with each other and share ideas. This helps pupils learn to tolerate and accept each other's opinions and promotes their moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- There is evidence of good marking and pupils are able to assess the quality of their work with confidence. 'Talk partners' are used effectively to make sure pupils are fully engaged in lessons while promoting high levels of independence.
- The parents who responded to Parent View and those parents who spoke to the inspectors thought that their child was taught well and made good progress at the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Parents, staff and pupils are all very positive about the behaviour in the school and the care and respect children have for each other. One child said to an inspector, 'Pupils love this school as the teachers are supportive and the pupils support each other.'
- Pupils' behaviour around the school and in their lessons is exemplary. They are polite, friendly and courteous. They feel part of the school and are proud to belong to it. They are given many opportunities to take on extra responsibility, for example through the school council, as playground leaders and Year 6 pupils run the school library. Equal opportunities are promoted and all pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities in lessons as team leaders, which they enjoy. This was observed both in Reception and in Year 6.
- Pupils feel very safe and know who to talk to if they have any concerns. They have a good awareness of internet safety.
- Pupils are aware of what constitutes bullying and discrimination and report that there are rarely any incidences in the school.
- Attendance is average and the administration team have very robust procedures in place to tackle absence.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The relentless ambition of the senior leadership team, driven by the determination of the highly effective headteacher and deputy headteacher, has brought about considerable improvements to the achievement of pupils and their desire to succeed. Areas to improve from the previous inspection and monitoring visits have been addressed.
- A culture of rapid and sustained improvement has been achieved by a robust tracking system, rigorous checking of the school's work and action plans to improve the progress pupils are making. Senior leaders and teachers track pupils' progress robustly to find out how well pupils are achieving and review interventions to suit the needs of the individual pupils.
- The management of teachers' performance has been exceptionally well used to raise expectations and to check the targets set for teachers to raise the standards of teaching across the school.
- Teachers who are new to the school say 'the school is a wonderful place to work' because of the support and opportunities that are in place.
- The headteacher regularly observes lessons with detailed feedback to teachers. There are also

opportunities for teachers to observe each other as part of their professional development, to make sure that teaching is good or better with an increasing number of outstanding lessons.

- The curriculum is well planned to meet the needs and interests of the pupils, providing pupils with varied opportunities to broaden their horizons within a secure learning environment. The current focus on writing is having a positive impact.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is at the heart of the school, with evidence in all lessons and assemblies, including an assembly on the Good Samaritan during the inspection which was very inclusive and gave pupils the opportunity to contribute.
- Parents who responded to the Parent View survey, as well as spoken to in the playground, were generally very positive about the school.
- The local authority has provided very good support to the school, which has successfully contributed to the improvements it has made.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has a clear knowledge of the school's strengths and what it needs to do to keep improving. It provides effective support and challenge. It is very clear on the targets for the school and how these can be met and makes sure that statutory responsibilities are met, such as safeguarding requirements. Governors have a good understanding of the school, including the management of teachers' performance and the implementation of 'Teachers' Standards' and how they affect salary progression. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching from first-hand evidence. They know what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance. The governing body monitors spending carefully and is aware of how the school is using the pupil premium to improve pupils' achievement. Governors make sure they are kept up to date with training to improve their effectiveness, especially when holding leaders to account.

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	126429
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	400132

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	300
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Keates
Headteacher	Frank Toner
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 2011
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