

St John's Catholic Primary School, Banbury

Avocet Way, Chatsworth Drive, Banbury, OX16 9YA

Inspection dates 10–11 September 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well and flourish socially. The attainment of most pupils is above average by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress, especially in developing personal and social skills.
- Across the school, teaching inspires a love of learning in pupils and ensures that they improve their literacy and numeracy skills quickly.
- Pupils are great ambassadors for the school. They are friendly and polite and behave exceptionally well at all times. They feel very safe.
- Pupils have many memorable experiences during their time in school. These contribute extremely well to their personal development.
- Senior leaders have ensured that the school has continued to improve since the previous inspection. There have been consistent improvements in teaching and, as a result, the rate of pupils' progress and their levels of attainment have been rising.
- Leaders check provision thoroughly. They respond quickly to provide effective support to any pupils who may be in danger of falling behind.
- The knowledgeable governing body provides good support and challenge to other leaders.
- Parents support the school well. They play an important part in its success by funding projects and helping their children at home.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The pupils' work in aspects of information and communication technology (ICT) requires improvement. This is because the school does not have sufficient resources to support pupils in improving their skills in computing.
- On occasion, teachers provide work for pupils that is too hard or too easy and this can slow down their learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 18 lessons, of which three were observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made some shorter visits to lessons to check on aspects of teaching and the pupils' progress.
- Discussions were held with pupils, members of the governing body, members of staff and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the views of 78 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspectors also read letters from parents, looked at the school's own surveys of parental opinions and talked to some parents at the start of the school day.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and heard some pupils read. They looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information about pupils' learning and progress, planning and monitoring documents and the school development plan. They also scrutinised records relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding and health and safety.
- The inspectors analysed 30 questionnaires from staff.

Inspection team

Mike Capper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Nigel Duncan

Additional Inspector

Gill Walley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, but around one in three has English as an additional language. The most common home language for these pupils is Polish.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs on the school roll is much lower than that found in most schools.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is very low. This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after.
- 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 resources so that pupils can improve their computing skills more quickly.
- Improve teaching by ensuring that pupils are always given activities which are set at the best level to accelerate their progress and to ensure there are no occasions when work is too hard or too easy for them.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders are successful in ensuring that pupils achieve well.
- Senior leaders make good use of data to check that all groups and individuals, including those eligible for additional government funding, make good progress. They ensure that school assessments are accurate by sharing information both within school and also, increasingly, in partnership with other schools. Pupils' attainment has been rising across the school, with national test results at the end of Year 6 in 2013 the best ever. Leaders have achieved this success without losing their strong focus on developing personal qualities such as respect, resilience and kindness.
- Planning for the next stage of the school's development is thorough and is based on accurate self-evaluation. Good use is made of training and performance management to improve teaching. Teachers are constantly challenged to improve and clear links have been established between good teaching and salary progression. There is no complacency and leaders have developed clear strategies to develop teaching further and to tackle weaknesses in ICT and the occasional lack of challenge for pupils in lessons.
- Middle leaders (such as those in charge of subjects) play a good part in securing school improvement. Most have a very clear picture of what still needs improving because they have good opportunities to check provision for themselves.
- The curriculum (topics and the subjects taught) promote good progress in basic skills and comply with current legislation. However, the school does not have enough resources to allow pupils to develop a full range of skills in computing.
- Activities in lessons, clubs and visits contribute extremely well to pupils' great enjoyment of school and to their very strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, teachers make imaginative use of the 'school forest' to teach pupils social skills such as team work and cooperation. Pupils leave school as well-adjusted, happy and confident individuals. They show good tolerance and respect for others and are prepared well for life in multicultural Britain.
- The school focuses well on improving pupils' healthy lifestyles and their physical well-being. Sport funding provided by the government is used to good effect to introduce pupils to new sports and to improve the skills of teachers. The impact of spending is monitored carefully to ensure that it provides value for money and is resulting in increased participation rates.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements. Adults are trained regularly on how to implement the school's safeguarding policies.
- The school has a very strong partnership with parents. They are almost unanimously happy with the work of the school and support it well by helping their children with work at home.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The quality of governance has improved since the previous inspection. Under the strong guidance of the Chair, the governing body has greatly increased its involvement in checking the work of the school. The governors have developed good procedures for finding things out for themselves. Consequently, they have a good understanding of what the school is doing well and what still needs improving. Governors are knowledgeable about how well the school is performing in comparison with others because they check assessment information thoroughly. They know where teaching is especially strong and how all teachers are helped to improve. They ensure that only good performance is rewarded financially. They monitor closely the use of additional government funding to ensure that it is used to good effect to support eligible pupils. They ensure that safeguarding procedures are of a high standard.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Parents and staff agree that the exemplary behaviour seen during the inspection is typical and is a key factor in pupils' good learning in lessons. Pupils explain clearly why they behave so well, making comments such as, 'If we are sensible we will succeed,' and, 'It is important that we do not stop others from learning.'
- Pupils are very polite and courteous. They develop a love of learning and work very hard at all times. They have very positive attitudes towards their work, happily attempting challenging tasks.
- The school promotes excellent relationships and tackles discrimination very robustly. Pupils support each

other extremely well in lessons, showing great tolerance and respect for the needs of others. There is a delightful atmosphere at break times, with pupils from different backgrounds playing together very happily. Older pupils, for instance, willingly volunteer to support children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and they carry out their responsibilities very sensibly.

- Pupils who arrive at school during the school year say that they settle very quickly because 'everyone is so friendly'.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils are very confident that bullying or 'falling out' is extremely rare; but, if it does happen it is tackled very quickly. Pupils report that there is always someone to talk to if they have a worry. Records show that bullying or poor behaviour is extremely uncommon and has been so for many years.
- The school's strong procedures to teach pupils about bullying mean that they are very aware that it can take many forms. They explain confidently how to avoid danger when using social media and know what to do if they have a concern.
- Activities such as cycling proficiency training and work in class about areas such as 'stranger danger', substance and drugs abuse and 'making safe choices' ensure that pupils are very clear about how to avoid potential dangers in later life.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is good and has improved since the previous inspection. This has been achieved through the good use of training and high levels of challenge from senior leaders when they review the quality of teaching. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve well over time.
- Members of staff are very enthusiastic and establish very good relationships with the pupils. They help pupils develop very positive attitudes towards learning by teaching them that it is 'okay to make a mistake'. This means that pupils are happy to try out new work because they know they can do so without fear of failure.
- Teachers expect pupils to behave well and this means that time is not wasted in lessons. They do not willingly accept second best, placing a good emphasis on neat presentation and expecting pupils to work hard all of the time.
- Across the school, reading, writing and mathematics are taught well, resulting in the pupils' good progress. Teachers plan interesting activities that make pupils keen to learn. Good quality displays celebrate pupils' successes and motivate pupils to do well.
- Teachers constantly check up on how well pupils are doing by, for example, asking questions or listening to discussions. They use this assessment information well most of the time to provide good challenge, although, just occasionally, teaching does not take enough account of what pupils already know. This results in work sometimes being too hard or too easy for pupils.
- Teachers meet the needs of pupils with English as an additional language well and help them to improve their speaking skills quickly. For example, they ensure that they understand new vocabulary so that they can play a full part in activities.
- Adults give well-targeted support to pupils who have been identified as needing extra help including the most able, those who receive additional government funding and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs. Skilled teaching assistants make a good contribution to their learning, both in and out of lessons.
- The quality of teaching of ICT is restricted by a lack of resources. This means that teachers are unable to give pupils frequent chances to practise and improve their skills throughout the school day. This slows the rate at which skills improve.
- Parents are very pleased with the quality of teaching in the school. They support teachers well by helping their children with homework and by hearing them read.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress across the school. Pupils' attainment is consistently above average by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- When children start school most are working at typical levels for their age and then acquire new skills quickly in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children's knowledge of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) improves rapidly in Years 1 and 2. This is reflected in the above average percentage of pupils that reached or exceeded the expected level in the national phonics screening checks at the end of Year 1

in 2013.

- By the end of Year 6, pupils read and write confidently for a range of purposes. They use their good literacy and numeracy skills to good effect in other subjects, for example applying their knowledge well to solve mathematical problems or to write reports in history or science. However, pupils have few opportunities to use their computing skills in different subjects. This is due to a lack of resources and slows progress in ICT.
- The school ensures that all pupils make good progress over time, although work books show that occasionally work is too easy or too hard for some, slowing their progress at these times. This is not always picked up quickly enough by teachers in charge of subjects. Nonetheless, school data and national test results show that all pupils, including those from different ethnic backgrounds such as from Poland, achieve well. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make the same good progress as others.
- The most able pupils make good progress. Their progress is especially rapid towards the end of Key Stage 2 because they are given additional support to help them fulfil their potential. Consequently, around half of the pupils in the current Year 6 are already working around two years ahead of the expected level for their age in reading and mathematics.
- The small number of pupils who are supported through additional government funding make good or better progress across the school. In national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2013, they were about a term behind their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. They were, however, outperforming pupils nationally, who were not in receipt of funding, by about the same amount. The school's success at closing the gap between the attainment of eligible pupils and others has been achieved through the good use of individual and small group support that is well focused on individual needs.
- Pupils with English as an additional language make rapid progress in improving their speaking skills. Those who arrive in school during the year are given high quality support, both in and out of lessons; by the end of Year 6, most are working at the same levels as their classmates.

The early years provision

is good

- Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. A parent summed up some of the key strengths when commenting, 'We are already very pleased with the teaching and how well our child has settled.'
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children learn rapidly and make good progress because they are taught well. Consequently, attainment rises to above average levels by the end of the Reception Year.
- There is a very happy atmosphere in lessons. Teachers accurately assess children's prior learning and use this information well to meet their differing needs well, including for the most able and those who are disabled or have special educational needs. Adults focus strongly on teaching children about the importance of good behaviour and staying safe from their very first day in school. Consequently, children behave extremely sensibly and go about their chosen tasks with great purpose and enjoyment.
- Teachers effectively use a well-resourced outdoor area to allow children to practise and reinforce skills in literacy and numeracy. For example, they count and write when hunting for mini-beasts. Adults intervene well to move learning on, although just occasionally children do not receive enough adult support in developing their ideas so that skills can improve even more quickly.
- Teachers give very good support to children who are in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. They model new vocabulary extremely well. This means that these children quickly improve their confidence and their language skills.
- Provision is well led and managed. The use of end of year data on children's attainment has been improved so that the school can react quickly to any emerging trends. The school has good plans to increase further the focus on writing so that remaining gaps between attainment in that area of learning and other areas close even more quickly.

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	123181
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	448551

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	292
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barbara Hutchinson
Headteacher	Kevin O'Connor
Date of previous school inspection	21–22 October 2009
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