

# St John's Catholic Primary School, Banbury

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123181
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	340302
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Rodney Braithwaite

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	286
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Canon Mervyn Tower
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Kevin O'Connor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 February 2007
<b>School address</b>	Avocet Way Chatsworth Drive Banbury OX16 9YA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01295 263740
<b>Fax number</b>	01295 215340
<b>Email address</b>	Headteacher.3350@st-johns-banbury.oxon.sch.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 October 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	340302

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2009

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons, and held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and governors. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to self-evaluation, the assessment and tracking of pupils' progress, various school policies and the safeguarding of pupils. Inspectors looked at pupils' work, governors' minutes, the school improvement plan, and school assessment strategies. Inspectors analysed 134 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the:

- attainment on entry of children starting school in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and their progress through the school
- success of the school in dealing with its identified priorities, including the raising of attainment at higher levels in writing and mathematics
- school's self-evaluation of its provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils
- effectiveness of the present management structure, and its capability to lead successful change and improvement

## Information about the school

This primary school is larger than average. Most pupils are of White British background. Almost all pupils are of the Catholic faith. There are a number of minority ethnic groups, the largest being of Filipino origin. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than average, the largest group being pupils who have moderate learning difficulties. A small but growing number of pupils speak English as an additional language. The school has a number of awards, including Activemark, Eco-school (bronze) and the Healthy School Award.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school. It has many strengths, in particular an exceptionally calm and warm ethos which leads to excellent relationships and a high quality of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This in its turn helps pupils to behave in an exemplary fashion and have very good attitudes to learning, exemplified by their high attendance rate. Additionally, the school has an outstanding engagement with parents who support it wholeheartedly. This is even recognised by pupils, one of whom commented, 'The school is a friendly community that interacts with parents'. The school cares for its pupils well, and ensures that they are safe and that the needs of the most vulnerable pupils are effectively supported. Pupils show enthusiasm and enjoyment in their learning and take their responsibilities seriously. Their involvement and partnerships in the local community are extensive, especially through the church and the nearby high school. They have good links with other countries, although links with other communities in this country are less developed.

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage in their learning and personal development. This continues in both key stages so that by the time they leave, Year 6 pupils are reaching standards in English, mathematics and science that are above the national average. The school has recognised some inconsistency recently in attainment, but has taken rapid steps to ensure improvement. The introduction of better assessment of pupil progress is leading to higher expectations among leaders that pupils can do even better, and can reach more challenging targets. All groups of pupils achieve well, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The increasing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language are achieving very well.

Teaching is consistently good and is enhanced by the very effective contributions of teaching assistants. The broad curriculum gives pupils a wide range of stimulating and exciting learning experiences. However, it is weighted heavily towards excessively long lessons in literacy and numeracy in the mornings. This leads to lessons which can sometimes lack urgency. The leadership and management of the school are good. The deservedly popular headteacher provides a compassionate and caring role model. He has created an energetic and ambitious senior management team who share his determination to achieve continuous improvement in learning provision and outcomes. The team is showing a good capacity to sustain improvements already made. Leaders realise that their monitoring of some priorities is still developing, but until now they have not always had the necessary time to be rigorous in identifying quickly where there may be need for improvement. Sometimes they do not have all the information needed for a more rigorous self-evaluation. The governing body supports the school strongly under

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

the sensitive leadership of the chair, challenges leaders where necessary, and makes a sound contribution to the leadership and management of the school.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Sharpen the monitoring and evaluation by senior leaders, by:
  - giving leaders more time to analyse information and prepare planning for improvement
  - ensuring that existing good practice in the monitoring of teaching, especially in marking and suggesting pupils' next steps in learning, is consistent among all leaders.
- Improve the balance of the curriculum in the mornings by:
  - shortening the length of lessons in numeracy and literacy, and adding other learning opportunities
  - encouraging teachers to move more quickly on to tasks and activities in the time given to numeracy and literacy.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils respond well to stimulating teaching, which was good in three quarters of the lessons seen, and they are always eager to learn and participate fully, often with good verbal contributions. This was seen in many lessons, including one in Year 4 when pupils enthusiastically contributed autumn adjectives to their team producing sentences on how they use their senses. The great majority of pupils continue their good progress through the school and achieve well, after a very good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This includes pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are making very good progress.

For a number of years, pupils' attainment has been above average when they leave in Year 6. However, in 2008, their attainment in national tests in mathematics and science was only average. The school immediately reviewed its teaching in these subjects and introduced new learning strategies. As a result, attainment rose again this year to previous levels. Typically though, the school rightly believes it can do even better in these subjects and in writing, and has the expectation that standards will rise even more as improved assessment procedures become embedded. Evidence during the inspection indicates that more pupils than in the past are now reaching above average attainment in English, mathematics and science. Attainment is also above average in information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education.

The school is characterised by very good relationships, which contribute greatly to the excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Pupils in Key Stage 2 in their questionnaires agree unanimously that they 'learn a lot in lessons', that adults care about them, that they feel safe, and that all the staff 'do a good job'. Pupils are responsible, lively but respectful to each other and adults, and behave impeccably in

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

and out of school. They have received many accolades from the general public when on outings in this country and abroad. Although identifying rare cases of bullying, they are certain that this is always dealt with fairly and quickly by staff. Their attitudes are best summed up by the comments of one pupil, 'This is an amazing school with lots of clubs, it's really friendly and everybody helps you'. Pupils know and understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, and enjoy the many sporting clubs at the school. Among the contributions made by the active school council is its choice of charities for school fundraising. Pupils are also involved in many activities in the local community, especially through links with the church. This helps significantly in the good preparation for their future lives, which is further enhanced by good standards in core subjects, and their developing independence and knowledge of the world.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils, and improved assessment procedures enable them to have a better understanding of the needs of each pupil. The management of pupil behaviour, which is

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

enhanced by pupils' excellent attitudes to learning, ensures calmness and a strong partnership for learning. Teachers' questioning skills are consistently good and encourage a good standard of speaking in all years. This was seen regularly in all lessons, including classes in Years 1 and 2, where pupils gave lengthy answers to questions on how to plan and write stories about the St John's Wood goblin. Teachers work very effectively with their teaching assistants who are frequently involved in intervention activities with pupils most in need of help. Teachers use technology well in their teaching, and continually promote all aspects of spiritual, moral and social learning. Although pupils often know their learning targets, teachers' marking of books is inconsistent and sometimes fails to give enough guidance on pupils' next steps in learning.

The curriculum is broad and gives pupils many learning opportunities both in and out of school. There are strong partnerships with local schools, especially the local high school, which promotes good enrichment, for example in learning French. A wide range of extra-curricular activities, clubs, visitors and residential visits, including trips abroad, are very popular with pupils and often oversubscribed. Displays of pupils' work are of good quality and support learning well. The strong Catholic ethos contributes very well to many aspects of the curriculum and pupils' personal development. The lesson timetable, however, is not well balanced in the morning. Lessons in English and mathematics are too long, sometimes lasting 75 minutes, and can lead to a lack of urgency in teaching, and a shortage of variety in learning opportunities for pupils.

Pupils are well supported, guided and cared for. They all feel very safe and are confident in the adults who support them. The school's provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those in the early stages of learning the English language is good. This is in spite of the lack of time given to the management of the special needs provision. The family liaison officer is particularly effective in linking with families needing guidance or support. Provision for child protection and risk assessment is fully in place. Procedures for tackling attendance issues are very strong. Arrangements for the transition of pupils to their next stage of education are excellent.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher ensures that the staff share his desire for a continually improving school, which provides for the different needs of all the pupils. He is especially

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

successful in promoting a strong feeling of moral and spiritual values, which results in a calm and welcoming school. There are strong caring relationships and pupils accept their responsibilities as members of a thriving and peaceful community. The senior leadership team ' a combination of experience and youthful enthusiasm ' is developing into an effective and reflective team, and now understands far more clearly the strengths and improvement priorities for the school. The staff have been moulded into a mutually supportive, motivated team which ensures that pupils are cared for in an inclusive learning environment where they all have every opportunity to progress in their learning and personal development.

The recent blip in attainment, especially in mathematics, has led the school to review its strategies with some success, and there has been much improvement in the last year. Leaders, though, have realised that to maintain consistency in pupils' learning, more has to be done, particularly through monitoring. For example, the monitoring of teaching is not always urgent enough in following up identified priorities, such as improving the marking of pupils' work. Leaders of some aspects, for example special educational needs, do not at present have sufficient time to fulfil their responsibilities totally because of classroom commitments. The governing body, which shares very strongly the values evident throughout the school, is both supportive and challenging, and works continually to improve resources. Although all safeguarding requirements are in place, governors realise that their legal responsibilities are being continually increased. They are aware of the need to undertake tighter monitoring of new requirements, and to evaluate more sharply the effectiveness of their policies and practices.

Parents and carers are consulted regularly about the learning and safety of their children, and are encouraged to play a full part in their learning. Parents think very highly of the school, and have made many notable contributions to school resources. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. It is very strong locally and with other countries. The school is planning an expansion of its relationships with other schools in this country. The deployment of resources is good, especially the use of teaching assistants throughout the school.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>



<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The majority of children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with the skills expected for their age. They make good progress in most areas of learning because provision for learning has improved, teaching is consistently good and children's care and welfare are promoted well. Progress in writing and some aspects of mathematical development is satisfactory. The good leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage have ensured children have an effective blend of adult-led and child-chosen activity. In the classroom, the intervention of teachers and teaching assistants to help children consolidate and extend their learning is good. The Reception classroom is well designed with a good range of equipment and displays that the children relate to with enthusiasm. The outdoor area is a spacious and good resource for learning. All children play and learn happily together with activities often linked to a central theme, for example building with construction kits, using the computer to play an interactive game or designing and making stars from shapes. The children respond well to formal teaching and to independent activities and behave excellently.

As part of the assessment process, adults consistently observe activities and compile a record of progress which they use to plan the next stage of the children's learning. Children make good progress, acquiring the qualities they need to develop their skills for the next stage of their education. This is developed through the consistent use of routines, giving children responsibility for small tasks and allowing them to initiate their own activities. This was seen when a small group of boys named themselves 'worm detectives' and carefully found worms and discussed their investigation when looking at them through a viewfinder.

The children's care and safety are firmly at the heart of the good provision. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader and teacher work very effectively as a team. In particular, they ensure the smooth transition from the several feeder nurseries into the school, and again when children move into Year 1.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## **Views of parents and carers**

Responses received from almost half the parents are virtually unanimous in their approval of the school. They feel their children are very safe, that teaching and leadership are good and are happy with their children's experience in school. Typically a parent commented, 'All my children are very happy, and have a good education' excellent teachers and assistants' headteacher is superb and leads by example'.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St. John's Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 134 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 286 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	86	64	45	36	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	90	67	44	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	48	39	82	61	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	58	43	71	53	2	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	71	53	61	45	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	58	43	70	52	4	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	60	45	67	50	2	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	60	45	64	48	2	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	58	43	71	53	3	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	55	41	68	51	4	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	45	36	78	58	2	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	62	46	69	51	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	80	60	52	39	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



23 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's Catholic Primary School, Banbury, OX16 9YA

Your school provides you with a good education, looks after you well and keeps you safe.

Thank you all for making us so welcome when we recently visited your school. We enjoyed listening to you telling us how much you enjoyed your learning, and explaining your playground games. We think you are very polite, look after each other well and behave excellently. You deserve the praise you get from members of the public. It was also good to hear how much you like and respect the school staff, and that your parents agree with your opinions of the school.

You are well taught by your teachers and their assistants, and you have many good opportunities to learn, as well as many exciting clubs. You do well in your learning in English, mathematics and ICT. However we do think some of your lessons in the morning are very long, and so some of you lose concentration occasionally. Your headteacher and leaders of the school take great care to make sure that you are given the best education possible. In order for the school to be even better, we have asked them to:

- make some of your lessons shorter in the mornings, so that you can have an extra lesson every morning as well as your English and mathematics
- give some of the leaders more time to look at the work you do and how teachers tell you to improve, to watch your lessons, and make plans for some of you who may need extra help.

Thank you again for being so helpful, cheerful and talkative. We hope you like your new classroom next year.

Yours faithfully

Rod Braithwaite

Lead Inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**