

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Banbury

Fiennes Road, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX16 0ET

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 January 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend this caring, inclusive school. They feel safe, and have secure, positive relationships with each other and staff. Pupils understand the school's values, and strive to help each other and to make a positive difference to their community. Older pupils are excited about opportunities to take on leadership roles, such as being a 'community champion' or school council member. They enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular clubs, school trips and visitors. Pupils talk confidently about how to manage risks, such as the dangers of fire and drug use, and how to keep safe online.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. If pupils find school life challenging, there are trusted adults available who make sure that the right help is provided. Bullying is taken seriously by both staff and pupils. Although uncommon, staff manage any incidents sensitively and appropriately.

Leaders' high expectations mean that pupils try to do their best. However, younger pupils, including children in the early years, do not achieve as well as they should overall. While leaders know that teaching phonics effectively is the key to unlocking pupils' learning across the wider curriculum, this is not consistently effective.

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

Leaders have high ambitions, which means pupils achieve well by the end of Year 6. This is especially true for vulnerable pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders identify the needs of pupils with SEND quickly and precisely, making sure they get the right support. Despite recent staffing changes, leaders make sure there is a robust, collaborative approach that helps pupils with SEND to learn well. Leaders engage highly effectively with outside agencies and are tenacious in their approach to securing any additional, external support pupils with SEND might require.

Although leaders develop the curriculum in thoughtful ways, it is not yet as effectively implemented in key stage 1 and the early years as it is in key stage 2. This means that pupils' learning overall is not as strong as it should be, lower down the school. Younger pupils do not always have access to the key knowledge and vocabulary that they need. Teachers' checks on pupils' learning are not as effective. In the early years, staff's expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high. Some of the planned activities do not develop children's knowledge well enough. Despite strengths in helping children's physical and emotional needs to develop, some children are not as well prepared for Year 1 as they should be.

Leaders put reading at the centre of pupils' learning. They have rightly introduced a new approach to teaching phonics, beginning at the start of early years, which is strengthening this aspect of the school's work. Leaders prioritise training so that staff can deliver the school's new phonics programme. If pupils fall behind, staff respond quickly with the right support. However, this programme is at an early stage

of being put into practice. This means that too many children are not yet learning to read as well as they could. Staff select books that are matched closely to the sounds that pupils know. They promote reading for pleasure across the school by reading to pupils daily. Staff make books a key part of the curriculum. Leaders work with parents to help them understand how important it is to support their children's reading at home.

Leaders create very positive opportunities for pupils to learn community values. For example, the school council led an initiative to put new recycling schemes into each classroom. Through assemblies and the wider curriculum, pupils learn about people from different backgrounds, faiths and beliefs. Leaders use every opportunity to promote equality, tolerance and understanding. Leaders have developed strong approaches to promoting positive mental health, which supports both pupils and staff in considerate ways. Pupils' behaviour is managed effectively. Most pupils attend school regularly, and there are clear strategies in place to support any pupils and families if they struggle with this.

Leaders, including the governing body, are fully committed to the school. Parents value school staff and leaders highly. One parent said, 'Staff are very caring and supportive; it feels like being part of a family.' Leaders engage parents in the life of the school, but there is still some further work to do to make sure this is completely effective. Leaders take account of staff's workload and well-being in considerate ways. Governors know the strengths of the school and the precise areas that need to be improved. Although some governors are new to their roles, governors and trustees know how to support and challenge school leaders effectively. Leaders are determined to succeed, and have the knowledge and skills to do so.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a robust culture of safeguarding at the school. Leaders provide and arrange training so that staff know what to do and can identify pupils who may be at risk from harm. Staff follow clear procedures if they have concerns about a pupil. Staff use the school's recording and reporting system highly effectively. Through wider support with other agencies, and through the curriculum, pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe online and how to be prepared for their next stage of education. They understand what healthy relationships are, and develop an age-appropriate understanding of key issues such as consent.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils are not learning to read as well as they could. Phonics is not yet taught fully effectively in early years and key stage 1. Leaders must ensure that there are consistent approaches in place from early years onwards.

- Some aspects of early years and key stage 1 provision are not as effective as others. Staff do not ensure that all pupils make as much progress as they should across the curriculum. Leaders should review and refine the early years and key stage 1 curriculums to ensure that there is a consistent, high-quality approach that aligns with the very strong practice in key stage 2.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

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	141155
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10242121
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sarah Sienkiewicz
Headteacher	Clare Smith
Website	www.st-josephs-banbury.oxon.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 July 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Banbury converted to become an academy on 1 September 2014.
- The school is part of The Pope Francis Catholic Multi Academy Company.
- A section 48 inspection to evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Banbury as a Catholic school took place on 18 and 19 May 2022.
- Children in the early years are taught in one Nursery and one Reception class. Most Nursery children attend in the mornings only but 8 attend for 30 hours.
- The school runs a breakfast club on site.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team completed deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and physical education. To do this, they met with subject leaders, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school and priorities for improvement.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, a selection of subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative from the Archdiocese of Birmingham. The lead inspector met with a representative from the multi-academy company, two members of the local governing body and the chief executive of the trust.
- The inspection team reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising records and through discussions with staff and pupils.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were considered through discussions and a review of Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Carl McCarthy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lorraine Greco

Ofsted Inspector

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