

Inspection of St John Fisher Catholic Primary School, Littlemore

Sandy Lane West, Littlemore, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX4 6LD

Inspection dates: 2–3 October 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school: they are happy and feel safe. All the adults that work with the pupils are kind and supportive. Pupils say that bullying is very rare. They say that if there is any poor behaviour, there is always an adult on hand to sort out any differences.

The school provides a broad range of activities for pupils, including singing and musical events. Pupils spoke about visits to the library, visiting authors and the range of after-school clubs. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. Pupils are encouraged to develop a positive work ethic. They enjoy working together and discussing their ideas.

The school is a calm and welcoming environment. Staff know pupils well. St John Fisher is a school built on high levels of respect and care. Pupils were proud to tell the inspector that they are 'one community'.

Pupils usually behave well in lessons. From time to time, teachers have to remind pupils how to behave. When the teaching is not planned as well as it should be, pupils lose focus and do not complete tasks.

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

In recent years, pupils have not done well enough in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders identified that they needed to change their approach to the teaching of these subjects. In September 2018, teachers introduced new approaches to address these weaknesses. Leaders prioritised the teaching of reading and introduced a new mathematics curriculum. While this has led to improvements, leaders know that some aspects of the curriculum are still not challenging enough.

All staff help pupils to become fluent readers. Leaders have thought carefully about which books link to the topics they are teaching. Pupils take books home and regularly read with adults. Staff training has been effective. This helps pupils to learn phonics. Adults choose books for pupils that are carefully matched to the sounds they are learning. Pupils in Year 6 told inspectors that they enjoyed reading and could discuss their favourite authors and books.

Leaders have improved the mathematics curriculum over the past year. Teachers' planning helps pupils build on what they have already learned. Pupils are able to count and calculate with confidence. Staff have benefited from training that is helping to improve pupils' knowledge. Yet, pupils still have gaps in their understanding. As a result, they struggle to solve hard problems.

In other subjects, there are no clear plans detailing the skills and knowledge that pupils need to know. In these subjects, teachers' plans do not help pupils to learn more based on what they already know.

Leaders want all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to do well. Staff provide a range of support to help these pupils succeed. Pupils that need support have clear targets. However, in some subjects, such as geography and history, leaders have not adapted the curriculum to meet these pupils' needs.

In early years, leaders make sure that children are safe and behave well. Children develop positive relationships. This is because teachers develop strong relationships with them. However, teachers are not doing enough to help children do as well as they could. Teachers do not work out what children can and cannot do when they join the early years setting. Teachers have not had enough training and support in how to teach the early years curriculum.

The trust has improved its support for the school in the past year. Despite this, it does not have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Local governors are not clear about how the trust has helped to improve the quality of education.

Pupils support each other well. Leaders focus on developing positive relationships based on mutual respect and tolerance. Staff encourage pupils to think about how their actions can affect others. Older pupils enjoy helping the younger children at playtimes.

All the staff and parents and carers are supportive of the principal. Every parent and carer would recommend the school to others. One parent said, 'The class teachers are warm and welcoming and want their pupils to achieve and thrive.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff make sure that pupils are safe and protected from harm. Leaders have ensured that adults are checked for their suitability to work with children.

Staff are aware of the risks pupils may face. Staff receive regular training and are vigilant. They work with other agencies to support pupils and their families when necessary. The principal has developed a culture where mental health is a high priority. This provides pupils with a safe place to share any concerns or worries.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have made some improvements in the development of the curriculum, for example in mathematics. However, these improvements have not led to pupils knowing more and remembering more over time. Leaders need to ensure that pupils improve their knowledge, skills and understanding of subjects so that they achieve well.

- Subject leaders need to develop clear plans that focus on the skills pupils are expected to learn to help them to succeed. Leaders must ensure that they improve how they check how much pupils have learned.
- The trust has been through a turbulent period. Trustees do not hold leaders to account well. Trustees need to hold leaders to account so that leaders improve the quality of education.
- In early years, leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is well planned so that it meets pupils' needs. Some staff require training to develop their understanding of what they teach and how they check that it is working. This means that children do not learn as well as they could. Leaders need to ensure that teachers' plans are better matched to the needs of pupils.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	139480
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10111222
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Concannon
Principal	Dianne Carbon
Website	www.st-john-fisher.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 March 2016

Information about this school

- St John Fisher Catholic Primary School is part of the Dominic Barberi Multi Academy Company. The work of the school is overseen by the board of trustees.
- The school is designated as having a religious character and received its section 48 inspection in June 2016, when this aspect of the school's work was graded as good.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors met with the principal, all class teachers, members of the governing body and the executive principal of the trust.
- As part of this inspection, the following subjects were considered: reading, mathematics, science and art. For each of these subjects, inspectors did the following: discussed the provision and teaching with senior leaders and subject leaders; visited lessons; talked to pupils; and looked at work in pupils' books.

- Inspectors took into account 16 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 15 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors scrutinised training records, spoke with pupils and tested staff’s safeguarding knowledge to ensure that pupils are safe. The lead inspector also met with the designated safeguarding lead.

Inspection team

David Harris, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Kate Redman

Ofsted Inspector

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