

St John's Catholic Primary School

Blackbridge Lane, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 1RR

Inspection dates 7–8 November 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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well from average starting points. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach above-average standards in reading and writing and average standards in mathematics.
- Teaching is good because teachers provide interesting and engaging lessons which motivate pupils to learn.
- Pupils' progress is good and leaders and teachers carefully check the progress of every pupil to ensure that nobody falls behind.
- Pupils are polite and courteous. Their outstanding behaviour contributes to the strong sense of community in the school. Exceptional attitudes to learning make a significant contribution to achievement. Pupils feel that the school keeps them safe and secure.
- The drive and determination of the headteacher have had a positive effect on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching.
- The school's leadership and management are good. Skilled leaders have focused on improvement through effective monitoring and evaluation so that pupils' standards and rates of progress have improved.
- The effective governing body provides the school with good levels of challenge.
- The way the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Teachers' marking does not always provide pupils with clear advice about how to make their work better.
- Pupils do not have challenges matched to their ability in mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' targets in mathematics are not always clear enough for pupils to become fully involved in their own learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons and part-lessons including eight joint observations with the senior leadership team. In addition, inspectors heard children reading and scrutinised the work in their books.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, school staff and a representative from the local authority. A discussion was held with members of the governing body including the joint Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors took account of 70 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as a school survey of parents' and carers' views. Parents and carers were also spoken to at the end of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and analysed a large range of documents and policies, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation and records relating to behaviour. Safeguarding documents were also scrutinised.
- The views of staff were analysed through the 23 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Liz Bowes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Duncan Heryett

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St John's is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is lower than the national average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent or carer in the armed services. Currently there are no pupils from forces families on roll.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is much lower than average, but a higher-than-average number of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress expected by the government.
- The school has received the International School Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by ensuring that teachers' marking consistently provides pupils with clear advice about how to make their work better.
- Improve pupils' attainment in mathematics, particularly at Key Stage 2, by ensuring that:
 - all groups of pupils are appropriately challenged in lessons
 - pupils' improvement targets are absolutely clear about what they need to do to improve so that they can become more involved in their own learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most children start school with skills that are broadly in line with those typical for their age. Good teaching and stimulating activities ensure that they settle quickly. Staff rapidly get to know what children need to start making progress and plan appropriate tasks for them.
- Pupils in Year 1 develop a good understanding of phonics (linking letters and sounds). They apply these skills well in their reading and writing. The results in the 2012 national phonics screening check were above average although in 2013 results dipped slightly.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has been consistently above average, demonstrating the good progress that pupils make from the beginning of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has also improved significantly since the arrival of the present headteacher. By the time they leave, pupils' standards are now above average in reading and writing where all pupils make the expected progress. In mathematics, their attainment is average.
- All pupils develop an early love of writing and reading. They are keen to talk about their favourite books and read confidently and accurately. Parents and carers were very complimentary about the home-school reading diaries where pupils have to write a brief summary of what they read at home. Initiatives such as this have resulted in nearly half of the pupils making more than the expected progress in reading.
- In mathematics, the proportion of pupils making more than expected progress is slightly below average and a lower proportion than average obtain the higher levels in Key Stage 2. This is because pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in lessons.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make the same good progress as their classmates. This is because teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils well and ensure that support is carefully matched to their needs.
- Throughout the school those who are eligible for the pupil premium attain broadly in line with their classmates. In most year groups all eligible pupils are progressing well, and often better than their classmates, particularly in reading and writing. However, in 2013, the few pupils who were eligible for the pupil premium were about five terms behind their classmates by the end of Key Stage 2, and just over four terms behind all pupils nationally. Through the targeted use of the additional funds, particularly for additional mathematics and one-to-one tuition, the school is successfully closing these gaps.
- The extra funding for physical education is used to provide sports coaching and activities for those who are less keen on sport. School staff are attending courses to ensure that they can further enhance their skills.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Good teaching in Reception enables pupils to develop an enthusiasm for learning which continues throughout the school.
- Lessons are well planned. Teachers provide interesting and engaging tasks which motivate pupils to learn. Pupils in Year 4 particularly enjoyed learning about formal language by enacting a news interview with a Roman soldier.
- Teachers know exactly how well each pupil is doing and their high expectations inspire pupils to try their best. This was clearly demonstrated in Year 2 where in the two months before the inspection pupils had made exceptional progress. In an outstanding lesson in this class, pupils were intensely concentrating as they were keen to express all their ideas in writing. The quality

of their vocabulary as well as the quantity of well-formed sentences demonstrated that the teacher had given them the skills and confidence to succeed.

- Leaders and teachers regularly and carefully check the progress of every pupil to ensure that nobody falls behind.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the learning of all pupils. In a Year 1 multiplication lesson, the assistant was deployed to read out the questions and monitor the class while the teacher went round the room checking the answers.
- While teachers mark all pupils' work regularly, their feedback does not always provide pupils with clear advice on how to make their work better. Pupils sometimes find the targets they are set in mathematics hard to follow and this prevents them from becoming fully involved in their own learning.
- In a very small number of lessons, teachers do not match the work they set closely enough to the levels at which pupils are working. Sometimes pupils' progress is hampered because there are too many interruptions from the teacher.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are polite and courteous and their outstanding behaviour both in class and around the school contributes to the harmonious atmosphere.
- The school is a very caring community. As one pupil put it, 'Our school is above all words. It's the best in the world.' They feel that their views and opinions are valued, for example they enjoy the opportunity of trying out being headteacher for a day.
- Parents and carers are very supportive; they particularly like the buddy system, where a Year 5 pupil supports a Reception class child. Pupils and staff feel that this system helps the very youngest in the school to feel safe and secure.
- Pupils talk with excitement about the range of opportunities they have. They take on responsibility around the school, for example as members of the school council and the eco council. Within lessons, as 'little technicians', they help with any computer problems that other pupils may be having; this contributes to pupils' excellent attitudes to learning.
- Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and equality of opportunity is well promoted. Those pupils who join the school with very limited skills in English are paired up with a native speaker which ensures that they quickly settle down.
- Pupils understand the many forms of bullying and say that bullying is very rare and that they would know how to get help if they needed it. They understand the risks when they are online and how to keep safe when using the internet.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and they are punctual into school and class.

The leadership and management are good

- The calm and purposeful leadership of the headteacher provides a very clear direction for the work of the school and has helped to raise standards. Staff and governors fully support her drive to do the best for all pupils.
- Although standards have risen since the headteacher's appointment some weaknesses in mathematics remain.
- There is rigorous monitoring of every aspect of the school's work in order to identify its strengths and weaknesses. The systems for regularly monitoring pupils' progress have been very effective in helping to raise attainment. Improvement planning is sharply focused on moving the school forward. The link between teachers' salary progression and pupils' achievement is clear and understood by all staff.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide academic and personal support for eligible

pupils through, for example, the provision of additional staff and resources.

■ The curriculum, which won an award for its international perspective, is broad and balanced. It provides pupils with a rich and varied array of learning experiences which promote their spiritual, social, cultural and moral development exceptionally well. Pupils have a variety of interesting experiences that give them a greater awareness of the world around them including International Week. They also have an opportunity to write to pupils at a school in Kenya.

■ The local authority provides effective support for the school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

– The effective governing body provides the school with good levels of challenge. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They know how its results compare with those of other schools and they regularly hold leaders to account for the school's performance. Governors monitor the quality of teaching and hold all staff to account through the performance management procedures, which link to pay and career progression. Finance is managed carefully so that resources are used effectively to raise achievement. Governors have a clear understanding of how the pupil premium is allocated and its impact on improving pupils' levels of attainment. Governors benefit from regular training to improve their effectiveness. The governing body makes sure that the school meets the statutory safeguarding requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	126039
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	426634

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	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Matt Bovey and Judith Benson
Headteacher	Joanna Brown
Date of previous school inspection	October 2008
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