

Inspection of St John's Catholic Primary School

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

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of St John's Catholic Primary School and all that it stands for. They are keen to explain the school values and what it means to 'love one another'. Pupils show respect and thoughtfulness around the school. Bullying is rare. Staff resolve any cases quickly and effectively. Pupils know this and are confident to turn to them if needed.

Pupils behave well, rising to meet leaders' high aspirations in lessons and during social time. They work hard and focus well on their learning. Pupils help each other when they occasionally fall short of their intentions, showing resilience and reflecting calmly about how they can learn from any mistakes.

Pupils are happy to attend school. They join in the wide range of learning and extra-curricular activities with energy and enthusiasm. From Reception Year onwards, pupils are encouraged to try new things, explore the unfamiliar and develop new skills. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are supported to join in with these enriching experiences, including residential trips. Pupils relish the wide range of clubs ranging from sports to sewing. Parents and carers are also positive about this happy school, many describing it as a 'lovely school'.

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

Leaders have adopted a suitably broad and ambitious curriculum that supports pupils well from Nursery to Year 6. For the majority of subjects, leaders and staff ensure that learning is planned carefully. They have agreed important knowledge and vocabulary that they will ensure pupils learn as they move through the planned curriculum. This is particularly effective in mathematics, where pupils are helped to re-visit and build on prior knowledge. However, in a minority of subjects, what pupils already know and understand is not fully considered as new topics are introduced. They do not learn to recall and apply their prior knowledge routinely. This hinders pupils' learning over time.

Teachers are enthused by the renewed curriculum and training that they have received. They speak highly of leaders in the school and multi-academy company (MAC) who have helped them to develop their skills. Consequently, lessons are purposeful and positive. Teachers explain and model new ideas well. They use questioning to assess pupils' understanding in order to adjust activities. However, this is not yet consistently effective. A few of the commercial schemes adopted by the school are not fully matched to the needs of all pupils. Some staff do not yet have the knowledge and confidence to do this routinely. Teachers use strategies to ensure that pupils with SEND learn effectively. Teaching assistants are skilled and knowledgeable. They provide bespoke support for pupils with complex needs.

Leaders have put reading at the heart of the curriculum. In Nursery, children start learning to read from when they arrive. This helps them to develop a love of stories and reading that is continued through the school. Staff use secure subject knowledge to teach phonics effectively. Struggling readers are given helpful extra support which enables them to keep up. They read books that are closely matched to the sounds they have learned. Pupils read routinely in lessons, to develop their fluency. They read a range of different texts, which helps to develop a love of reading.

Staff and leaders have established a positive culture throughout the school. Teachers have high expectations and have established clear routines in lessons which pupils respond positively to. They behave well and any low-level disruption is quickly and successfully addressed. Behaviour in lessons is orderly and respectful. Pupils demonstrate caring behaviour at lunch and break time. Year 6 pupils are proud to be playground monitors and they act as excellent role models for younger pupils.

Leaders ensure that pupils develop personally as well as academically. Staff provide opportunities to develop pupils' social skills. For example, Nursery children learn how to work with other children and share resources. Pupils learn the importance of accepting others and learning that people have different views. In Year 5, pupils debate the right to protest and visit the Houses of Parliament. Staff develop ambition in pupils through the weekly house competitions. These are awarded to those demonstrating the school's values.

Leaders have high aspirations for all pupils. They have established a strong curriculum supported by extensive staff training. Although the national end of key stage test results in 2022 were disappointing, current pupils are learning the planned curriculum well. Staff value the support of leaders and their collegiate approach to making changes. Multi-academy company directors and the local governing body have been instrumental in supporting and challenging leaders to achieve improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders use regular assemblies to educate pupils about the nature of specific safeguarding risks. Pupils know who to report concerns to. A worry room provides a space where pupils can comfortably share any concerns.

Leaders provide high-quality training to help staff to understand their responsibilities. Staff know and are vigilant for the signs of potential safeguarding concerns. Referrals are swiftly made to external agencies when needed.

Safer recruitment practices are diligent, and the required checks are made on staff and volunteers to ensure they are suitable to work at the school. Governors meet their statutory safeguarding duties.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The teaching of the revised curriculum is not yet developed to meet the needs of all pupils. This means that some pupils can struggle to secure knowledge in a minority of subjects. Leaders need to focus on developing teachers' knowledge of how to adapt the curriculum so that it meets the needs of all pupils.
- In some foundation subjects, curriculum thinking does not yet link important knowledge between different topics. This means that pupils do not build a deep enough understanding of important concepts in these subjects. Leaders need to refine curriculum thinking so the curriculum re-visits and further embeds important knowledge across topics.

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	147898
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10267800
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	175
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of Trustees	Paul Concannon (Chair of Directors)
Headteacher	Brian Morton
Website	www.st-johns-banbury.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined The Pope Francis Catholic Multi-academy Company in September 2020. A new headteacher joined the school in April 2022. The new chair of the governing body took up her role in February 2023.
- In the past three years, there have been significant changes to both the staff and the governing body, with a high proportion of staff leaving and joining the school.
- The school has a Nursery for children who are three and four years old.
- The governing body manages before- and after-school childcare provision.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- This is a Roman Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Birmingham. Its last section 48 inspection took place in December 2021.

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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other school staff. The lead inspector also met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body, and spoke to the chair of directors and the chief executive officer from the MAC and a representative from the Archdiocese of Birmingham
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors spoke with staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leads to review their knowledge, records and actions. Inspectors also reviewed information about the safer recruitment of staff.
- To review wider judgements, inspectors spoke to staff and groups of pupils, and observed behaviour in classrooms and at lunchtime.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils from different year groups and considered responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- The views of staff, including responses to Ofsted's online staff survey, were considered.
- The views of parents were considered through talking to a group on the gate before school and taking into account the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey.

Inspection team

Phillip Blagg, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David Cousins

Ofsted Inspector

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