

St Catherine's Catholic Primary School, Swindon

Davenwood, Upper Stratton, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 7LL

Inspection dates

18–19 December 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
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

- Since the previous inspection, leaders, including the governing body, have taken rapid and decisive action to address the identified concerns.
- Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for further development. They challenge and support leaders appropriately to secure further improvements.
- Subject leaders are relentless in their drive to continue to improve pupils' outcomes. As a result, pupils' progress and attainment is increasingly strong across all subjects.
- In 2018, by the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in reading, writing and maths was above the national average.
- Pupils behave well. They have positive attitudes to their learning and work hard. They are unreservedly friendly and honest. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive.
- Children in the early years make a good start to their education. They settle quickly because of well-established routines. However, not enough of the most able children exceed the early learning goals.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers use their skills well to plan exciting lessons that engage and motivate pupils. However, at times, the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged in mathematics in key stage 1 and in writing in key stage 2.
- Teachers plan thoughtfully to meet the needs of pupils with special educational and/or disabilities (SEND).
- The curriculum is well planned and provides pupils with rich and varied learning experiences. The curriculum motivates and engages pupils and contributes well to their personal and social development.
- Leaders have recently introduced an assessment system to evaluate accurately pupils' achievement in subjects other than mathematics and English. They recognise that the system is still in its infancy and requires further refinements.
- Leaders are working hard to improve the attendance of the small proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent. However, there is still more to do to ensure that these pupils attend more often.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers provide tasks that challenge the most able pupils.
- Strengthen pupils' outcomes by refining assessment systems to support teachers further in planning precise next steps for pupils in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Continue to work with parents and carers to promote disadvantaged pupils' attendance and reduce their persistent absence.
- Continue to improve the quality of early years provision by ensuring that staff provide high levels of challenge for the most able children.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders, provides clear direction and vision for the school. Together, they have communicated their vision well to a motivated and close-knit group of staff. Staff morale and expectations are high.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. Plans to further improve the school are precise and identify appropriate areas for further development.
- Middle leaders are highly effective. High-quality professional development provided by senior leaders and external support have supported their confidence and expertise. They monitor and evaluate the impact of teaching and learning in their subject areas well. As a result of middle leaders' actions, pupils' outcomes are strong.
- The provision for supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. The school's values of love, service, peace, mercy, belief and truth are upheld by pupils and staff. Pupils reflect on their values at times of meditation and they say that this helps them concentrate on what is important to them. Pupils learn about other cultures and faiths.
- A link with a school in Malawi has helped pupils develop a better understanding of the lives led by children in different parts of the world. School pupil chaplains, bullying ambassadors and the school council teach pupils the importance of British values.
- Senior leaders are determined that pupils have opportunities to participate in a range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. Pupils say that they enjoy the opportunities to participate in a range of different sports that they would not normally have access to, for example rock climbing and ice skating. Pupils regularly participate in sporting competitions, including Swindon school's football league.
- Leaders manage teachers' performance effectively. Teachers, and particularly middle leaders, say that they have benefited from high-quality training opportunities.
- Leaders have ensured that additional funds to support pupils with SEND are spent effectively. Rigorous monitoring of additional support and provision ensures that pupils are receiving the appropriate level of support to make strong progress.
- The leader responsible for pupil premium funding ensures that pupils who are eligible for the funding achieve well. Her tenacious approach and rigorous monitoring have ensured that pupils make strong progress from their starting points. As well as a strategic focus on pupils' outcomes, leaders have also ensured that pupils have access to a wide range of well-being experiences. Leaders use the funding effectively to continue to improve disadvantaged pupils' attendance. However, a proportion of disadvantaged pupils are persistently absent.
- The curriculum is well planned. It provides pupils with opportunities to develop a love of learning through well-targeted enrichment opportunities. For example, learning about knights was made more exciting with pupils visiting Warwick Castle. Pupils report that the curriculum enables them to use their skills in wider contexts. Pupils also spoke enthusiastically about being able to use their music skills to perform nationally in a

'Young Choirs' event.

- Leaders have recently established an assessment system which helps them to evaluate the progress that pupils make across the curriculum and the standards that they achieve in each subject. This system has yet to be refined and fully embedded.
- Parents speak highly of the school. Parents, who spoke with inspectors at the start of the school day, were unanimous in their positive views of the school. The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, are also extremely positive.

Governance of the school

- Governors are committed and passionate about the school's success. They have a range of skills and expertise to support the school. Governors recognise that, in the past, the governing body did not react quickly enough to the decline in standards. However, following external training and guidance, governors now play a significant role in driving school improvement.
- Governors can articulate clearly the many ways in which they have challenged and supported leaders. They monitor the school finances and additional government funding with precision to support the progress of all groups of pupils. They are meticulous in their evaluation of the impact of pupil premium spending to support the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who are looked after.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils' safeguarding and welfare are well managed. The checks carried out on adults who work at the school are thorough and well organised. Leaders, including governors, ensure that the school meets the requirements for recruiting and appointing new employees. Governors commission regular audits to ensure that systems being used by leaders are robust and fit for purpose.
- Systems for raising and reporting concerns are clear. Associated files and paperwork are well organised and enable leaders and external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils are safe. Leaders provide staff with regular updates to keep them well informed. This ensures that staff and pupils are vigilant regarding the signs that children may be at risk.
- Pupils looked after by the local authority receive good support. Leaders are relentless in ensuring that their attendance, progress, attainment and emotional health and well-being are monitored carefully. Funding is spent appropriately to ensure that their specific needs are met.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and can talk about this confidently, including when using the internet.
- All parents who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire agreed that their children feel safe, happy and well looked after at the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- There is a positive climate for learning across all year groups in the school. Pupils have boundless energy and enthusiasm for learning. Teachers foster and channel this passion well and this enables pupils to grow with their learning across the curriculum.
- Teachers plan interesting lessons and engage pupils in their learning. They use their subject knowledge effectively. Teachers provide a clear sequence of learning that develops pupils' skills and understanding. For example, pupils mummified tomatoes before writing their own instructions on mummification. Pupils say that this brings their learning alive and makes it more purposeful.
- Teachers use a range of different questions to find out what pupils know. They do not always accept pupils' first responses, and probe further to check pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers use this information to identify where pupils require additional help. As a result, pupils who have fallen behind quickly catch up and make good progress.
- The teaching of reading is a strength. Historically, leaders recognised that too much focus had been placed upon improving other areas of the curriculum to the detriment of reading. Their swift and decisive action has raised teachers' expectations of reading. The quality of reading materials that teachers use develops pupils' vocabulary, and that feeds into their writing.
- Teachers promote a range of reading skills effectively. They question pupils well. This encourages pupils to infer and deduce meaning from texts and deepens their understanding of the texts they read.
- Regular and systematic phonics lessons are effective in enabling younger pupils to acquire the phonics skills they need for early reading.
- The teaching of mathematics is strong. Pupils work proficiently across a range of concepts and they develop a good level of mathematical fluency. Work in current pupils' books shows that they are making strong gains in mathematics. However, pupils in key stage 1 are not being challenged as well as they could be. This is because teachers are not moving pupils on quickly enough once they have grasped the learning.
- The teaching of writing is effective. Teachers give pupils a wide range of opportunities to write for different purpose and audiences across a range of different topics. Pupils write confidently and at length. However, most-able pupils in key stage 2 are not achieving as well as they could in some year groups. This is because teachers are not adjusting their plans quickly enough to ensure that pupils are challenged appropriately.
- Teaching and learning are good across a range of subjects. Work in pupils' books in subjects other than English and mathematics shows that teachers plan activities that build upon pupils' knowledge and understanding across the curriculum well. Pupils speak with pride about their achievements in a wide range of subjects.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning, challenging pupils to achieve their very best. They question pupils effectively to ensure that they have secured the learning before moving them on. As a result, pupils who are supported by

teaching assistants make good progress from their starting points.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Leaders place a high priority on developing pupils' sense of belonging. For example, a vibrant entrance display promotes the Catholic ethos of the school: 'Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire'.
- The nurturing school environment creates a strong community where individuals are respected and valued alike. One parent who commented on Parent View wrote, 'The school is like an extended family where everyone knows each other and looks after one another.' This view was reflected in the comments made by other parents.
- The school's own strong Catholic values are embedded within the curriculum. Pupils are proud of their achievements and their work in the wider community. Pupils who spoke with an inspector reported on how what they do in the community makes them feel valued and worthy citizens. They particularly enjoy reading, playing board games and singing carols with older members of the community.
- Pupils also state that they feel safe and looked after in school. Pupils are clear on how to stay safe inside and outside of school. Pupils are clear that they would not provide their names and details when using the internet. Pupils are aware of different types of bullying. Although they say this is rare, they like the fact that they can always speak to a 'bullying ambassador' if they have any concerns. They are also confident that adults will support them if they have any worries of concerns.
- Pupils are taught well how to keep themselves safe in school and outside of school. The pupils who spoke with the inspector were appreciative of the regular external visitors to support school assemblies, particularly the NSPCC.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Records show that incidents of poor behaviour are rare, and this view is supported by the pupils who completed the pupil survey. Pupils listen well to adults and respond quickly to their directions. This maximises opportunities for learning.
- Pupils' conduct around school is impeccable. They are polite to each other and to adults.
- Pupils' attendance is in line with the national average. Leaders monitor attendance scrupulously for any patterns and trends. This has enabled leaders to put in early intervention to support pupils and families. However, a proportion of disadvantaged pupils remain persistently absent and their attendance is below the national average.
- Very occasionally, pupils in key stage 2 lose concentration and do not sustain their focus on learning.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2017 and 2018, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average. In 2018, a greater proportion of pupils than the national average achieved the higher standard.
- In 2017 and 2018, a large proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard at the end of key stage 2. This is because leaders use the pupil premium funding well to address any barriers to learning.
- The small number of pupils with SEND make strong progress from their starting points. Pupils are supported effectively, and they engage with well-designed learning that challenges and consolidates their knowledge and understanding.
- In 2017 and 2018, pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 1 were above the national averages. However, the proportion of pupils working at greater depth remains below the national average. On occasion, the most able pupils currently in the school are not consistently challenged, particularly in mathematics.
- Over the past three years, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been above the national average.
- Across a range of subjects, current pupils make strong progress overall. The progress that pupils made in writing in 2018 was significantly above the national average. Current pupils' progress in writing continues to be strong. However, some most-able pupils in key stage 2 are not being challenged as well as they could be.
- In mathematics, pupils are continuing to make strong progress. In 2018, nearly every pupil achieved the expected standard. Pupils' books show that they are working with greater fluency and accuracy in their calculation skills. Pupils use their knowledge confidently to apply their skills to mathematical problems. However, teachers in key stage 1 do not consistently challenge the most able pupils well. Consequently, some pupils do not reach the higher standards that they are capable of.
- Pupils read widely and for enjoyment. Leaders are deeply committed to promoting reading. Vibrant displays across the school reinforce the value of reading well. Teachers share books through the reading of stories, helping pupils to develop a love of reading. Pupils who read to an inspector read with great confidence and fluency.

Early years provision

Good

- A large proportion of children start the early years provision with a level of development that is below what is typical for their age in most areas of learning. Effective collaboration with parents and local pre-schools ensures that teachers have appropriate assessment information. This enables staff to ensure that teaching and learning meets the needs of most children well. Adults swiftly establish high expectations and children rise to the challenge.
- Outcomes for children in the early years have been either in line with or above the national average for the last three years. The proportion of children reaching expected

standards, the early learning goals, for reading, writing and mathematics is above average. However, the proportion of children exceeding the expected levels is below average.

- As a result of good-quality support and provision, disadvantaged children achieve as well as other children.
- Leaders have created an engaging and stimulating environment for children to learn in. The early years environment offers a wide range of carefully planned activities to ensure that children have a range of opportunities to engage in learning of their own. Inspectors observed motivated and enthused children who are curious. They take responsibility for their own learning in purposeful play, building on the skills and knowledge taught to them by the adults.
- Relationships between adults and children are very positive. Children are happy and behave well. They work and play well together in a harmonious environment.
- The quality of teaching is good. The early years staff work well together to assess children's learning and plan lessons that meet the needs of most children. The early years leader continuously reviews children's growing skills and interests. Consequently, most children make strong progress from their starting points.
- However, the most able children are not consistently challenged. Activities for the most able do not routinely deepen children's knowledge and skills. Leaders are aware of this and have strategic plans in place to meet the needs of the most able. Nevertheless, it is too early to see any discernible impact of the planned actions.
- Links with parents are effective. Parents report that the information sessions are very effective in enabling parents to prepare their child for school and help with learning at home. Teachers share clear assessments of children's development with parents and parents use this information to support their child's learning at home.
- All statutory safeguarding and welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	138619
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10058304

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	194
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Anne Marie Long
Headteacher	Andrew Henstridge
Telephone number	01793 822699
Website	www.stcatherines.swindon.sch.uk
Email address	head@stcatherines.swindon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 November 2016

Information about this school

- St Catherine’s Catholic Primary School is part of Clifton Diocesan Education Consortium.
- The majority of pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND or who are supported by an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The school is designated as having religious character and received a section 48 inspection in October 2014.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons across the school. Some observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour around the school and at break and lunchtime.
- Meetings were held with the school improvement partners, senior and middle leaders, the person responsible for safeguarding, and the leader with responsibility for pupils with SEND.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with four governors.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils informally during their break and lunchtimes and in classes. They also held a more formal discussion and listened to groups of pupils read.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's self-evaluation document, the school's improvement plan and documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors examined a sample of pupils' books from across the school jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors spoke with parents as they brought their children to school in the morning. They also considered 26 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, 15 responses to the staff survey and 22 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Matt Middlemore, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Deborah Wring

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
M1 2WD

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