

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Carterton

Lawton Avenue, Carterton, Oxfordshire OX18 3JY

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 November 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	Requires improvement

The acting headteacher of this school is Cheryl MacLennan. This school is part of Pope Francis Multi Academy Company, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Fraser Long, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Concannon.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are confident, happy and feel safe at this school. They enjoy each other's company and behave in a kind way to one another. The school helps pupils to build warm and positive relationships. Pupils know they are part of a respectful and diverse school, where everyone gets along.

The school has high ambition and expectations for all pupils. Staff encourage pupils to be resilient learners and provide support for pupils who need additional help to do this. This helps pupils to usually learn well. Pupils swiftly learn the clear routines when they join the school, so they understand the school's high expectations of behaviour. Children learn the importance of sharing and taking turns as soon as they start in Nursery.

Recently, many new pupils have joined the school. New pupils are warmly welcomed, which helps them to settle in quickly. As one parent stated, 'The school is truly inclusive and gives the children a real sense of securely belonging to the school community.' The school provides opportunities for pupils to develop leadership skills, such as being class ambassadors. Pupils also benefit from a range of clubs, including choir, sports clubs and dance workshops.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum. Leaders have carefully considered what knowledge and skills they intend pupils to learn and remember. This builds through the school from Nursery onwards. The school swiftly identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff are equipped with expert knowledge to adapt their teaching to support these pupils to learn the curriculum effectively.

Staff have secure subject knowledge in most subjects. This helps teachers to present new concepts clearly and to accurately check pupils' understanding. In many subjects, staff carefully identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and use this information to inform future teaching. In a few subjects, this is still being developed. The most recent published results in mathematics and writing do not reflect the current improved quality of pupils' work.

The teaching of early reading is effective. Children get off to a strong start in the development of language and communication skills in Nursery. The school has provided high-quality training to ensure that staff provide precise guidance to teach pupils to read. This means that pupils learn to read fluently by sounding out words and blending sounds with accuracy. For pupils at the early stages of reading, the school provides effective additional support, and pupils routinely practise their reading with adults. Adults carefully check pupils' reading to ensure they know that pupils understand what they are reading.

The school is a calm and orderly place for pupils to learn and play. High-quality training supports staff to maintain high expectations, which help pupils to behave well, both in and out of lessons. Pupils are taught clear routines from early years onwards. For example, in Nursery, children are taught about the importance of sitting and listening, so they are ready to learn. In lessons, most pupils focus well on their learning and show positive attitudes to their learning. There are occasional incidents of low-level disruption in lessons. Staff are quick to support pupils who become disengaged to focus on their learning.

The school teaches pupils about the importance of regular attendance and prompt punctuality. Leaders work effectively with parents to make sure that pupils attend well from when they join in early years. As a result, attendance is strong and improving.

Pupils' personal development is prioritised. The school engages fully with the wider community to promote this. For example, pupils recently worked with the community to clean the local river following their river survey work. The school invites visitors from the local community to talk to pupils on a range of issues such as careers and culture. During a recent 'cultural day', Year 1 and 2 pupils enjoyed talking with visitors about the different countries in which they have lived. Pupils are taught to celebrate difference. This means that pupils build an understanding and acceptance of the community around them. There are many opportunities for pupils to show leadership at this school. These opportunities help them to learn about important concepts, such as democracy and how Parliament works. The school ensures that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, benefit from leadership roles.

Leaders at all levels know the school well because of accurate information they receive and their frequent visits to the school. Leaders have prioritised professional development and well-being of staff. Leaders' focus on staff training for reading, mathematics and strategies to support pupils with SEND means that pupils are learning increasingly well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, staff's subject knowledge is not fully secure. As a result, some pupils' knowledge and understanding does not build systematically. The school needs to continue to improve staff's subject expertise. It also needs to support staff to emphasise the most important knowledge and skills to help pupils link new ideas to what they have learned previously.

- In a few subjects, assessment is not sufficiently developed. This means that, sometimes, pupils are taught what they already know or move on to new learning before they are ready. The school should ensure that all staff know how to accurately check pupils' understanding and make effective use of this information to inform future teaching.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	139532
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10288035
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	117
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Concanon
CEO of trust	Fraser Long
Headteacher	Cheryl MacLennan
Website	www.stjosephsprimarycarterton.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 February 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the headteacher has left the school. The school is being led by the acting headteacher, with support from the multi-academy company. The acting headteacher has been in role since October 2022.
- 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 of the school's religious character took place in July 2022.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders of the school, members of staff, pupils and parents.
- The lead inspector met with governors, a trustee, the chief executive officer and held a telephone call with the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also heard pupils read.
- Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work in some other subjects. They also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors spoke with staff, pupils and parents to gather their views. They considered 20 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including 13 free-text comments. Inspectors also took account of 13 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Paul Hemmings, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Alan Derry

His Majesty's Inspector

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