

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



24 February 2023

Cheryl MacLennan  
Acting Headteacher  
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Carterton  
Lawton Avenue  
Carterton  
Oxfordshire  
OX18 3JY

Dear Ms MacLennan

### **Requires improvement monitoring inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Carterton**

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 23 February 2023, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school has received a judgement of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspections.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders from the multi-academy trust, trustees and members of the interim executive board (IEB) the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also visited lessons, spoke to staff and pupils, heard pupils read to an adult, reviewed a range of documents and looked at pupils' work. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

**St Joseph's Catholic Primary School continues to require improvement. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.**

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that the specific strategies formulated to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are more precisely matched to pupils' needs so that these pupils achieve as well as they can.

## **Main findings**

Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes to staffing. The school is currently being led by you as the acting headteacher. There are no other senior leaders in the school. Some teaching and support staff have left the school, new staff have taken up posts and there are further changes set to take place at Easter. A member of staff from another school in the multi-academy trust has been seconded to support the school as SENCo. The previous governing body was replaced with an IEB because of concerns about its performance. The IEB began its work in September 2022.

The impact of COVID-19 and significant changes in leadership, but also staffing more widely, have meant that some of the improvements you planned to make following the last inspection have been slowed. Nevertheless, you have continued to focus your attention on improving the quality of education and the early years.

You have strengthened the teaching of reading. Staff understand the importance of developing pupils' reading. You have prioritised reading and pupils now read more often. You are checking pupils' reading ability systematically and this is helping you to provide the appropriate help. The support you are providing to improve pupils' reading is having a positive impact. Pupils' reading ages are improving.

You have focused heavily on phonics, invested in staff training and purchased decodable books that match the school's phonics programme. Pupils at the early stages of learning to read are beginning to improve their reading. They sound out and blend well. However, sometimes staff give pupils books that do not match the sounds pupils have learned closely enough. This means that some pupils struggle and do not feel a sense of success when reading.

You have thought carefully about the curriculum which you introduced at the beginning of January. The curriculum reflects the local community and what pupils will need to prepare them well for the future. It also sets out the broad topics and themes pupils will learn in a range of subjects and areas as they move from Nursery to Year 6. You have broken down the important knowledge and skills across the curriculum. However, there is more to do to ensure that this is consistently the case in all subjects.

You are rightly working hard to improve the provision for pupils with SEND. The support you receive from the multi-academy trust is having a positive impact. However, there is more to do to ensure that these pupils learn as well as they should. Currently, leaders' strategies to support pupils are not implemented effectively enough by teachers.

The multi-academy trust has been instrumental in supporting you and other staff. In particular, the trust's school improvement partner and seconded SENCo have helped you to strengthen the quality of education, early years and leadership. You are continuing to improve the school at pace. The school improvement partner has also provided intensive support that has helped you to strengthen safeguarding. Staff have a strong understanding of safeguarding and the risks pupils face. The systems and processes are

much stronger, and staff use them effectively. You are working closely with other agencies to ensure that pupils receive the help they need.

The IEB comprises skilled and experienced professionals. There is a clear strategy in place to support the school's improvement. IEB members have an accurate understanding of the strengths and priorities for development. A strong balance of carefully timed support and challenge is leading to positive change. However, a barrier to achieving further progress is the stability of staffing, including leadership. This stability will be needed to bring about the necessary improvements.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the chief executive officer of the Pope Francis Catholic Multi Academy Company, the director of education for the Diocese of Birmingham, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Oxfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Shaun Jarvis  
**His Majesty's Inspector**