

Holy Trinity Catholic School, Chipping Norton

24 London Road, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire OX7 5AX

Inspection dates

10–11 May 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders have an unwavering commitment to placing the well-being and academic achievement of all pupils at the heart of this highly aspirational school.
- Leaders have improved pupils' outcomes by inspiring all adults to expect the most from pupils. Pupils throughout the school rise to the challenge and make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In Year 6 in 2016, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was significantly above average. Current pupils also reach high standards across all subjects. They have many opportunities to experience and try new things across the curriculum.
- Teachers know their pupils extremely well and provide interesting and challenging opportunities for them to learn. There is a clear focus on helping pupils to acquire the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers deploy their skilled classroom assistants well to ensure that all groups of pupils make very rapid progress.
- The school has a very effective tracking system that measures carefully the progress that pupils make, triggering extra support for any who fall behind.
- Pupils have exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. They are highly respectful of each other and behave very well in lessons and around the school. They are extremely polite, friendly and have good manners.
- Provision in the early years is excellent. The staff ensure that it genuinely stimulates children's curiosity about the world around them. Consequently, children make outstanding progress and have a great start to their learning. They play creatively and investigate happily together.
- Leaders at all levels thoroughly check the quality of teaching and offer staff excellent advice and guidance on how to secure the best learning from the pupils.
- Governors are very knowledgeable and skilled in their roles and determined to improve themselves continually. They are highly aspirational and know the school very well.
- Most parents and carers are very happy about the school and praise it highly for the excellent opportunities that pupils experience.
- There are occasional times in lessons when staff do not encourage pupils to develop their ideas, as far as they could.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sharpen teachers' ability to deepen pupils' understanding in lessons so the maximum impact is made on learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher leads the school with a clear moral purpose. Her vision is to provide the best possible education for pupils. Staff morale is high. The staff team and governors have equally high expectations for pupils' behaviour, well-being and achievement. All are united in the shared vision and values. Consequently, pupils make outstanding progress. Standards reached by pupils currently in the school and historically, are well above average.
- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection of the predecessor school. Leaders manage its quality exceptionally well. They offer valuable advice to teachers and look carefully at pupils' work to ensure that achievement remains very strong. Teachers fully understand the high standards expected of them and the pupils in their class.
- The curriculum is a significant strength. The school gives specific attention to basic skills but also provides pupils with a rich range of subjects and activities. Subjects are often knitted together in themes and enhanced by trips to places of interest, special events or visitors to school.
- French and science stand out as notable strengths, with many high-quality learning experiences in these subjects. In addition, pupils develop a range of worthwhile skills while working in the nearby forest school area. In the before- and after-school club, activities are very well linked to the areas studied in lessons.
- Studies of different religions enable pupils to understand what different people across the world believe and how they live. Work within topics begins to equip pupils with an understanding of how Britain is different from other countries but also where similarities lie. Pupils have a good understanding of the cultures that make up modern Britain through a range of themed days and weeks.
- Training opportunities for staff include weekly staff updates, training within partner schools and one-to-one coaching. The headteacher's vision for pupils' success is extended to staff. High-quality professional development leads to high-calibre teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders and governors identify weaknesses in the school's work and eliminate them quickly because they have very effective ways of measuring how well the school is doing. Pupils' outstanding achievement is maintained through development planning that is extremely thorough and focuses on attainment and progress. It also ensures a continuous and unrelenting drive to improve teaching and learning even further.
- Pupils' excellent personal development is due in part to a curriculum that strongly contributes to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is threaded through the school day. The topic-based approach to learning makes excellent use of pupils' interests and curiosity. This encourages pupils to think deeply about the world around them, including the environment. Many pupils learn to play musical instruments and attend the very wide range of extra-curricular clubs. These are highly valued by parents and pupils, with one parent saying, 'The school also offers an amazing array of extra opportunities – music, sports, French lessons, trips out.'

- British values are promoted excellently through lessons, assemblies and every part of school life. Staff discuss and talk in detail about democracy, the rule of law and mutual respect and cooperation in the school community and the wider world. This is actively promoted through the school's key principle, 'Working together through the love of God.' It also decisively encourages pupils' understanding of the importance of taking on elected leadership roles on the school council. Their responsibilities include reporting back to teachers and the governing body on aspects of the school they think should be improved. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders and governors make exceptionally good use of the additional government funding for primary sports and physical education. They have introduced new sports, which have been successful in attracting new participants. The school is an active member of the Chipping Norton Schools Partnership. Leaders ensure the sustainability of the funding by encouraging sports coaches from this local link to share their skills with class teachers, so that they too can deliver high-quality sports teaching.
- Specific funds to provide support for disadvantaged pupils are put to very good use, with spending tailored to individual needs. Pupils receive an excellent blend of academic and personal support. For example, there is high calibre one-to-one teaching and time for pupils and parents to meet with the school's diligent, caring and highly effective parent support adviser.
- Leaders make skilful use of funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Such pupils' needs are identified early. Leaders track their excellent progress continually. Teachers and teaching assistants provide high-quality support to pupils and their parents. In Year 1, for example, a small group of girls received expert support in mathematics, focusing closely on work not fully understood in class.
- Nearly all parents are appreciative of the way that the school now provides for their children. One comment, typical of the many positive free-text messages received during the inspection, was, 'I couldn't be happier seeing my children thrive in such a friendly and positive environment.'

Governance of the school

- Governors are highly skilled and effective. Their determination to support and challenge leaders in pursuing a high standard of education is reflected in their detailed and excellent analysis of reports provided by leaders. Governors understand well the meaning of information about pupils' performance. They probe carefully and ask questions about pupils' achievement from different groups, including those who fall behind expectations.
- Governors have an exceptionally accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, often gained from first-hand experience. They visit lessons, talk to pupils and look at their work. Governors ensure that the right checks are made on people who work in the school. They are ambitious for every pupil to achieve across a broad curriculum. Governors, alongside school leaders, aim to make sure that pupils develop attitudes and values that will help them, and the communities in which they live, now and in the future.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Policies, procedures and records are well-structured and up to date.
- Summary records of incidents of concern, no matter how small, are kept meticulously. All staff are appropriately trained and have access to carefully written policies and guidance. As a result, they have a secure understanding of their individual responsibilities for safeguarding.
- Governors make sure that safeguarding and safety matters are regular items on the agenda of their meetings. Safer recruitment procedures operate correctly and the single central record of checks on staff's suitability to work with children is complete and up to date. Pupils are safe. They know, and say, that there is always an adult that they can talk to about any worries that they have. Parents feel supported and helped to understand different aspects of pupil safety. One parent commented, 'The school goes above and beyond in other areas such as hosting e-safety and literacy workshops for parents.'

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers have an unswerving focus on teaching basic skills within and alongside the wider curriculum. All staff expect pupils to learn exceptionally well and pupils rise to the challenge. Pupils make outstanding progress because teachers plan lessons based on a very detailed and accurate understanding of what pupils know, can do, and what will challenge them to do even better.
- Teaching gives pupils an extremely good grounding in reading, writing and mathematics. Reading is a particularly high priority. Pupils who read aloud to inspectors did so with fluency and expression. They spoke of the successful impact of initiatives to enthuse them about reading, such as the wide range of fiction and non-fiction books that the school offers. Pupils are encouraged to read at home and as part of research homework set by teachers. This extends the range of texts read by pupils and reinforces reading skills even further.
- Teamwork between staff is very strong. This is a school that makes excellent use of experts. For example, in Year 5 and 6 a mathematics specialist challenges the most able pupils with a wide range of problems and investigations. The school is open to new ideas and welcomes innovation. Staff are always looking to build further on existing links with other schools and organisations to develop teaching and pupils' skills.
- The teaching of writing is a significant strength. Pupils are given opportunities to write about 'real subjects' in a range of genres because of the school's approach to using the whole breadth of the curriculum. Consequently, pupils make very good progress with handwriting, punctuation, vocabulary, spelling and sentence structure. In Year 5, pupils checked and challenged the use of apostrophes by a county council on their signs. They displayed an excellent understanding of the structure of sentences, apostrophes and other punctuation.
- In mathematics, basic number skills, including mental calculation, are taught very well. Teachers provide helpful materials and apparatus to enable pupils to tackle challenging

work and consolidate their current understanding. In Year 1, a small group of pupils were adeptly using a number square to calculate challenging questions. As a result, pupils made extremely rapid progress.

- The teaching of phonics is very effective. The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the phonics screening check has improved since the last inspection and has been above the national average for the last three years. Pupils who need to catch up in key stage 2 have extra phonics lessons. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to read aloud and thoroughly check their understanding of unknown words and phrases. Consequently, pupils quickly extend their vocabulary.
- Teachers and their assistants ensure that disadvantaged pupils learn as quickly as other pupils. If any vulnerable pupils do fall behind with their learning, the school provides focused one-to-one tuition or small-group support to enable them to catch up.
- Excellent teaching in science includes examples of practical investigations, such as making and testing circuits and looking at the reflective properties of light. Some of the science curriculum is taught in discrete lessons and some as part of the topic-based curriculum. Lessons in the woodlands also make a strong contribution to the science curriculum.
- Teachers apply the school's ambitious marking policy very well in all subjects. This means that errors made in one subject get checked in pupils' work in another subject such as science and geography. As a result, pupils' basic skills are reinforced continually. For example, when a pupil made a mistake with a capital letter in writing in English work, it was also followed up in a history task to make sure it had been understood and applied.
- Teachers help pupils to understand new ideas and misunderstandings through very clear explanations. Occasionally, they do not deepen pupils' understanding. This is because pupils' ideas and answers are not challenged or debated enough to test their knowledge and understanding.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are very confident, happy individuals, who know that adults have their best interests at heart and will provide help whenever it is needed. They feel a valued part of an inclusive school community.
- Pupils understand what bullying means and the different forms it can take, such as cyber bullying. They told inspectors that there is 'not really any bullying at the school'. Pupils say that occasionally a pupil might say something unkind to another but, in the words of one pupil, 'it's all sorted out by the next breaktime'.
- Pupils learn to be very resourceful and resilient. By learning outdoors in the forest school, they get to solve problems and test out their abilities beyond the classroom. Musical instrument tuition and the chance to compete in sporting events help pupils to realise the link between effort and success and equip them with highly positive attitudes that serve them well. One pupil said, 'There are no ceilings to learning, only the sky.'

- The work of the school in anticipating welfare concerns and supporting pupils' attitudes is excellent. Staff work closely with pupils, parents and external agencies to integrate new and vulnerable pupils. This enables them to quickly feel part of the school community so that any barriers to learning are addressed immediately. For example, pupils attend a residential trip to Cornwall, very effectively supporting their personal development through carefully selected activities that strengthen skills such as teamwork.
- Teachers provide pupils with excellent role models, showing respect, consideration and tolerance. Pupils follow this example and understand that it is important to treat others kindly and thoughtfully. Pupils follow the example of staff because, as one pupil said, reflecting the perspective of many, 'It helps us to be a better person.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils take much pride in their school, show complete respect for their teachers and arrive looking smart and fully ready to learn.
- The school community is built on a bedrock of strong and respectful relationships. This helps pupils to feel special and be guided by the school's deep-rooted principles and values.
- Pupils take a lot of pride in their work. Standards of presentation in pupils' books show a highly consistent effort to write very neatly and record their mathematical work in a very systematic manner. Any dip in these standards is unusual.
- Pupils love learning. One pupil explained this to an inspector as, 'We have fun, but are learning at the same time.' Pupils want to work hard in lessons and do so continuously. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress from their different starting points. Pupils listen attentively to adults and when other pupils are talking, not wanting to miss out on anything.
- Pupils of all ages play and work well together. For example, Year 6 pupils referee the football match for the younger pupils. The school is a place of harmony. In the before- and after-school club, pupils share resources and include others kindly in their activities so that nobody is left out. On the playground and field, pupils enjoy using a range of equipment together.
- Staff manage any isolated instances of poor behaviour well. They bring a sense of calm authority to any such situations and encourage pupils to reflect on the consequences of any unwise decisions. As a result, pupils come to understand that they must set high standards for their own behaviour. Most parents say that behaviour is very good. One parent said, 'Children are very well-behaved and feel part of a family.'
- The attendance of pupils is above the national average for primary schools. There is very little persistent absence. Pupils greatly enjoy their education and speak of how they value their school. Parents reinforced this, with one saying, 'Our children skip to school and are really happy.'

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Outcomes for pupils are outstanding because pupils in all year groups across a range of subjects achieve exceptionally well. Pupils are prepared fully for the next stage in their education.
- Attainment is above average. In 2016, at the end of key stage 2, an above average proportion of pupils reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. All pupils reached the expected standard in writing and nearly all reached the expected standard in reading. Nearly half of the pupils reached a higher level of understanding.
- The individualised approach taken by the school to the progress made by each pupil ensures that none falls behind. For example, in a Year 4 music lesson pupils showed their secure understanding of different notation and used it successfully in their own compositions.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Across the school, these pupils are supported very well and, as a result, make excellent progress. Support programmes are delivered very effectively.
- There are too few disadvantaged pupils at the school for an analysis of their progress and attainment data to generate meaningful statistics. However, a study of pupils' work confirms that disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make the same rapid progress as other pupils at the school and much faster progress than other pupils nationally. This is because the high priority afforded this group results in support that is tailored exceptionally well to their individual needs. For several pupils, this means extra help with writing.
- The most able pupils make very quick gains in knowledge and their skills are strengthening at an exceptionally fast rate. This is because teachers pitch work very effectively according to pupils' abilities. In turn, this provides them with significant challenge in their learning. For example, in mathematics pupils are expected routinely to use and apply their skills in a very wide range of real life situations and investigations.
- There are times when rates of learning could occasionally be even quicker if the level of challenge were higher.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children get off to a flying start in the early years. They arrive with broadly typically starting points for their age. Staff quickly identify their needs and plan activities to help them acquire new skills rapidly. As a result, children are prepared very well for Year 1.
- Outstanding teaching ensures that children make very rapid progress and greatly enjoy coming to school. An example of this was seen during the inspection in an imaginative lesson on phonics that had all the children fully focused for a long period. Progress was very rapid because children loved the idea of 'exploding phonemes' and related very well to the way that the teacher presented it.

- Leadership at all levels is exceptional. Leaders know and understand the strengths of the setting. They are relentless in their efforts to keep improving. The early years leader has developed a consistent approach to assessment. Staff use technology to record accurately evidence about children’s achievements. They regularly meet together to benchmark standards. This approach also involves parents well.
- Differences in progress that existed between boys and girls have diminished. Extra support and challenge are provided for the most able children. This provision is making a very positive impact on their rates of progress in language and numeracy development. Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive highly effective one-to-one support that enables them to make rapid progress from their starting points.
- Children work extremely well together and are engrossed in their learning. This is because of the emphasis adults place on developing children’s personal, social and behavioural skills. Adults ask thoughtful questions to make children think about what they are doing and to deepen their knowledge and understanding. As a result, children develop their skills and knowledge with high levels of independence and confidence.
- Leaders are highly vigilant in all aspects of safety and safeguarding children’s welfare. The way that children play and learn happily together shows that they clearly feel very safe and secure.
- Strong links between home and school enable parents to engage with their children’s learning. The effective assessment system ensures the inclusion of parental contributions and highlights the next steps in learning for their children.

School details

Unique reference number	141150
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10032937

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wyn Brack
Headteacher	Lorna Buchanan
Telephone number	01608 643487
Website	www.holy-trinity.oxon.sch.uk
Email address	head.3420@holy-trinity.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- 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 school met the government's floor standards in 2016 which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average. There are no disadvantaged pupils in the early years or in key stage 1.

- The school converted to an academy in July 2014. The school is one of three schools within The Pope Francis Multi Academy Company. The predecessor school was judged by Ofsted to be good.
- There is a before- and after- school club managed by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a number of part-lessons. Inspectors also made shorter visits to lessons. The inspection team looked at pupils' work in their books.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders.
- Discussions were held with members of the governing body and the chair of the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors spoke formally to pupils in a meeting and informally at break and lunchtime.
- The inspection team looked at documents provided by the school, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and its improvement plans, safeguarding documents, and those relating to attendance. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' progress data, records of performance management and minutes of the governing body meetings.
- Inspectors considered the 59 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and comments made via the free-text facility. Inspectors had informal discussions with parents during the inspection as they brought their children to school. There were 26 responses to the staff questionnaire and 65 responses to the pupil survey which were taken into account.

Inspection team

Richard Blackmore, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Dunmall	Ofsted Inspector
Louise Eaton	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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