

St John the Evangelist Church of England Primary School

Bluebell Way, Shilton Park, Carterton, OX18 1JF

Inspection dates 8–9 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- The headteacher and senior leaders are driving improvement. Strong teamwork and skilful leadership has created a renewed vigour and culture for learning.
- The headteacher has acted decisively to eradicate inadequate teaching. As a result, teaching is now good, with some that is outstanding.
- Pupils achieve well and all make at least good progress. The gap in achievement between different groups of pupils has narrowed, and in some cases, closed.
- Teachers provide effective guidance to pupils in their marking comments. Pupils respond well and show improvements in their work.
- Self-evaluation is accurate. Effective plans are in place to support continued improvement. Senior leaders and governors are ambitious for the school to improve even further.
- Pupils behave well, they are polite and courteous. They feel safe and have a good understanding of how to keep safe.
- Governors have good systems in place to check on the school's progress. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They provide effective challenge to school leaders.
- Attendance has improved and is well above average.
- Most parents have confidence in the school and would recommend it to other parents.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Teachers do not always check on pupils' progress regularly enough. Their questioning does not always develop pupils' thinking.
- The skills of middle leaders are currently underdeveloped. At present, they are too reliant on senior leaders for driving improvement.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day’s notice. Inspectors observed 19 lessons. Three were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the English and mathematics subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader. Her Majesty’s Inspector also met with three governors and two representatives from the local authority.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils. Inspectors also heard pupils read; three from Year 2 and three from Year 6.
- Informal discussions were held with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors took account of 70 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) that were submitted during the course of the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and examined a range of documentation, including the school’s own records of pupils’ attainment and progress, the checks the school make on the quality of teaching and teachers’ performance. Inspectors scrutinised work in pupils’ books, records of governing body meetings and school records on behaviour, attendance, child protection and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Ann Henderson, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Howard Dodd

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- This school is much larger than most primary schools. The headteacher took up his post in January 2014. An interim headteacher was in post from January to December 2013.
- There are two classes in each year group. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught together in two Reception classes. There is part-time nursery provision for three- to four-year-old children.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- A very small proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for additional government funding known as the pupil premium. The funding is used to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after.
- A very small proportion of pupils are supported by service premium. This is additional funding to support pupils who have or have had a parent in the armed forces within the last three years.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is similar to that found nationally. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national figure.
- The school meets the current government's floor standards, which sets 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 more is outstanding by:
 - ensuring teachers regularly check on pupils' understanding and challenge their thinking
 - ensuring teachers regularly check on pupils' progress towards achieving their targets, so that they know what to do to improve.
- Increase the skills of middle leaders to enable them to develop their roles and have a greater impact on school improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children begin school in the Nursery and Reception classes with skills and abilities that are below those expected for their age. They make good progress from their various starting points because teachers make regular checks on their development and carefully plan their next steps in learning. The school successfully promotes equality of opportunity for all pupils. Currently, two thirds of pupils have reached a good level of development and are well placed to join Year 1. This is a significant improvement on previous years.
- Pupils make good progress in their understanding of the sounds letters make (phonics), because teaching is systematic. Pupils benefit from being taught in small groups and teachers regularly check on pupils' progress. By the end of Year 1, the proportion reaching the expected standard is well above the national average.
- By the end of Year 2, pupils now reach above average standards, particularly in writing. Most pupils write with clear, legible, joined handwriting. The recent initiative adopted by the school to support pupils to talk about their writing and build their writing skills systematically has been successful. All groups of pupils, including the most able, have made much better progress in writing this year. The gap between pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding, and other pupils, has closed.
- The progress of Key Stage 2 pupils, including those eligible for additional government funding, has accelerated this year. School leaders were rightly proud of the unvalidated results of the Year 6 tests in 2014. All pupils achieved Level 4 in reading and almost all in writing and mathematics. Significant proportions achieved Level 5 in reading and mathematics. A few of the most able pupils achieved the highest level in reading, writing and mathematics. All pupils made steady progress from their various starting points and most made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from low starting points. The resources used and the support they receive is carefully tailored to enable them to access learning at an appropriate level and make good progress. Teaching assistants provide effective support to help them to be successful in their learning.
- Pupils read widely and enjoy the broad range of reading material available to them. Most pupils use their knowledge of sounds and letters to decode unfamiliar words. Some pupils do not read regularly enough at home. This limits the amount of progress they make, particularly in the early stages of reading. This is why achievement is not outstanding.
- The school is using additional government funding provided for sport to increase pupils' levels of fitness well. Pupils are enthusiastic about the opportunities provided for them. They were looking forward to the Commonwealth Games Sports Day planned in partnership with other schools during the week of the inspection.

The quality of teaching is good

- There has been a significant shift in the quality of teaching this year. Teachers know their pupils well and have a better understanding of their levels of ability. They check pupils' progress to plan interesting activities that are set at the right level. Pupils now benefit from teaching that is at least good, and some that is outstanding. This has had a significant impact on the increased rates of progress this year.
- The quality of teachers' marking and feedback to pupils is now a strength of the school. All teachers use the marking code well to guide pupils to improve their learning. Pupils understand the marking system and respond well to teachers' guidance, showing improvements in their work. This has contributed well to their good progress.
- Most pupils know their targets, or where to find them, but currently some teachers are not checking pupils' progress towards achieving their targets regularly enough. As a result, the

progress of some pupils is not as rapid. This is why teaching is not outstanding.

- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. Routines are now well established and expectations are made clear. Classrooms are well organised and attractive, with a good balance of displays to support pupils' learning and celebrate their achievements. Even the youngest children are able to sustain their concentration and are eager to show the success they have achieved.
- Teacher's checks on pupils' understanding have improved. However, there are occasions when teachers do not always check to see how well pupils have understood activities, in order to challenge pupils' thinking and increase their knowledge.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. Reading, writing and mathematics are taught effectively. There are greater opportunities for pupils to participate in discussions, to share their ideas and check their understanding.
- In many classrooms, pupils discuss and agree what successful learning will look like or guidance checks are clearly laid out for pupils in their books. This has increased pupils' confidence and helps them to check on their learning during the lesson and gauge their own success.
- Extra tuition before school has been provided for pupils in receipt of additional government funding. This support for English and mathematics has been used well. The speed of progress for these pupils has increased and raised their levels of attainment.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. It has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Pupils' conduct in lessons and around the school shows they take responsibility for themselves and care about those around them. Relationships between pupils and adults are respectful and courteous.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They take pride in their achievements; this is evident from the standards they are now reaching and the improved presentation of their work. They recognise the improvements to the school that have helped them to learn more quickly and be successful. They are proud to wear the uniform of St. John's school.
- Pupils enjoy school and are eager to learn. This is evident from the improved attendance, which is now above average. There have been no exclusions.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Most parents agree. Pupils know there is always someone on hand to help them. They know that if they have a problem, it will be dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- Pupils have a good understanding of many types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, homophobic bullying and racism. Pupils know how to keep safe when using the internet. They understand the systems in place to deal with any form of bullying and know the difference between bullying and bad behaviour. Pupils know that when any incidents are reported, they are quickly dealt with. Pupils report that incidents of bullying are rare. This has greatly improved.

The leadership and management are good

- The current headteacher has successfully built on previous work and stepped up the pace of improvement. His leadership has galvanised the whole school team to work towards reaching the highest standards in all the school's work. Senior leaders and governors have clear ambition to become an outstanding school. There has been a relentless drive to raise standards and enable pupils to achieve well.
- The leadership of teaching is strong. Weak teaching has been eradicated and effective coaching and support has been provided for teachers to improve their teaching and enable pupils to make better progress. The headteacher effectively holds all teachers to account. Observations of lessons and a wide range of teaching activities are used to evaluate the quality of teaching. The judgements of senior leaders are reliable and accurate. Procedures for setting targets for

teachers are rigorous. Leaders ensure that salary increases are not awarded unless staff have met their targets, based on pupils' progress.

- Senior leaders are developing the skills of middle leaders. However, at present they are reliant on the expertise of senior leaders to identify areas for improvement in their sphere of responsibility and develop suitable plans for improvement. They have not, as yet, evaluated the quality of provision in the aspect of the school's work they lead. This is why leadership and management are not outstanding.
- The school has rightly focused on improving pupils' achievement in English and mathematics, ensuring all pupils have an equal chance to succeed. Additional government funding has been used well to provide extra tuition for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. This has been successful. These groups of learners have made much better progress; their previous underachievement has been eliminated.
- Senior leaders and governors have accurately evaluated the work of the school. There is a clear and effective improvement plan in place which is supporting all staff and governors to understand the 'direction of travel' and work together to raise standards and improve the school.
- Partnerships with parents have improved. The vast majority of parents would recommend the school to other parents. They say that communication has improved and welcome the use of social media to keep them informed and up to date. A large majority say they receive valuable information about the progress their child is making.
- School leaders have worked well together to provide memorable experiences for pupils through a range of visits and visitors to the school. Much of this work has been used to improve pupils' writing skills. Subjects are carefully linked to provide pupils with interesting themes for learning. The recent work on 'flight' displayed in the school showed the scientific link to mathematics, literacy, history and geography.
- The school uses the additional funding for sport well. A clear plan is in place to develop this aspect of the school's work further. A range of activities are provided to enable more pupils to participate in sporting activities. This was clearly evident through the planned whole-school 'Commonwealth Sports Day'. Pupils were looking forward to participating in the event, which, for St John's pupils, had an Asian theme. Pupils understand the importance of physical fitness and the contribution of sport to enable them to live a healthy lifestyle.
- The range of subjects taught make a very good contribution to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are strong links with St. John the Evangelist Church. A calm, caring and harmonious ethos pervades the school.
- The local authority has supported the school well. Effective links with other schools have enabled teachers to observe best practice and work alongside other teachers to improve their teaching. Recently, due to the school's rapid improvement, the level of support quite rightly has been reduced.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This is because they visit the school to find out for themselves what is happening. They use the school's raising achievement plan to guide their work, making regular visits during the school day to check the effectiveness of planned improvements.
- The headteacher provides governors with a broad range of evidence to enable decisions on the pay progression of staff to be made, linked to their performance. This has also ensured that funding decisions on the training of staff are allied to improving teaching. A planned programme of support for weaker teachers has been effective in strengthening the quality of teaching across the school.
- Governors have a very good understanding of information on pupils' achievement and how it compares with schools nationally. School leaders provide clear, detailed information on pupils' achievement to enable governors to raise challenging question and hold school leaders to account. Governors are anxious to ensure that no group of pupils is disadvantaged. They have made correct decisions on budget spending to ensure 'frontline' staff have the greatest impact on raising standards. The governing body meet all statutory requirements. The systems and procedures in place to safeguard pupils are secure.

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	133532
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	441637

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	374
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bill Blakey
Headteacher	Mark Smith
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 November 2012
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