

St Amand's Catholic Primary School

St Mary's Road, East Hendred, Oxford OX12 8LF

Inspection dates	16–17 March 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The determination of the headteacher has driven improvements in teaching and learning. This has led to a quickening in pupils' rates of progress, which are now good.
- Pupils reach broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is good. Staff usually give pupils work that is well matched to their needs. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve well, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability.
- Teaching assistants typically make an important contribution to pupils' learning. They support the teachers to help make sure that pupils, especially those who have special educational needs or disability, do well.
- Pupils are very happy in school. They serve their school community well as they carry out many roles of responsibility with great maturity.
- Children in the early years achieve well because they settle quickly and learn how to share, take turns and play with each other. Adults are good role models, encouraging children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills as they play.
- Pupils' attendance has risen and is now above average.
- Leaders at different levels and staff are relentless in their pursuit of improvement. Effective systems are used to hold all staff to account.
- Governors know the school well and provide high-quality support and challenge to the leadership team. They have made an important contribution to improving the school's effectiveness.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes, teachers do not demand enough from the most-able pupils.
- Teachers do not always ensure that pupils respond to written feedback about their work in line with the school's policy.
- There are not enough tasks that require pupils to write increasingly at length and use their writing skills in different subject areas.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and the pupils' rates of progress, especially in writing, by:
 - making sure that teachers challenge the most-able pupils to articulate their thinking, deepen their understanding and strengthen their skills
 - ensuring that pupils respond fully to comments made by teachers about how to improve their work, in line with school policy
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to write at length in different topic areas and across the full curriculum.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher is held in high regard by governors, the parish, staff, parents and the wider community. She has established effective links with other schools so that teachers can learn from best practice across a wide range of subjects.
- Subject leaders in this small school, who typically lead more than one area of the curriculum, play a key role in ensuring school improvement. They check carefully to make sure that actions have the intended impact in their areas of responsibility. This has contributed to improvements in the teaching of English and mathematics in particular. The early years leader has ensured that this year group has continued to improve and ensures that children achieve well.
- The leadership of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is a strength of the school. Parents are fully involved in setting and reviewing their children's targets and understanding how well they are doing in reaching them. The coordinator knows the progress made by these pupils and has a very clear understanding of the actions required to ensure that their progress is at least good.
- The school's plans for improvement identify the right priorities, including in the action plans written by subject leaders. Targets are precise so that they can be measured and the plans set out who will check and evaluate the success of the actions.
- Teachers' performance is managed well. Staff have carefully chosen targets which are challenging and closely linked to the areas identified in the school's improvement plans. Leaders check on teachers' work on a regular basis and meet to discuss how well pupils are achieving. Staff training and support has helped teachers to reach challenging targets and improve their skills in a wide range of subjects.
- The school spends the physical education and sport premium wisely.
- Pupil premium funding is carefully targeted to increase the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils. Strategies include interventions such as 'Project X', which has had a profound impact on pupils' progress in reading through a strong focus on the sounds that letters make. The impact of these actions has been seen in the increasing rates of progress of this group so that most disadvantaged pupils are now reaching the standards attained by other pupils.
- A key strength is the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is promoted very well across the rich and diverse curriculum. There are many opportunities across subjects for pupils to use and apply their reading and mathematics skills. This is not always the case in writing.
- The local authority has provided good support and knows the school well. It has helped leaders to work successfully to address the key issues identified at the previous inspection.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors know the school well. They have a strong focus on pupils' achievement and welfare. As well as the school's self-evaluation document, subject leaders' reports on reading, writing and mathematics and visits to school enable governors to form a clear overview of the school's improvement. Their contribution has also strengthened since the last inspection as a result of attending training courses that have developed their ability to challenge and provide support for the school.
 - There are named governors linked to curriculum areas and school priorities. Governors' visits to school and interviews with members of staff have increased their overall impact. Governors ensure that pay progression is linked to performance; staff advance up the school's pay scale only if teaching is of good quality.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There are robust systems to ensure that keeping pupils safe is a high priority. Regular training helps staff make sure that they are able to identify any pupils who are at potential risk. The school works well with outside agencies to support more vulnerable students and their families.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers ensure that lessons hold and sustain pupils' interest well. Teachers' good subject knowledge is seen in the quality of their explanations and the pupils' responses to probing questions. Discussion is used well to generate thinking, to develop their ideas and consolidate their understanding. For example, in the Year 1/2 class pupils had an improving understanding of expanded noun phrases through a well-guided

discussion of how they are used effectively when reviewing a story. This was seen in the way pupils accurately placed this feature in book reviews they were completing with sustained effort.

- Teaching assistants support pupils' learning well. This is helped by their good understanding of how best to meet pupils' needs, particularly those who have special educational needs or disability or who are disadvantaged, and they support them well.
- Teachers assess pupils' attainment accurately. In most respects they apply the school's marking policy well. As a result, pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve and this generally ensures that mistakes in their work are not repeated. Teachers regularly write comments next to pupils' work to challenge their thinking and develop their skills further. Although written feedback is detailed and accurately points out to pupils how to improve, teachers do not insist that pupils have another go to try and improve their work. This limits pupils' progress.
- The teaching of phonics (the link between letters and the sounds they make) is a strength of the school. A high proportion of Year 1 pupils achieve the standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1. Teaching assistants are used very effectively to provide extra phonics sessions for those pupils identified as requiring additional help.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to use their reading skills across the curriculum. Teachers have high expectations of the accuracy of pupils' reading, for example, when researching information in topic work. Pupils are given good opportunities to use reading to correct their spellings, grammar or punctuation errors.
- There are some subjects where writing is not used sufficiently, for example history, and opportunities to develop writing at length are not planned or developed as well as they could be. Leaders are already working effectively to plug this gap.
- Teaching of mathematics is effective and has improved since the last inspection. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to talk to each other to work out which strategies to use to solve problems and challenges. This contributes to their good rates of progress. Mathematics lessons now cover a wide variety of topics and pupils' work shows a good range of recorded and practical work. The school is quick to identify underachievement in mathematics and, if this occurs, support for pupils is swiftly put into place. For example, the 'Power of 2' programme has been used well to help those who struggle with number patterns and times tables.
- Teachers plan topics that link different subjects together closely. Pupils say that they enjoy learning in this way. For example, work seen in books from pupils in Year 3/4, centred on a volcanoes topic: as well as composing interesting eyewitness accounts of an eruption, pupils explored different materials which they thought would be suitable to use to make a model to show how a volcano is constructed.
- Occasionally, teachers do not challenge most-able pupils to excel. This happens when teachers' expectations of what this group of pupils can do are not high enough. For example, in a writing lesson this group of pupils were not given a task that made them think hard enough on the accuracy of their sentence structure. On these occasions, some pupils make slow progress and do not reach the standards of which they are capable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and take a great pride in their work, and rightfully so. Pupils take care to present their work well and strive to do their best. Pupils appreciate the amount of support and guidance given to them.
- Pupils are courteous and polite and look after one another sensitively. Older pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities to help look after younger pupils. They take their responsibilities as school councillors very seriously and play an important role in shaping improvements.
- Pupils are highly confident and fully prepared to put forward their views in a thoughtful and respectful way. This is because they are taught how to listen carefully to the views and learning of others and present their own view in a clear and polite manner.
- Playtimes are planned well and new sports activities are helping these occasions to be engaging and fun. Pupils say that breaks are great, with plenty to do and time to play with their friends. Pupils have good attitudes to keeping healthy and have a good grasp of the features of a healthy lifestyle. The responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and discussions with parents in the school playground indicate that the overwhelming majority are happy with all aspects of the school's work. Parents know that the school keeps their children safe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Attitudes to learning are excellent and in all classes there is a tangible air of excitement and enthusiasm that ripples from one child to another as they learn. Pupils make great efforts with tasks and questions that they find difficult. For example, a pupil made strenuous attempts to use phonics accurately when reading aloud, showing impressive progress.
- Classrooms are exceptionally calm and orderly, enabling pupils to focus on their work without interruption. Pupils behave outstandingly well around the school, in the lunch hall and when moving through corridors.
- Leaders have ensured that the proportion of pupils who attend school regularly has risen to above average over the last two years. This is helping pupils to make more progress than before.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of the types of bullying that may take place. They report that bullying is not tolerated and that there is no bullying in school. The school's own records show that incidents of bullying are rare and that they are rigorously followed up.
- Pupils say that disruption in lessons is very rare and that the behaviour system and rewards are very effective. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and school records show that these expectations are usually met.
- Pupils spontaneously rise to the challenge set by teachers and teaching assistants. This reflects their desire to learn all the time and in all subjects. For example, in Year 6 pupils made outstanding efforts to use their knowledge from previous work on religious books to understand some of the key differences between Judaism and Islam.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- The good start children make in the early years is built on well as pupils move through Key Stage 1. They make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 2 in 2015, the most recent attainment information shows that pupils reached average standards. This represents good progress from their often low starting points. Reception children are well prepared to start Year 1 since the proportion achieving a good level of development is above the national average.
- Pupils currently in Key Stage 2 make good progress. By the end of Year 6 in 2015 their attainment was at the national averages for reading, writing and mathematics. It has risen over the last two years because teachers provide work that motivates pupils to learn. Pupils do well in reading because those with weaker phonics skills receive frequent help to improve as they move through the school. In mathematics, work in books shows that pupils are making good gains because they regularly apply their mathematical knowledge to practical problems.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are making at least expected progress. This is because appropriate plans are in place to match teaching to their learning needs. Detailed, personalised programmes are put in place for pupils where required.
- The very small minority of disadvantaged pupils, those entitled to the government's additional pupil premium funding, are making good progress in mathematics, writing and reading. The school's own performance information and pupils' work show that there is no significant gap in attainment between this group and other pupils at the school.
- When given the opportunity, the most-able pupils show their capabilities, for example in explaining their reasoning in solving problems. Overall, however, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply the skills they have learned or deepen their understanding.
- Year 6 pupils are well prepared for starting secondary school.

Early years provision

is good

- The Reception children are taught in a mixed-age class alongside Year 1 pupils. The tasks are planned effectively to ensure that good account is taken of their wide-ranging abilities.
- Children in the early years make good progress from their individual starting points. Carefully tailored provision is made for the children who have special educational needs or disability in the Reception class.
- The strong teaching in the Reception class provides an effective balance of teacher-led activities and opportunities for children to explore and learn by themselves. Activities are well matched to the children's abilities, and staff use questioning effectively to reinforce and develop children's understanding.

- Children behave well. They take a keen interest in the tasks provided and are motivated to learn. Children mix well with each other, taking turns and sharing resources sensibly. They learn to follow instructions closely, listen to adults and readily contribute their ideas.
- Children have a good understanding of how to play safely, as shown by their play on the climbing equipment outside and their use of wheeled toys and tricycles. Relationships are strong and this ensures that there is an atmosphere of warmth and mutual respect.
- Parents value the experiences their children have in the early years. As one parent commented about their child, 'She is enjoying every aspect of school life.' Parents also appreciate the contact that they regularly have with staff so that any concerns can be quickly dealt with.
- Leaders regularly and carefully carry out assessments and take successful steps to ensure that children are making the progress they should and learn in a safe environment. Adults quickly identify and intervene to help any children who are at risk of falling behind and children who have special educational needs or disability. Action is taken promptly to ensure their needs are fully met.

School details

Unique reference number	123224
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10002329

This inspection 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	121
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Katherine Oldham
Headteacher	Helen Ellery
Telephone number	01235 833342
Website	www.st-amands.oxon.sch.uk
Email address	office.3855@st-amands.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 December 2013

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes, with the exception of Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is lower than the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups; few speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- A before- and after-school club is based on the site and is managed by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in eight lessons, six of which were jointly seen with the headteacher. He also examined the quality of work in pupils' books.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school, and at breaks and lunchtimes. He had informal discussions with pupils, met with the school council and listened to some pupils read.
- The inspector assessed 39 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, a letter from a parent and spoke to parents at the end of the school day.
- The inspector evaluated the responses from eight staff questionnaires and met with the headteacher, other school leaders, four governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at school documents, including information about pupils' achievement, records of behaviour and attendance, records of monitoring, school self-evaluation, plans for improvement, and information relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Richard Blackmore, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2016

