

Inspection of St John's Catholic Primary School, Banbury

Avocet Way, Chatsworth Drive, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX16 9YA

Inspection dates: 11–12 September 2019

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils attend school regularly and want to succeed but they do not do as well as they should because leaders' and teachers' expectations are too low. Older pupils are worried about making a poor start at secondary school because they have not learned enough.

In key stage 1, pupils have not got into good routines. Too many pupils are not ready to learn because teachers allow them to misbehave. However, children in the early years have got into better habits.

Pupils found last year difficult because there were so many staff changes. They say that this has got better since the start of the autumn term. They also appreciate the improved facilities. Pupils generally feel safe and know who to speak to if they have a concern. Some pupils say, and do, unkind things to each other. Although there is less bullying than previously, some pupils do not always treat each other respectfully.

Many pupils think deeply about how they can take care of others. However, they do not know enough about current issues in society or the issues they may face as they grow up.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The quality of education that the school provides is poor. Leaders have prioritised the wrong things. Some changes they have made have not helped to move the school forward. Leaders have also been slow to implement some necessary improvements, for example changes to strengthen the curriculum.

Although key stage 2 results improved in 2019, younger pupils do not acquire the reading knowledge and skills in phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) that they need. Too many pupils leave key stage 1 unable to read. Pupils also struggle to write well.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is poor. Leaders and governors have not focused enough on this aspect, including improving the contribution that teaching assistants make to pupils' learning. Some teachers do not manage the behaviour of pupils with SEND well enough.

The content of what pupils learn is not ambitious enough. Pupils do not gain a good grounding in a range of subjects. For example, in history, older pupils do not know enough about how people lived and thought in past times. Across different subjects, the topics pupils study are not well organised. Teaching does not provide pupils with solid foundations on which they can build their learning. For instance, in mathematics, teachers do not go back over pupils' mistakes. This means that pupils have gaps in their understanding and knowledge.

The school has a personal development programme but leaders have not organised this well enough. Pupils learn some aspects in more detail than others. For example, leaders and teachers emphasise the importance of spiritual reflection through assemblies and class discussion. However, pupils do not gain sufficient knowledge about life in modern Britain. They also do not have a deep enough understanding of how to have healthy relationships.

Pupils' behaviour has improved over the last school year but it is not yet good. It is better in key stage 2 than in key stage 1. In some key stage 1 classes, teachers have not made sure that pupils follow class routines, which interferes with pupils' learning. Leaders do not keep close tabs on pupils' behaviour in class. However, Reception staff have made sure that children practise routines, and their behaviour is therefore better than in other classes.

The school is working hard to reduce bullying and there is not as much as there was. Despite this, some pupils feel that other pupils are unkind to them during breaktimes. Staff do not always use agreed approaches for dealing with bullying.

The early years is weak. Children leave Reception without the skills and knowledge in reading, writing and number that they need to make a good start in key stage 1. Their writing skills are especially weak. New staff have made a good start on improving the curriculum but this is in its early days and there is still a lot to do.

Several governors, including the chair of the governing body, are new. Like many staff, they are committed to the school. Governors supported leaders well through last year's upheavals. However, they have not questioned leaders' decisions about what they do and the order in which they do it. They have not placed enough emphasis on improving the quality of pupils' education day to day and making sure that teachers' workload is manageable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. During the last year, leaders made positive changes to different aspects of safeguarding. The local authority has visited the school to check on the progress of improvements. Leaders have put in place recommendations arising from these checks. They have also strengthened the way that they record safeguarding concerns. The designated leader and her deputy carefully oversee this process. They keep a close eye on referrals they make to social care services to check that they are following up on agreed next steps. Several parents and carers commented on Parent View about how caring the school is.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The quality of the curriculum is weak across the school. Leaders and governors need to develop capacity in the leadership of the curriculum, including in the early years. Leaders should ensure that new curriculum plans are fully implemented and check that the taught curriculum closely matches their intentions.
- Teachers' subject expertise across the curriculum, including in phonics, is insufficient. Teachers need subject-specific training so that pupils can acquire firm foundations in the knowledge and skills they need to make a good start at secondary school.
- Leaders must place greater emphasis on improving early reading so that a greater proportion of pupils can apply their phonics knowledge accurately by the end of Year 1. Leaders and teachers should make sure that pupils who enter key stage 2 unable to read fluently receive the support that they require to catch up.
- Pupils with SEND do not have their needs met. Leaders should make sure that staff and teaching assistants receive training in meeting the very different needs of the pupils in this group. Leaders should also develop the range and quality of support they offer. They should carefully check that they have deployed support effectively.
- Leaders should tackle poor behaviour, in key stage 1 in particular, as a priority. Approaches for recording and analysing low-level disruption need to be developed further. Teachers, including newly qualified teachers (NQTs), should receive more training and support so that they can better manage pupils' behaviour in class. Leaders also need to ensure that actions to reduce bullying are working well.
- Members of the governing body are developing their processes and procedures. Governors are determined to improve the school but they do not challenge leaders effectively. Governors should make sure that actions are sharply focused on strengthening the quality of education for all pupils, including those with SEND, as well as on improving behaviour. They also need to check that leaders are tackling teachers' workload concerns.
- Leaders should make sure that all the different aspects of the school's work on personal development are equally strong, including those relating to pupils' journey into adulthood. They should carefully sequence what is taught so that, over time, pupils acquire in-depth knowledge of our society, its values and current issues, thus adding to pupils' cultural capital.
- The school should not appoint NQTs.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	123181
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10087939
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	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mrs Catherine Weaver
Headteacher	Miss Anna-Marie Donnelly
Website	www.st-johns-banbury.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	September 2014

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes to both the staff and the governing body, with a high proportion of staff leaving and joining the school. A new headteacher joined the school in September 2018. The new chair of the governing body took up her role in November 2018.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below the national average and, in several classes, there are no disadvantaged pupils.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, members of the governing body, including the chair, and the special educational needs

coordinator. They met a range of staff individually and in groups. Inspectors also met with two groups of pupils. Inspectors held meetings with a representative from the local authority who has been supporting the school and a representative from the diocese.

- As part of their inspection of safeguarding, inspectors met with the designated lead twice, once with her deputy and made telephone calls to the local authority's designated officer and representatives from the authority's multi-agency support hub. They also spoke with parents at the end of the school day and considered responses to the Parent View survey and the comments made in the free-text boxes on Parent View. Inspectors reviewed two emails parents sent to the school about previous safeguarding issues.
- Inspectors focused deeply on reading, mathematics, history and physical education. They visited classes, met with leaders, including subject leaders, and met separately with pupils and class teachers. Inspectors looked at pupils' work and heard pupils read.
- Inspectors also held meetings with leaders to discuss curriculum plans, met the early years leader and spoke with pupils about their day-to-day experiences at the school.
- Inspectors were aware during this inspection of historic allegations of a child protection nature, involving the school, that had come to light since the last inspection. These allegations have been investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by the school in response to the historic allegations were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform the inspectors' judgements.

Inspection team

Sarah Hubbard, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mineza Maher

Ofsted Inspector

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