

John Henry Newman Academy

Grange Road, Littlemore, Oxford, OX4 4LS

Inspection dates 4–5 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Too few pupils are working at the standards expected for their ages and pupils' progress is inconsistent across year groups.
- The most able pupils are not always given work that challenges them sufficiently.
- Teaching is not consistently good. Pupils that have previously fallen behind are not always catching up as quickly as they could.
- Teachers' marking does not help pupils know how to improve their work by learning from their mistakes.
- Attendance is improving but the rate of fixed-term exclusion is too high.
- Key academy leaders are relatively new. Consequently, some of their well-judged changes have yet to secure improvements in Key Stage 2.
- Middle leaders have not used information about pupils' attainment to evaluate the effectiveness of their recent actions to bring about improvements.

The school has the following strengths:

- The academy is steadily improving under the current senior leaders.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- There are good relationships between adults and pupils throughout the school.
- Improvements to pupils' behaviour are helping them to make the most of learning opportunities.
- The headteacher is revitalising the academy. Governors, staff, parents, carers and pupils hold her in high esteem.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- The academy trust and governors play a key role in holding leaders to account.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons, eight of which were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed an assembly, heard pupils reading and discussed their reading progress with them. Meetings were held with two groups of pupils.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, senior leaders, other staff with significant responsibilities and representatives of the governing body and Oxfordshire Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST).
- The inspectors took account of 12 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents and carers, one letter received from a parent or carer during the inspection and responses to the staff questionnaire.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the academy’s self-evaluation documents and improvement plan, records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, academy policies, and records of checks made by academy leaders on the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors looked at pupils’ books, displays of pupils’ work and the academy’s assessments of the progress made by pupils.
- Inspectors also examined the academy’s arrangements for spending the additional sports and pupil premium funding.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Farr, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Lesley Farmer

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Beddard

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- John Henry Newman Academy is much larger than the average-sized primary school. The academy has a 39-place Nursery.
- The school opened as an academy in September 2012.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, for whom the academy receives additional funding (pupil premium), is above average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The recently appointed Principal took up post in September 2013.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils of different abilities in Key Stages 1 and 2 achieve well and reach the standards they should by ensuring that:
 - teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are consistently high for all pupils
 - when teachers plan their lessons, they include tasks and activities that will challenge pupils of all abilities, especially the most able
 - teachers' skills in the teaching of writing are developed further, so that pupils' presentation of their work, including handwriting, improves swiftly
 - pupils, especially those with special educational needs, have more opportunities to read
 - marking and feedback give pupils regular opportunities to correct mistakes and provide opportunities for them to respond to comments.
- Ensure the recent reduction in fixed-term exclusion is maintained.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leaders and managers by ensuring that:
 - the impact of leaders' work is linked to pupils' achievement and properly evaluated
 - opportunities are created for leaders at all levels to learn from the best practice within the academy chain
 - the training programme for teachers and middle leaders is tailored to their individual needs
 - governors meaningfully evaluate the impact of additional funding on pupils' attainment.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement over time requires improvement because standards in reading, writing and mathematics are not high enough. Too few pupils reach average or above average standards of attainment. Better teaching is leading to improved progress but this is not yet rapid enough to overcome previous underachievement.
- In some year groups, progress in writing is slower than in reading and mathematics. In these year groups, pupils are not catching up quickly enough.
- Children enter the Nursery and Reception with skills and experiences below the levels typical for their age. They make good progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and start Year 1 with skills that are expected for their age. This is because activities are carefully planned and well matched to the abilities of the children.
- Pupils' abilities to read and spell using the sounds that letters make (phonics) are below the levels expected for their ages. There have been some recent improvements in the teaching of phonics but these have been too recent to enable pupils to catch up fully.
- Some of the most able pupils do not always achieve as well as they should because the work they are given is not sufficiently demanding, especially in writing. In conversations with inspectors, some pupils described their tasks as being too easy.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is variable. Teachers are aware of their needs and their progress is monitored closely. Some of these pupils progress well because they are ably supported in lessons by additional adults who skilfully question them, helping them to think through their learning. However, this is not consistently the case. Where skills are less secure, for example in reading, pupils are not provided with regular opportunities to read and discuss books.
- Pupils with English as an additional language and pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are making good gains in their learning and better than in the past. This is because teachers provide well-targeted support that is tailored to their specific needs.
- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in Year 6 in 2013 were two terms behind in reading and mathematics and three terms behind in writing. The gap in reading and writing has reduced marginally in the current year. However, the gap in mathematics has increased and pupils are now on average three terms behind. Historically, not enough has been done to help these pupils catch up with their classmates. Leaders have recently introduced ways to help pupils make better progress, but it is too early to see the full impact of these revised methods.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because not enough has been good or better over time. Expectations have not been, and are still not, high enough in some classes. As a result, progress has not been consistently good as pupils move through the school.
- Not all teaching is sufficiently motivating and appropriately challenging. Teachers do not always use information about what pupils already know in order to meet their differing needs accurately. For some pupils the work they are given is occasionally too hard. For others, including the most able, it is too easy and does not extend their learning.
- The teaching of writing requires improvement as too often pupils' work is presented poorly. Handwriting skills are not improving over time.
- The quality of relationships between adults and pupils is a consistently strong feature of lessons.

As a result, there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils usually show good levels of concentration and they ask and answer questions confidently.

- Teaching assistants often make a positive contribution which improves the quality of learning for targeted pupils, such as those with special educational needs. Teaching assistants are generally competent at modelling tasks so that these pupils are able to achieve success in small steps. This helps learners make progress.
- Marking is regular and includes targets to help pupils understand how to improve their work. However, it is not good enough overall to promote rapid progress. In some instances, particularly in literacy, basic errors, such as spelling mistakes, are not corrected regularly. Although some teachers ask pupils to respond in books to their learning or marking, this is underdeveloped. Some pupils only respond briefly with comments like 'OK' so the impact is lost.
- Most parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire felt their children were taught well. While teaching is not yet good, these views support inspection evidence that it is improving.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Although pupils behave well in classes and around the school, this is a relatively recent improvement. In the past there have been an above average number of fixed-term exclusions. Although the number has fallen markedly in the last few months, the rate of exclusion remains too high.
- Inspectors found that behaviour in lessons is usually good because pupils are eager to learn. However, when work is too easy, pupils become restless and lose concentration. This can be distracting to others.
- Leaders have introduced a new behaviour system. Pupils understand this clearly, and are very familiar with the rewards and sanctions. Pupils say that behaviour has improved, both in the classrooms and on the playground.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are confident that the adults in school will take good care of them. Pupils believe that behaviour has improved since the new Principal took charge and introduced 'better rules'. They feel safe in the school and are confident that if they have any concerns they can approach an adult who will help them 'sort things out'.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying including the effects of cyber bullying. They say that bullying does not usually happen. Leaders do not tolerate discrimination. The very few and isolated racist incidents have been dealt with swiftly and appropriately by staff.
- Leaders have improved the ways in which they record incidents of poor behaviour and are able to demonstrate that there are now significantly reduced incidents of disruptive behaviour. Although more incidents are recorded than in previous years, this is because expectations of pupils' behaviour have correctly risen, leading to even minor misdemeanours being dealt with and recorded more routinely.
- Attendance has improved over recent terms, and for the vast majority of pupils it is now good. Persistent absence has reduced and more pupils are attending regularly. However, there are still small numbers who have poor attendance or poor punctuality.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because many leaders are relatively new and

have not yet developed their skills fully. Middle leaders, despite introducing appropriate changes, do not presently have a full range of leadership skills. As a result they have yet to bring about improved outcomes for pupils, especially at the end of Key Stage 2.

- There are effective methods for regularly evaluating the performance of teachers. Leaders ensure staff performance is linked to promotion and increases in pay. However, judgements about the effectiveness of teaching are over-generous because they do not take account of how well pupils are progressing.
- The Principal has correctly established a set of procedures to manage the performance of teachers. Performance management targets have been set for all staff. However targets are too generic and training opportunities are not tailored to individual requirements. Consequently, teaching is not improving as quickly as it could.
- Under the leadership of the new Principal, the relatively new senior and middle leaders are uniting as an enthusiastic and committed team. Many of the changes implemented have led to noticeable improvements in pupils' attendance, behaviour and attitudes.
- Leaders are making progress towards ensuring equal opportunities by improving teaching and raising standards for all groups of pupils. Although inconsistencies remain, progress is beginning to improve for groups of pupils.
- Leaders effectively promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is exemplified in displays around the school linked to academy values. For example, courage is promoted through reminding pupils that, 'Courage doesn't roar. Sometimes it's the little voice at the end of the day that says I'll try again tomorrow.'
- The support and challenge provided by the academy trust has been beneficial, especially in appointing key academy leaders. The passion and enthusiasm for improving the education of pupils from the trust's Acting Director of Schools are evident, and set the tone and expectation that are beginning to improve outcomes. The trust continues to work closely with academy leaders to accelerate improvement.
- The use of additional sports funding to provide a specialist sports coach and develop links with other organisations, such as London Welsh Rugby Club, has resulted in increasing pupils' participation rates in sport both within school and within the local community. In addition opportunities are provided for teachers and teaching assistants to develop their own levels of expertise alongside experienced coaches.
- The range of subjects taught is broad and balanced. The curriculum is enriched by visits, after-school clubs and whole-school events such as celebrating World Book Day. Academy leaders are reviewing the present structure and a new curriculum document will be ready for September 2014.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Following changes, governance is now much more effective. Relatively new governors bring considerable expertise and understanding and ensure a clear strategic direction for the academy. The governing body has a clear understanding of the academy's performance, its strengths and priorities for improvement. Governors now ask more challenging questions of the Principal about the effectiveness of the academy's work and they are scrutinising leadership activity more closely. They have begun to monitor the use of additional funding. However, as leaders have only recently revised ways of using the funding, governors are yet to evaluate meaningfully the impact of this work on closing gaps in pupils' attainment. They have recently completed an audit of their own skills and have planned training to develop them further. Governors monitor closely the quality of teaching and they are involved in decisions about pay increases, linked to the quality of teachers' work. They are committed to improving the academy and have recently set appropriately challenging performance management targets for the headteacher.

What inspection judgements mean

Academy		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding academy 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 academy 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	An academy that requires improvement is not yet a good academy, but it is not inadequate. This academy will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>An academy that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This academy will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>An academy that requires special measures is one where the academy is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the academy's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the academy. This academy will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

Academy details

Unique reference number	138774
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	440114

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

Type of academy	Primary
Academy category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the academy roll	398
Appropriate authority	Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust
Chair	Reverend A Bevan
Principal	Mrs J Ranger
Date of previous academy inspection	Not previously inspected
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