

St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

Sandy Lane West, Littlemore, Oxford, OX4 6LD

Inspection dates

11–12 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- All pupils make good progress and so achieve well.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6 has been rising. It is now nearer to the national averages for all primary schools.
- Teaching across the school is usually good with some outstanding practice, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
- Pupils enjoy school. They behave well and enjoy their learning.
- Pupils are very clear about the levels they are working towards and what they must do to achieve these levels.
- Leaders and managers are focused on continual improvement for the school. This has resulted in rapid improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.
- The school community has strong spiritual values that pervade all its work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Written and oral feedback is not used consistently to tell pupils how well they have done and what they must do to improve.
- Teachers do not always set tasks that challenge all pupils, especially the more able, so that they can make more rapid progress.
- Governors do not have sufficient skills to ask searching questions of the school leaders to ensure that they have a good knowledge of the work of the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors spent time in 14 lessons and saw 10 members of staff teaching and working with the pupils. Inspectors were accompanied by the executive headteacher or head of school to six of these lessons.
- Meetings were held with members of staff, the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at the school's development plans, minutes of the governing body meetings, the school's records of pupils' progress and work in pupils' books and 'learning journeys'.
- Inspectors took account of the 18 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and held informal discussions with parents and carers at the start of the day.

Inspection team

Jenny Batelen, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Adam Hewett

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average size primary school with eight classes.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the 52 part-time place Nursery and a single Reception class.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. These include pupils with medical, speech and language and learning difficulties.
- A below average percentage of pupils come from White British backgrounds with a similar percentage from minority ethnic backgrounds. These include Black African, Black Caribbean, White and Black Caribbean and those from any other ethnic group.
- An above average number of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, about 34 %, is above average. The pupil premium is extra money given to schools by the government to support, among others, pupils who receive or have received free school meals.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- St John Fisher Catholic Primary School is in a soft federation with St Gregory the Great Catholic Secondary School under the leadership and management of an executive headteacher. St John Fisher has a head of school with day-to-day leadership and management responsibility.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement further by:
 - ensuring that feedback to pupils, including marking, is consistent in helping them to know how well they have done and what they must do to improve
 - planning tasks that challenge all pupils, especially the more able.
- Develop the skills of the governing body so that they are able to check on the work of the school, including the information about pupils' progress, and ask searching questions of the school leadership.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills levels that are well below those expected for their age, especially in their language skills.
- School tracking shows that all pupils make good progress. The impact of the developments since the previous inspection is now resulting in good progress for all groups of pupils in the school and a rising trend in standards for both key stages in all subjects. These improvements have not yet had time to ensure that pupils, especially the more able, are always challenged to make rapid progress in all lessons.
- Pupils from the different ethnic groups make good progress in line with their peers. Those who speak English as an additional language are able to make good progress because of the specific programme in place to help them quickly grasp the language skills needed to cope with their work in the classroom.
- The school's early and skilled intervention for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs ensures that they make good progress. Pupils are extremely well supported so that their learning, medical and, sometimes, emotional needs are understood and do not hinder their progress.
- The effective teaching of phonics (sounds that letters make) in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 ensures that pupils have a strong foundation of skills that they use to help them read and write. Reading workshop sessions reinforce this throughout the school and ensure that pupils develop an understanding and love of reading.
- The targeted use of extra funding from the government (pupil premium) enables the school to ensure that these pupils are well supported, not only in the classroom, but in a range of extra-curricular activities, including trips and Easter school revision. As a result they are able to access all activities and make good progress in all subjects.
- As standards are rising, pupils are increasingly well prepared for their future life. The very close links with the secondary school ensure that they are well equipped for their next step in education.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to ensure that they provide the best opportunities for pupils whether working with the whole class, small groups or individuals. This ensures all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress.
- Regular, formal and informal assessments mean that teachers know exactly how well pupils are doing. They have increasingly high expectations of what pupils can do and usually plan challenging tasks that ensure pupils make good progress towards achieving their next level. Sometimes this challenge is not sufficient, particularly for the more able, and as a result their progress slows a little in that part of the lesson.
- Adults use skilled and probing questions to develop thinking and encourage pupils to talk about their work in pairs, small groups and whole-class discussions. This supports the development of language skills as well as the subject-specific knowledge well. A Year 4 class discussed the features of a non-chronological report as a whole class and in pairs. As a result they were clear about what they must do to produce their own written report on orangutans.
- Lessons have clear success criteria and pupils know how well they are doing. They have opportunities to think about the targets they are working towards and decide if they have met them in that week's work.
- Marking in books is usually clear about what has been achieved and includes comments to help pupils know how to improve their work. This is not always evident in all work, particularly in Key

Stage 2, and as a result sometimes pupils are not able to make the quick and effective improvements that will consolidate their learning.

- Teachers make strong links across different subjects and to real life so that pupils are excited and interested in what they are learning. In a Year 1 class, pupils were immediately engaged in learning about different jobs that people do, as the teacher linked this to their walk in the surrounding area of the school. As a result pupils made excellent progress as they worked at independent activities, such as pretending to be police officers, using and extending their language skills.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are able to learn together. The wide range of activities inside and outside, including using climbing equipment to develop physical skills, means that they are able to make good progress in all areas of learning through child-initiated and adult-led activities.
- Skilled observations and assessments of children throughout the day enable early years staff to plan activities that will further children's development and understanding.
- English and mathematics teaching ensures that pupils have a good grasp of the technical language for each subject. Pupils in a range of year groups were confident in explaining how their written work could be improved by the use of 'generalisers' in sentences. Pupils in Year 6 were encouraged to explain how they solved a 'missing number' calculation using the correct terminology throughout.
- Homework supports pupils' learning well. Pupils and staff see it as important. Parents and carers comment on how they value the information given by the school that enables them to help their children at home.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well around the school. They care about each other and play well at break times where a range of activities ensures that pupils keep active.
- Consistent strategies in use throughout the school ensure that those who may find it difficult to manage their own behaviour are helped to stay on task and to handle relationships with others.
- Pupils are keen to learn and in almost all lessons excellent behaviour ensures that all pupils listen well both to their teacher and to each other. Very occasionally pupils' interest is not held well enough and as a result there is some restlessness and lack of focus by some pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils feel very safe. They understand how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, such as fire and bike safety. They are very confident about how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and how to deal with cyber-bullying.
- Pupils say there is no bullying of any kind, including racist incidents. They say that any name-calling is friendly such as when shortening someone's name. They are very confident that adults will help them if they have any concerns or worries. Most parents and carers support this view and say that their children are kept safe in school. They are confident that their children are happy to come to school and as a result attendance is above the national average.

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher and head of school, well supported by school staff, are very clear about how to improve the school further. Areas for development are clearly identified because school self-evaluation is closely linked to school improvement and to teacher performance. As a result the impact of developments since the previous inspection has been considerable and achievement for all pupils is now good.
- Leaders and managers ensure that teaching improves at an individual level. The process of setting targets for teachers allows them to focus on individual development points, as well as

whole-school priorities.

- Subject leaders take a strong lead in improving aspects of their subject so that teachers are better equipped to deliver good quality lessons, particularly in English and mathematics.
 - Careful record keeping and checking of each individual pupil's progress are understood and undertaken by all staff. Consequently appropriate interventions are quickly in place to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds, and that there is no discrimination, for example between boys and girls.
 - Leaders carefully allocate pupil premium funding. This has ensured that these pupils are able to make the best progress possible and are able to access the full range of school activities.
 - The curriculum provides rich experiences, including visits and visitors, which enhance pupils' understanding of the subjects they are studying. Pupils have the opportunity to learn about different cultures, both in their own and the wider community. They take part in a range of cultural and sporting events, strengthened by links with the secondary school in the federation. The strong spiritual values of the school were typified when pupils came together from different parts of the school singing a praise song, accompanied by African drums, to celebrate each other's achievements.
 - Parents and carers value the school and are supportive of events that involve them and deepen their understanding of their children's work.
 - The local authority works effectively with the school strengthening the skills of the leadership team to check on the work of the school. It has been involved in developing the teaching of mathematics and supporting the school's work with disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, ensuring that their needs are met.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - does not ask enough searching questions of the executive headteacher and head of school. Governors do not have all the skills needed to thoroughly check information about pupils' progress, although the head of school has been assiduous in ensuring that training is available. As a result governors are unsure about the impact of many aspects of school management, for example target setting for teachers, the use of pupil premium and local authority support.
 - has been effective in ensuring that the school budget is in a stable position. Governors have supported the changes in teacher deployment and the organisation of the leadership team so that teachers' skills are used in the best way to benefit the pupils
 - has effective controls to ensure that its statutory responsibilities are met: all staff are vetted and trained to keep pupils safe and free from harm.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors. A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.

School details

Unique reference number	123217
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	406148

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father John Hancock
Headteacher	John Hussey
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 May 2011
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