

# St John's Catholic Primary School

Oldfield Lane, Oldfield Park, Bath, BA2 3NR

## Inspection dates

5–6 February, 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Standards at the end of Year 6 are above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils make good progress in their learning, and the proportion making more than expected progress in writing is much higher than the national average.
- Teachers have high expectations, are aware of the various stages that pupils have reached in their learning, and set clear objectives for what they need to do next to improve.
- The long-standing headteacher works well with the school's governing body and the staff of the school, making positive changes which are leading the drive for improvement.
- Governors are very well informed and knowledgeable about all aspects of the school. They make sure that they hold the headteacher to account for the progress that pupils make in their academic performance.
- Parents praise the work of the school, the leadership of the headteacher and the commitment of staff. They agree that their children feel happy and safe in school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small minority of pupils are not making the same accelerated progress as their peers in writing and mathematics. This is because some teaching is not fully effective in moving these pupils on to the next stage of their learning quickly enough.
- Teachers do not always ensure that pupils are given sufficient time to respond to the next steps in learning that teachers provide in the constructive guidance that is given in their marking of pupils' work.
- The school's approach to developing English and mathematics skills through other subjects is not yet consistent in all year groups in Key Stage 2.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 25 lessons, three of which were joint observations with the headteacher. Inspectors also listened to pupils read and observed them during break time, dinner time, during assembly and around the school.
- A range of documentation was looked at, including the school's improvement plan, the school's own assessment data, records of lesson observations, reports from the school's local authority consultant and the school's safeguarding documentation. A wide range of pupils' books and a collection of examples of the school's work with pupils over a period of time were also examined.
- The inspectors held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, the local authority consultant, senior members of staff and a group of pupils.
- The inspectors took account of 54 responses to the online Parent View survey, 37 staff questionnaires, and met with some parents informally at the start of the school day.

## Inspection team

Graeme Burgess, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
George Long	Additional Inspector
Lucy Maughan	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St John's Catholic Primary School is larger than most primary schools.
- There are 11 classes in the school, seven of which have pupils of different ages. The Reception year is divided into two classes.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is higher than most other schools. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than most other schools.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families) is much lower than the average.
- The large majority of pupils are White British.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not have access to alternative provision.

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

- Enhance the quality of teaching so that more pupils make better than expected progress in all year groups in writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
  - fully effective use is made of the school's data tracking system to identify those pupils who are not yet making good progress in their learning, by setting work that is matched closely to their needs and which accelerates their learning
  - pupils have more time to respond to teachers' comments on what they need to do next in order to improve
  - pupils in all the classes across Key Stage 2 have access to the same opportunities to develop key writing and mathematical skills through their topic work across the curriculum.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils in all year groups make good progress from below-average starting points. Some make exceptional progress, particularly in reading, so that standards are typically above average by the end of Key Stage 2. The good progress being made by all groups reflects the school's strong commitment to ensuring that all pupils succeed.
- The progress made by pupils in Reception classes is a real strength of the school. Activities are well planned, engage and motivate pupils, and are supported by strong teaching. Phonics (the sounds that letters make) is taught well, and its success is reflected in the above-average standards reached in the phonics screening check in Year 1.
- Pupils achieve well because of good teaching. In particular, teachers' increasingly effective use of the tracking system to pinpoint pupils' next steps in learning is helping teachers to plan to accelerate pupils' learning. Achievement is not yet outstanding because a few pupils are not yet making the same rapid progress as their classmates in writing and mathematics.
- The curriculum successfully focuses on ensuring that pupils' learning is made real and this engages their interest and high-level motivation. For example, pupils in Year 3 visit the Roman Baths in Bath, thus bringing their history topic to life and inspiring their writing. However, not all pupils in Key Stage 2 are given these same opportunities, and a valuable chance to improve writing and mathematics skills through topic work, therefore, is lost.
- The more-able pupils are challenged well in lessons. For example, in an upper-set mathematics lesson in Year 6, pupils were challenged to use their problem-solving skills to calculate the area of irregular shapes. The pupils were fully engaged with the task, were working collaboratively by asking questions of each other to support their understanding of the problem and, as a result, the progress being made by this group of pupils was outstanding.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are successfully meeting the targets set for them and also make good progress. All staff know the pupils well as individuals and act quickly, when a need is identified, to provide the correct level of support. The successful inclusion of pupils with very specific needs into the school's daily routines is a striking example of the success of this approach.
- The majority of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium funding make better-than-expected progress given their starting points. The school has used its funding to provide these pupils with extra support in lessons by appointing additional members of staff to work with them individually and in groups.
- The majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire are very positive about the progress their children are making at the school.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Good and sometimes outstanding teaching in most subjects, including English and mathematics, is leading to most pupils making rapid progress and achieving successfully. Teachers have high expectations, plan interesting lessons and use questioning very skilfully to move learning forward. Pupils in Reception get an excellent start to their education as a result of being so well taught.
- The way in which teachers set clear lesson objectives and the pace with which they move pupils on to their next stage of learning is securing good, and sometimes exceptional, progress.
- The school strongly promotes equality of opportunity. It provides a positive climate for learning in the majority of classes as a result of an extremely caring ethos, which fosters good relationships and does not tolerate discrimination of any kind. For example, teachers treat the pupils with respect and, as a result, pupils, in turn, show them the same level of respect. The impact of this approach is that pupils then listen carefully in lessons and are keen to engage with their tasks. This is a major factor in facilitating the good progress that pupils make in their

learning.

- Additional adults in classes are effective in supporting pupils' learning. They engage with the pupils fully during lessons, prompting pupils' understanding through skilful questioning and contributing strongly to the progress that the pupils are making.
- Occasionally, in some lessons, teachers do not always provide tasks which are challenging enough, particularly in writing and mathematics. As a result, a few pupils are not yet making as much progress in these areas as they are in reading.
- The quality of teachers' marking is typically constructive. For example, the best marking celebrates what the pupils have done well, points to the next steps to be taken in order to improve their work and encourages pupils to respond to these comments. However, not all pupils are given sufficient time to respond to this feedback when they commence their next lesson, and this is a missed opportunity to accelerate their progress more.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good in lessons and around the school, having a positive impact on the progress they make and the standards they achieve. This starts in the Reception classes where clearly established attitudes towards engaging purposely with each other and in developing self-confidence are fully in place.
- Pupils are polite and respectful to each other and respond well to support and guidance given by all adults. The school's mission statement is fully embraced by all pupils and staff.
- Little time is wasted in the majority of lessons, as a result of appropriately paced teaching, and pupils are very clear about the school's behavioural system of 'Red Warnings'. Behaviour is not yet outstanding, however, because, occasionally, when lessons are not challenging enough, pupils are not fully engaged with their learning and this prevents them from making accelerated progress.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils believe that incidents of bullying or poor behaviour are very rare in school, and they enjoy the responsibility that they have as 'Bullying Ambassadors'. They say that the 'pupils here are really nice' and that 'it's like a family'. In addition, they told the inspectors that regular fire drills and information about how to keep safe on the internet mean that they feel very safe in school.
- All of the parents who met with inspectors, together with the vast majority of parents who completed the online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that their children are safe and well looked after in school. The views of the school staff are overwhelmingly positive.
- Attendance is now above the national average and the school actively promotes high standards of attendance and punctuality. Contact is always made with parents if pupils arrive late or are absent, and this is followed up, where required, by letters to parents. This demonstrates the strong commitment of both the school and the parents to the pupils' education.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The long-serving headteacher provides clear leadership, with a particularly strong emphasis given to the well-being of every pupil. The focus on improving the quality of teaching, learning and achievement, and diligent checking of progress is driving a good pace of improvement. The staff questionnaires show all staff share this vision for taking the school forwards.
- The headteacher's positive working relationship with the governing body is bringing about change which is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and on pupil progress. For example, the school uses specialist governor knowledge about the psychology of learning to support initiatives in developing a variety of teaching approaches. As a result, approaches to revisiting prior learning are beginning to have an impact on pupils' learning, leading to a more rapid rate of improving standards in the school.
- The local authority offers light touch support for this good school, which has clear capacity to

continue to improve.

- There is effective monitoring of teaching and its impact on learning. The headteacher conducts regular lesson observations. These are linked to staff appraisal, and feedback focuses on further raising the standard of teaching. Senior leaders are knowledgeable about pupil targets and the progress that pupils are making.
- Professional development for all staff is organised well by the school. In-house training focuses on areas for improvement identified within the school's development plan and centres around improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- There is an exciting curriculum in place which the pupils enjoy and which covers a range of subjects. However, the different topics are not always used as effectively in some classes in Key Stage 2 as they could be to forge links with English and mathematics in order to accelerate pupils' progress more rapidly.
- Performance management arrangements are fully in place, and teachers' performance targets are linked to the progress their pupils make. Decisions about pay are closely linked to how successfully teachers meet their targets.
- Pupil premium funding is used highly effectively to help pupils at risk of underachieving to succeed. In fact, the majority of the pupils identified for this additional support are making progress which is exceeding expectations. This is because the funding has been used to provide additional support for small-group work and individual tuition.
- The school has clear plans in place to use its primary sport funding to have an impact on pupils' health and well-being. For example, the school has appointed a school sports coordinator who leads lessons and training for the school staff in order to raise their knowledge of sporting skills. This is already showing signs that the pupils will benefit over a sustained period of time from the use of this funding.
- The school promotes the pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development exceptionally well. A range of before- and after-school clubs and activities meets the interests of the pupils, and the school's sports teams regularly enter local authority events and do well.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are well informed regarding the progress of the pupils in school, and have an accurate understanding of what needs to be done next in order to improve standards. They know about the quality of teaching and are fully aware of their responsibilities regarding teachers' pay and the systems for setting performance management targets. They regularly access training to gain a clearer understanding of their strategic role, and have been proactive in studying pupil progress data. They ask pertinent and challenging questions of the school leadership, and are working towards achieving the Governor Quality Mark. They work closely with the headteacher to prioritise areas for school improvement, and are keen to use the skills they have within the governing body to ensure that all pupils achieve the highest standards possible. For example, a governor with knowledge and understanding of using data examines pupil outcomes termly. The governors ensure that the school's funds are used effectively to help pupils achieve well, including those eligible for the pupil premium, and ensure that procedures for keeping pupils safe meet 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	109260
<b>Local authority</b>	Bath and North East Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	431460

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	316
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Laurence Swan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Bob Coleman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14–15 January 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01225 303990
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