

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Oxford

Headley Way, Headington, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX3 7SX

Inspection dates

10–11 July 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has created a vibrant school that is ambitious for all pupils. She is supported extremely well by staff who share her vision of providing pupils with a stimulating and varied curriculum. They work with dedication to ensure that pupils learn successfully.
- Governors are experienced and skilled in fulfilling their duties. They demonstrate strong commitment to the school's ethos and use their knowledge and expertise to hold leaders to account. Governors are effective because of their accurate understanding of the school.
- Staff are proud to be part of the school's team. They value the opportunities they have to develop engaging learning activities and have benefited from relevant, high-quality training.
- Leaders have ensured that teaching, learning and assessment are consistently good. This has been achieved despite considerable changes in staffing. However, there is some variability in the quality of the teaching.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have access to a rich curriculum. This is a particular strength of the school. However, subject-specific knowledge and skills are not effectively sequenced to ensure that pupils build on prior learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural (SMSC) understanding is exceptionally well developed. School leaders are wholly committed to broadening pupils' understanding of the world. They ensure that pupils have thought-provoking learning activities that develop their ability to reflect and to form their own views.
- Current pupils make strong progress. By the end of key stage 2, pupils attain highly and make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Attainment for disadvantaged pupils is strong and improving. Equally, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well because of the support they receive.
- Pupils behave well. They conduct themselves responsibly and show respect for others. They attend school well.
- The early years provision is excellent. Children savour the rich experiences that are planned for them. They make strong and sustained progress because of consistently effective teaching. Teachers' skilled use of assessment supports children's learning very well.
- Many parents and carers praise the school's stimulating and caring provision for their children.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop the quality of teaching so that all is as strong as the best, enabling pupils to make excellent progress.
- Ensure that the progression of skills, knowledge and understanding in each subject is logically sequenced so that pupils can build on their prior learning as they move through the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher's passionate belief that education has the power to transform the lives of her pupils shapes the culture of the school. She inspires the same commitment in her leadership team, who ably support her in creating a school where all are welcomed and nurtured.
- The headteacher and governors have established a clear vision. It is exemplified in the school's mission statement, 'Let us protect with love all that God has given us.' Pupils know and understand what this means. They can apply it to all aspects of their experience at school.
- Leaders have built a rich curriculum which offers abundant opportunities for pupils to discover their talents and strengths. Leaders have ensured that academic learning is balanced well with activities to support pupils' social, emotional and spiritual development. Pupils thrive in the aspirational culture, as demonstrated by a quarter of the school being members of the choir and orchestra. Inspectors were fortunate enough to see and hear them rehearsing.
- Middle leaders are effective. They are supported and trained well and are encouraged to take the lead and innovate within the curriculum. They are secure in their knowledge of pupils' strengths and needs. Leaders work with their teams to ensure that teachers' assessments are used to adapt teaching to improve learning. Middle leaders review and evaluate the success of their work regularly throughout the year. This review is entirely focused on its impact on individual pupils' progress and how their learning needs have been met.
- This academic year has seen a significant number of new teachers join the school. The majority of these have been newly and recently qualified teachers. They are very appreciative of the professional development and training that they have had from leaders. They have also benefited from the excellent practice of more experienced teachers. Leaders have been successful in maintaining good-quality teaching and learning at a time of high teacher turnover.
- Staff are very proud of being part of the team at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School. They enjoy its creative and innovative culture. They also support the unequivocal focus on the equal value of each pupil. This is a school that fully embraces the diversity of its community. Staff work hard but are aware that senior leaders take every care to reduce their workload.
- The leadership of the provision for pupils with SEND is a strength of the school. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) makes sure that the specific needs of each pupil are considered carefully. She ensures that provision is adapted to support pupils to make good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders are deeply reflective about the needs of disadvantaged pupils and support them well to overcome all barriers to their learning. Leaders and the home school link worker build supportive relationships with families. They also liaise with external agencies effectively to bring in the right support for vulnerable pupils.
- The same diligence is evident in the school's use of the physical education and sport

premium funding. Leaders and governors think very carefully about how to maximise the impact so that all pupils benefit.

Governance of the school

- Governors are very well informed about the school's work and astutely evaluate its strengths and weaknesses. They share leaders' vision that pupils should have a wide range of opportunities to grow and develop their talents. The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Through frequent and focused visits to the school, governors view the school's practice at first hand. They also use these visits to fully acquaint themselves with the school's safeguarding procedures and to monitor how well additional funding, such as the pupil premium and the sport premium, is being used.
- Governors demonstrate that they hold school leaders to account. For example, they use knowledge gathered from exit interviews with staff who leave to discuss with leaders ways in which the school could improve further. Outcomes from such discussions shape the school improvement plan.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have a thorough understanding of the school's local context and potential risks to pupils. They work with systematic determination to ensure that families and pupils have the support and information they need to keep safe.
- Staff are well trained and are alert to any indication that a pupil may be at risk. They make timely referrals and understand their responsibilities well. Consequently, pupils' needs are acted on quickly and decisively.
- Pupils report that they feel safe and that adults are quick to act when they raise a concern. Parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey also consider their children to be safe at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The strong and positive relationships between pupils and adults underpin the school's effective teaching, learning and assessment. Teachers and learning support assistants take the time to know their pupils as individuals.
- With a high proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language, every effort is made to ensure that all pupils develop strong language skills and build a rich vocabulary. Pupils who join the school at an early stage of speaking English receive carefully targeted support.
- Teachers make good use of joint planning opportunities and are supported to use assessment information to adapt teaching activities well to pupils' learning needs. Most do this very effectively. Leaders are aware that there is some variability in the quality of how this is done. They have plans in place to support and train staff further.

- Most teachers have strong subject knowledge which is used effectively to engage pupils and deepen their understanding. On occasions, however, the teaching in some subjects, such as history and geography, is not of the same high quality as in others.
- Assessment is used effectively throughout the school. Teachers are quick to spot pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Leaders ensure that information from pupils' progress meetings is shared and acted on quickly.
- Phonics is taught well. Pupils are confident in using their decoding and comprehension skills when approaching new and challenging texts for the first time.
- Reading is a priority for the school. This year, there has been a further push made to introduce new and stimulating texts to engage pupils' interest, as well as providing pupils with academic challenge. For example, Year 2 pupils were delighted by the comedy as well as fantasy they have discovered when reading 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'.
- The stimulus from these texts often leads to some exceptional writing throughout the school. However, teachers' expectations for the standard of pupils' writing across all subjects are variable. This results in pupils' work in some subjects being at odds with the higher quality and extended writing seen in their English work. The notable exception to this is the high-quality writing seen in pupils' religious education books.
- The teaching of mathematics has been a specific focus this year. Leaders ensured that all staff had intensive training at the start of the year so that they could be confident and consistent in their teaching. Mathematics learning is effective as a result of this investment. Pupils talked enthusiastically about their learning in mathematics and how they support each other in their work as 'maths partners'.
- Pupils benefit from the breadth of the curriculum. Teaching in foundation subjects is planned to engage pupils' interests and develop their thinking skills. Pupils respond well, enjoying the learning variety and their teachers' enthusiasm. However, the learning is not always sufficiently demanding. Neither is the teaching of skills and knowledge appropriately sequenced to build on what pupils have already learned and understood.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They know that they are valued and relish the varied learning activities on offer.
- Pupils can articulate the importance and meaning of the school's mission, 'Let us protect with love all that God has given us.' In the many opportunities pupils have to reflect, they are encouraged to think about the world and the responsibilities they have as global citizens. A typical example of how pupils make decisions to promote equality in school is the 'no pencil case' policy that is shortly to be introduced. Pupils have realised that not all pupils can afford the popular pencil cases and now see that this is divisive. Consequently, they have sought a solution that prevents any pupil from feeling inferior.

- Pupils have a clear understanding of what bullying is and how they should respond if they see bullying. Pupils refer to the school's policy of 'be an upstander not a bystander', which exemplifies pupils' awareness of their responsibility to put matters right. Pupils have been trained as anti-bullying ambassadors and have introduced a variety of strategies, such as the 'worry box' in each classroom. Although a few parents who responded to Parent View did raise bullying as a concern, pupils are definite in their opinion that bullying is rare and always dealt with decisively.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in a variety of contexts, including when online. They also understand the importance of keeping healthy through diet and physical activity. They enjoy the many and varied extra-curricular activities on offer, including music, dance, sport and – a very successful option – chess.
- Pupils' SMSC development is very strong. School leaders are determined to reflect the diversity of cultures within the school's community in order to promote understanding and tolerance. Parents are invited to come into school to give talks and answer questions. The school also organises events throughout the year to celebrate the full range of nationalities within school and the local community. Inspectors were able to witness the annual sports day during the inspection. Families are invited to picnic and enjoy together the spectacle of the event. The day demonstrated the warm welcome the school gives to its local community.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. School leaders have put in place secure systems to promote high standards of behaviour which staff use well.
- Pupils value their learning and respond well to the consistent support and guidance that they receive. They are polite and courteous in the way they conduct themselves.
- In class, pupils often show high levels of engagement and positive attitudes towards learning. Occasionally, a few pupils allow the pace of their learning to slow or they become distracted. Staff are quick to address this behaviour and bring pupils back on-task in a cheery but firm manner.
- Pupils attend very well because they enjoy school, but also because leaders are robust in ensuring that any absence is followed up straight away.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes for pupils are good. By the end of key stage 2 in 2018, the progress that pupils had made in writing and mathematics was broadly in line with national figures. Progress in reading was also average but had declined from being above the national average in 2016.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics is above the national average and has been for the last three years.
- The unvalidated 2019 key stage 2 results have recently been released to the school and show that pupils' attainment in reading is similar to that of 2018. This year, more pupils have achieved the higher standard in writing. However, the work in pupils' books across key stage 2 shows that teachers' expectations for pupils' writing are not

consistently high for their work in all subjects.

- There has been an increase in the proportions of pupils achieving the expected and higher standards in mathematics. This has been achieved because of this year's renewed focus on the teaching of mathematics across the school.
- At the end of key stage 1, pupils attain well, with higher proportions attaining both the expected standard and greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics than nationally. This year has seen a further increase in the proportions of pupils achieving the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The attainment of the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is in line with the national figure. Nearly all pupils have met the standard by the end of Year 2.
- The attainment of current disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2 is strong. It is either in line with their peers or is improving rapidly.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make strong progress and attain as highly as their peers. This is because of the effective and well-targeted support they receive from when they enter the school.
- Pupils with SEND make strong progress from their starting points because of the high-quality support that is tailored to their needs.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children have an exceptionally positive start to their learning in Reception. This is due to the excellent relationships that staff quickly build with children and their families.
- Leaders ensure that each child and their stage of development are known before they start at the school. This early information is used to adapt and shape the curriculum, ready for their arrival in Reception.
- The leader of the early years provision is experienced and knowledgeable. She has developed her team and ensures that their skills and expertise continue to grow. She makes sure that all statutory requirements are met and that safeguarding processes are followed diligently and swiftly.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are highly effective because staff plan to meet children's needs and interests. Staff keep a close eye on the progress children make and adapt teaching to suit their changing needs.
- The development of children's language skills is of major importance, particularly for the high proportion of children at a very early stage of speaking English as an additional language when they start in Reception. Staff use questioning skilfully so that children practise their vocabulary and language development constantly.
- Expectations of all children are high, and this is nowhere more evident than in the choice of texts to enthuse them. The choice of 'The Lord of the Rings' has excited the children's imagination but also encouraged their deeper moral and spiritual thinking very successfully.
- The teaching of phonics is strong, and children enjoy using their skills when reading or

working out the sounds they wish to use in their writing.

- Children play well together, listening to and acting on instructions. They make very good use of the many and varied resources available to them, particularly the excellent outdoor learning space.
- Children make good progress from their starting points and attain well because of the highly effective provision. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has, historically, been above that seen nationally. Disadvantaged children also make strong progress.
- Children have a strong and appropriate understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, on a hot sports day during the inspection, children knew why it was important for them to protect themselves against the sun while they were outside.
- Parents are very positive about the early years provision. They appreciate the welcome they receive as they bring their children into Reception and the variety of ways that staff use to ensure that there is effective communication with parents.

School details

Unique reference number	123216
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10088178

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	411
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Mary Clarkson
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Tomkys
Telephone number	01865 763 357
Website	www.st-josephs-pri.oxon.sch.uk
Email address	office.3838@st-josephs-pri.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 June 2018

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. It has no nursery provision.
- Around 30% of pupils are White British. The school has 15 out of 17 possible ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above the national average and so is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is in line with the national figure.
- There is a breakfast club and a variety of after-school clubs and activities. These are managed by the governing body.
- The school received its most recent section 48 inspection in June 2019.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors conducted many visits to lessons to observe learning, speak with pupils and look at their work. Most of these visits were made jointly with school leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders, including the SENCo. The lead inspector also met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority on the telephone. Inspectors took account of 35 responses from members of staff to Ofsted's online survey.
- Inspectors spoke to parents on both days of the inspection and considered 71 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 49 free-text comments. The lead inspector also had a telephone conversation with a parent.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils when they visited lessons and during playtimes and lunchtimes. They met with a group of pupils formally and listened to some read. Inspectors scrutinised a large sample of pupils' work in books and considered 45 responses to the Ofsted online pupil questionnaire.
- The inspection team considered a wide range of documentation, including information available on the school's website and records relating to pupils' attainment, progress, attendance and behaviour. Information on governance, including the minutes of governors' meetings, was scrutinised. The school's self-evaluation and development plans were examined, along with records of the school's work to keep pupils safe.

Inspection team

Yasmin Maskatiya, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Peter Barnes	Ofsted Inspector
Judith O'Hare	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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