

Inspection of St John Fisher Catholic Primary School, Littlemore

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

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 June 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

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff provide a high level of nurture in this safe and caring school. Their mission is to enable pupils to 'let all that you do be done in love'. This is the cornerstone that underpins all aspects of school life.

Across the school, there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils are polite and friendly. Children in the Nursery settle quickly because there are clear routines. Pupils know and follow the school values of trust, respect, love and truth. Pupils care for each other and understand what makes a good friend. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Pupils feel safe at school because they trust adults to look after them. Pupils say that bullying sometimes occurs but are confident that adults swiftly deal with any problems. Leaders' records confirm pupils' views.

Pupils learn to be active citizens. They take on roles of responsibility as school council members. Pupils are taught the importance of being an 'up-stander' and not to be a 'by-stander'.

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils. With support from the trust, the school has recently reviewed the curriculum. Now all pupils are engaged and are building on their previous learning in all subjects.

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

The trust, governors and leaders are realising their high aspirations for all pupils both socially and academically. This begins right from the moment the youngest children start in the Nursery. Leaders acknowledge that the school has experienced a high level of staff changes recently. These issues have now been resolved. All staff are enthusiastic and highly motivated to ensuring that every pupil, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), succeeds.

The curriculum is well sequenced and engaging. Leaders have designed it to identify the knowledge that pupils need to learn, from the start of Nursery through to Year 6. For example, children in Nursery learn about summer and the vocabulary to describe heat. In Year 2, pupils compare hot and cold regions of the world and in Year 6, they compare polar regions more specifically to Mexico.

Teachers carefully plan tasks to help pupils revisit prior learning and to ensure that they have no gaps in key knowledge before moving on to new learning. However, leaders know that because some vulnerable pupils are not coming to school as often as they should, they have gaps in their learning. In reading and mathematics, teachers are skilled in adapting tasks to ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, achieve well. For instance, in the Reception Year, when learning about doubling, children use a variety of mathematical equipment to help develop their understanding. However, leaders still need to ensure that teachers adapt tasks in other subjects as effectively.

Leaders have successfully prioritised reading. They have brought in a new phonics programme which is enabling pupils to learn to read quickly. The youngest children get off to a strong start because phonics sessions begin as soon as they are at school. Leaders have ensured that all staff are well trained in the new programme. Consequently, staff are highly skilled and able to provide high-quality support for those pupils who need it. Teachers ensure that pupils read books that match the sounds they know. This enables pupils to become fluent readers.

Leaders cultivate pupils' love of reading. They have made sure that every class has high-quality texts to read. This helps pupils to learn about different styles of writing and widens their vocabulary. Pupils enjoy receiving a certificate when they have read 25 books and being able to choose a book when they reach 100 reads. Both parents and pupils appreciate the opportunity to come to the 'booky breakfast' and read to each other.

Leaders know the needs of pupils with SEND well. There are effective procedures in place to identify pupils' barriers to learning swiftly. Leaders offer timely and effective support to ensure that pupils can take part in the same learning as their peers. However, more could be done to ensure that pupils with SEND achieve as well as their peers.

Pupils behave well both in and out of class. They know the importance of working hard. In lessons, the vast majority of pupils listen and concentrate well. Staff have high expectations of behaviour. Pupils know this and try their best not to let their teachers down.

The new trust and governors are experienced and knowledgeable. They challenge and hold leaders to account for the quality of education. Staff know their well-being is important to leaders and they feel supported effectively to do their jobs well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The members of the safeguarding team have ensured that staff are trained well to recognise signs in a pupil that might be a cause for concern. Staff know the procedures they need to follow if they are worried about a pupil. Leaders work well with other agencies to ensure that pupils and their families get the support they need promptly. The trust and governors monitor and challenge the school's safeguarding work. They check training is always up to date. Pupils know how to keep safe online. They know not to go on websites or talk to people they do not know.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In foundation subjects, staff do not always adapt learning effectively for pupils with barriers to their learning. Consequently, some pupils do not learn and remember the curriculum as well as they could. Leaders need to improve teachers' pedagogical content knowledge so that they can support all pupils to achieve well across the whole curriculum.
- Some vulnerable pupils are not attending school regularly enough. This means they miss learning and fall behind their peers. Leaders need to continue to develop strategies to ensure that the attendance of this group of pupils improves.

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](#)' 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	10268364
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	209
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Concannon
Headteacher	Luisa Penman (interim head)
Website	www.st-john-fisher.oxon.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	2 and 3 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- In January 2021, the merger took place between Dominic Barberi Multi Academy Company and the Pope Francis Catholic Multi Academy Company (PFMAC). St John Fisher Catholic Primary School is now part of the PFMAC.
- The school's last section 48 inspection of the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a Roman Catholic school took place in October 2022.
- The interim headteacher took up post in September 2021.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Deep dives were carried out in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, looked at samples of work and spoke to pupils about their learning. The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult and talked to them about their reading.
- An inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator to discuss the provision for pupils with SEND.
- The lead inspector spoke to the deputy director from the diocese, the chair of the PFMAC and met with members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors considered how well the school protects pupils and keeps them safe. The lead inspector met with the safeguarding team, the local governing body and spoke to representatives from the PFMAC to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding. Inspectors talked to staff about their safeguarding training and spoke to pupils about the support they have in understanding how to keep safe.
- The views of parents were considered through the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and parents' free-text comments to inspectors. An inspector also spoke with some parents at the beginning of the second day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Becky Greenhalgh, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jill Digweed	Ofsted Inspector

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