

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Banbury

Fiennes Road, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX16 0ET

Inspection dates

12–13 July 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

This is a good school

- The headteacher provides effective leadership. With the support of other senior leaders, she has worked tirelessly to move the school forward since becoming an academy. As a result, it is now a good and improving school.
- Teaching is typically good across both key stages 1 and 2. Consequently, most pupils are making consistently strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The strong governing body, supported by the directors of the academy company, provides robust challenge. Governors and directors have a clear understanding of what the school does well and what needs to be improved further.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who speak English as an additional language are supported well. As a result, they make strong progress during their time at the school.
- Parents who responded to Parent View and those with whom inspectors spoke were highly positive about the school and recognise that improvements have been made.
- Pupils enjoy being at school, and feel safe and well looked after. They behave well and have good attitudes to learning.
- Interventions and support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well-planned and effective. As a result, these pupils make strong progress.
- In some classes, the most able are not routinely given opportunities to deepen their learning or understanding of concepts further.
- This year, significant staffing issues in the early years have had an adverse impact on children's progress. As a result, a high proportion are not fully prepared for Year 1.
- Senior leaders have drawn up an action plan and appointed experienced members of staff to bring about rapid improvement in the early years. The plan has yet to be implemented fully.
- Phonics teaching in the Nursery class does not always move children on quickly enough and, as a result, some children are not ready for Reception Year.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the leadership of early years to have a greater impact on improving outcomes for children by ensuring that:
 - assessments are accurate and timely
 - information from assessments is used to monitor children’s progress effectively
 - any follow-up actions required to improve the progress of children whose progress is too slow are implemented quickly
 - early phonics teaching in the Nursery class provides more challenge so that children make a good start in the Reception Year.
- Improve the progress of the most able pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, so they achieve their full potential by ensuring that teachers are more consistent with the level of challenge they offer.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since her appointment, the headteacher has been resolute in her tenacity to improve the school. She cares deeply about children having the best education possible and has taken the school on a journey of rapid development. Governors, staff, pupils and parents hold her in high esteem. Many parents speak positively about the leadership of the school. One parent, echoing the views of many, commented: 'This school has come a long way from what it used to be like, it now has a lovely welcoming, safe and structured atmosphere. I would recommend it in a heartbeat.'
- The headteacher has introduced robust approaches to managing teachers' performance, which are having a positive impact on improving teaching, learning and pupils' progress. The targets that leaders set for teaching staff are sensibly linked to improving progress for pupils. Leaders challenge all staff to account for any pupils who are not on track to meet their challenging end-of-year targets. As a result, most pupils across key stages 1 and 2 are making good progress.
- Leaders ensure that additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. The funding is used to subsidise the cost of school visits and attendance at breakfast club, as well as being used to finance teaching assistants. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are making accelerated progress and, in many cases, the difference between them and other pupils nationally is diminishing.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is accurate. It correctly identifies the progress made since opening as a new school and the actions needed to improve even further. Actions to date have had a positive impact on both the quality of teaching and the rate at which pupils make progress in the school.
- Leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is strong. Under the guidance of the knowledgeable coordinator, pupils' needs are met very well. Teaching assistants deliver high-quality interventions to targeted pupils. As a result, these pupils are making accelerated progress.
- The leader for mathematics has introduced an effective approach to developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding at a greater depth across the school. The work undertaken in this area of the curriculum is having a positive effect on pupils' progress throughout the school. Pupils are now more confident with number work when applying it to real-life situations.
- Primary physical education and sport premium funding has been used to promote pupils' physical activity well. Pupils have opportunities to attend clubs such as fencing, netball, tag-rugby and gymnastics, with at least half of the pupils taking part in extra-curricular physical education.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their learning; one child could discuss at length with an inspector why the River Nile is so important to the Egyptians. They enjoy school trips, such as those to the Ashmolean Museum and the Black Country Museum, and the chance to camp in a local forest at night. These trips greatly enhance the pupils' understanding of the areas of study related to them.

- Leaders ensure that there is a wide range of extra-curricular activity on offer. Mathematics, reading, chess, art and prayer clubs are some examples of the way pupils' passions are enhanced. These activities are well attended and pupils report that they appreciate the time the staff give up to run them.
- Pupils have many opportunities to explore the fundamental British values of respect, tolerance and democracy through a programme of social, moral, vocational, spiritual and cultural education. Pupils know about democracy and vote annually to elect school councillors. Pupils are regularly given opportunities to reflect on, consider and celebrate the wonders and mysteries of life, helping them to become good citizens and neighbours.
- The school receives valuable support and challenge from the school's adviser from the Archdiocese of Birmingham. Activities such as lesson observations and data scrutiny have helped to secure further improvements in both teaching and learning.
- Leadership of early years has, until recently, been ineffective this year. Weak teaching and assessment of children's progress have resulted in many children making insufficient progress. Leaders and governors have acted swiftly to replace staff and strengthen leadership. These measures have had insufficient time to make a significant impact.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. Governors have a wide range of skills, experience and expertise. Their responsibilities are distributed well to ensure that their statutory duties are met. All governors have received training in safeguarding, including about child sexual exploitation, promoting fundamental British values and safer recruitment.
- The governing body, which includes directors of the academy company, are wholly dedicated to the school, and determined that it continues its journey of improvement. They are highly enthusiastic, well informed and know the school's strengths and weaknesses and what it needs to do to improve further. They understand how well different groups of pupils achieve and links with the quality of teaching.
- Governors and academy directors regularly visit the school to check whether procedures are being followed appropriately. They know the school well through their visits. Consequently, they are quick to challenge leaders about any areas they identify as needing further development.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a strong safeguarding culture, backed up by regular training for all staff. As a result, all adults are clear about what to do if they are concerned about the well-being of a child. Senior leaders follow up any concerns thoroughly and involve other agencies where additional advice or support is needed.
- Pupils report that they feel safe at school, they know who to talk to if they need help and are sure that all staff would respond to their concerns rapidly. One pupil said, 'Teachers keep you safe and the learning is great.'

- The school works effectively with parents to promote pupils' safety through relevant training and communication. A programme designed specifically to teach pupils how to stay safe online is being used successfully by both pupils and parents. This has been a welcome addition to the wide range of activities that pupils participate in to ensure that they can keep safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Since the arrival of the new headteacher, the quality of teaching has improved in the school. There are greater expectations of what pupils can achieve and teachers are held accountable if these are not met. As a result, most pupils are now making strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the curriculum.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. They use skilful questioning to develop pupils' understanding and generally set work that is pitched at the correct level. However, questions and activities are not always challenging enough for the most able pupils.
- Teaching assistants are highly effective and have a positive impact on pupils' learning. For example, they ably support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Carefully structured, well-delivered intervention programmes ensure that these pupils' needs are met and that they make strong progress over time.
- Pupils' learning is enhanced by teachers intervening with individual pupils during lessons and carrying out assessments on the spot to move their learning on quickly. For example, in an English lesson, pupils improved their choice of vocabulary and used a wider range of poetic devices because of the teacher's carefully considered advice.
- Teachers consistently apply agreed approaches for giving pupils feedback. This approach helps pupils to know what they have done well and how they could improve further. For example, in mathematics, teachers suggest follow-up work for pupils if they have not fully mastered the method of working.
- Leaders have reviewed the school's mathematics curriculum, developing resources appropriately. Teachers, with support from the subject leader, are now planning activities that include greater challenge and links to other curriculum areas. For example, during the inspection a Year 4 group were successfully engaged in measuring the range at which a magnet could attract a paperclip to the nearest millimetre.
- The progress of pupils in writing, although now broadly in line with national averages, has not been as rapid as pupils' progress in mathematics or reading. The school has taken steps to address this, and recent school assessment information and work in books show that nearly all pupils are now making very strong progress in this subject.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Pupils are clear about different kinds of bullying and know how to keep themselves safe. They say that bullying is extremely rare and that if it does happen they know that it will be dealt with effectively by the staff.
- Leaders promote healthy lifestyles, especially eating a healthy diet. Pupils understand the importance of a balanced meal and speak knowledgeably about why keeping healthy is important.
- Pupils are very friendly and polite. They enjoy engaging visitors in conversation and telling them about their school. Pupils describe the school as a 'warm and comforting place to be because we all help one another.'
- Pupils have a positive attitude to learning. They respond well to the expectations of staff and show a good level of respect when listening to each other. As a result, little time is lost in lessons.
- While pupils are proud of their work, sometimes a lack of care in the presentation of their writing does not reflect their good attitudes to learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In class, pupils are keen and enthusiastic. They enjoy talking about their learning and cooperate well with each other.
- Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour; as a result, pupils know what is and is not acceptable. Behaviour is tracked weekly. Since the introduction of the school's passport to success, which promotes positive behaviour, incidents of poor behaviour have reduced significantly.
- Pupils' attendance is in line with the national average. Leaders have provided effective challenge and support to families with higher rates of absence. Consequently, rates of attendance for these pupils have risen rapidly.
- The playground is well supervised at break and lunchtimes and pupils play well together. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy breaktimes because, 'There is always something to do and somebody who will play with you.'

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The school's detailed assessment information shows that current pupils across both key stages 1 and 2 are making very strong progress. This is also evident in the progress seen in pupils' books. However, the number of pupils who make good progress in the early years and the proportion who achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has fallen this year and is now below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check in 2016 was in line with national averages. In addition, the proportion of those who met the standard in the Year 2 re-check was above average. Current pupils are likely to achieve similar results this year.
- In 2016, the school was identified as a coasting school. The present Year 6 have made strong progress in both reading and mathematics from low starting points, and are meeting their progress targets in writing.

- At the end of key stage 1, pupils typically achieve in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Current pupils are likely to achieve similar results this year.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do well. The focused teaching and support they receive ensures that they make good progress and many make very strong progress. Hence, over time, the differences between these pupils and others nationally are diminishing.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language do well. Carefully targeted support from entry into the school results in most of these pupils making rapid progress and attaining well by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils enjoy reading and their progress is rapidly improving. Teachers and teaching assistants help pupils develop strategies to enable them to read with improved confidence and understanding. This in turn is supporting pupils in developing their comprehension skills.
- The most able, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make steady progress. In a few classes, however, progress is hampered by work being pitched at too low a level and with little depth.
- Pupils also make good progress across a range of other subjects. In history, they gain good knowledge and understanding of the past and the wider world. In science, they gain skills by planning scientific enquiries, asking relevant questions and taking measurements with increasing accuracy.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The early years provision requires improvement because not enough children have reached a good level of development this year and are, therefore, not fully ready for Year 1. Many children join Nursery and Reception with skills and knowledge that are well below those typical for their age, but have not made consistently good progress across early years.
- Weak teaching in the Reception class at the start of the academic year, accompanied by poor assessment, has hindered children's progress. Although a recent change of staff has resulted in some improvements in children's progress, this has come too late in the year to have a substantial impact on children's overall outcomes.
- Leaders are aware of what needs to be done to improve early years and have identified actions to secure improvements. New, experienced staff have been appointed for the start of next school year and leadership roles adjusted to ensure that children can make the progress of which they are capable.
- Adults make a wide range of resources available, both inside and outside the classroom, which the children enjoy. However, adults do not always challenge the children to use these productively. For example, a sand tray activity, set up to reinforce number skills, was being used for building sandcastles and children were given no direction as to how to use it as intended by the staff. Sometimes, children are left to play with others for long periods of time without intervention from adults. As a result, children's skills and knowledge are not being fully developed.

- Children's behaviour is good. For example, they are keen to help each other and can take turns when playing a game. They enjoy talking to adults and will initiate conversations.
- Staff form good relationships with children. They provide them with high-quality care so that children feel safe.
- Relationships with parents are good. Staff establish a good rapport with parents before children start school and this makes for a settled start. Parents are provided with guidance about how they may help their children at home, and workshops are held to keep them informed.
- Additional funding to support children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used effectively. Support interventions are quickly put into place, and as a result these children make good progress.
- Nursery children work well together. For example, during the inspection a group of six girls and boys were preparing for a birthday party, making cakes, wrapping presents, and planning which games to play.
- Phonics teaching in the Nursery is not always matched carefully to the ability of the children. Consequently, some children do not make the progress they should, so are not as ready as they could be for the start of Reception Year.

School details

Unique reference number	141155
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10032479

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

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	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angela Briggs
Headteacher	Clare Smith
Telephone number	01295 264284
Website	www.st-josephs-banbury.oxon.sch.uk
Email address	head.3825@st-josephs-banbury.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy on 1 September 2014. When its predecessor school, also called St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement.
- The school is part of The Pope Francis Catholic Multi Academy Company.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The current headteacher was appointed in January 2014.
- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.

- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is high, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is lower than other schools nationally.
- The number of children with a special educational needs and/or disabilities statement is higher than other schools nationally.
- The school met the government's current floor standards in 2016. These set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school met the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.
- Children in the early years are taught in one Nursery and one Reception class. Nursery children attend mornings only.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 15 lessons across a range of subjects. Some of these were joint observations with the headteacher and the early years leader.
- The inspectors analysed the school's work. They looked at a wide range of documentation, the school's procedures for getting an accurate view of its own performance and pupils' work in books.
- Meetings were held with school staff, members of the governing body, parents and carers.
- Discussions took place with a group of pupils, as well as informal conversations with other pupils during lessons and at playtimes. Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about books they enjoy.
- Inspectors considered 17 responses to the online staff questionnaire and 20 responses to the pupil online questionnaire.
- Inspectors considered 10 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and 10 responses via free text.

Inspection team

Brian Macdonald, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Gillian Peck

Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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