

Inspection of St John Rigby Catholic Primary School

Polhill Avenue, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK41 9DQ

Inspection dates: 10–11 December 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

Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St John Rigby Catholic School are confident, happy and polite. The school's core values teach pupils to be caring and considerate individuals. Pupils believe that everyone should be equal and yet unique.

Pupils behave well in and out of lessons. Parents who responded to Ofsted's Parent View agree that their children are safe and most say that pupils behave well. Pupils say that bullying is rare. They say staff will resolve any concerns fairly and quickly. Pupils give examples of where this has happened.

Pupils enjoy positive relationships with staff. Pupils participate well in class discussions and work productively with their peers. In some lessons, teachers model effective ways for pupils to check their own progress in their learning. Teachers provide a range of resources to help pupils become independent learners. As a result, some pupils learn to be reflective about their own learning and can talk about what helps them to learn best. However, the leaders' curriculum is not yet ambitious enough to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they should. Some parents and carers are concerned that leaders' expectations are not high enough for their children.

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

Over the last few years, there has been significant instability within the school workforce. This includes within the leadership of the school. This has led to a decline in standards over time. In a relatively short period, the new substantive headteacher has secured a committed leadership team. With support from the trust, she has begun to make strides in improving standards in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the school's curriculum across subjects does not yet provide pupils with a good quality of education.

Leaders' curriculum plans for most subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics, are not yet logically sequenced to ensure teaching and learning build on pupils' previous learning. Because of this, too few pupils gain in-depth knowledge and reach the higher standards of achievement at the end of each key stage in reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, from their work on Black history, pupils could talk about important inspirational people. Pupils explained how Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Junior have made a significant impact on society and world history.

Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy their learning and that teachers help them to reflect on their progress and how they can improve. Some pupils' work shows that they practise their writing skills routinely and produce writing expected for their age. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrated how their writing has improved over time. This is not evident across all year groups or classes. This is because curriculum plans for writing

do not specify what leaders want pupils to learn or to be able to do at the end of each year group.

By the end of Year 1, most pupils are able to use their phonic skills to read at the expected level for their age. However, some pupils fall behind and struggle to keep up. This is because support is not precise enough to ensure that they catch up quickly. In addition, some staff teach pupils to guess at words they don't know based on the context and pictures rather than systematically teaching pupils how to decode the words.

Teaching in mathematics has improved recently. Pupils build logically on their number skills. Leaders have identified that pupils need to practise these skills more in problem-solving activities.

Curriculum leaders in some subjects, such as history and geography, have not planned opportunities for teachers to develop pupils' understanding by building on their previous learning. This is not enabling them to deepen and extend their knowledge over time. Leaders of these subjects are new to their roles. They are receiving appropriate training and are focused on making sure that what pupils need to learn is being taught in the right order.

The leader of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is new in post. Leaders have identified that the curriculum for pupils with SEND is not ambitious enough. In addition, some pupils with SEND could achieve better with more precise support.

Children enter early years with skills and abilities broadly in line with national averages. They settle well and get to know routines quickly. However, leaders' plans do not set out what children need to be able to do from when they start Reception through to when they join Year 1. As a result, too many children leave Reception not achieving as well as they should.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders carry out the required employment checks on all adults who work with children at the school. Staff have received the relevant safeguarding training and know whom to speak to if they have concerns about the well-being of pupils. Leaders are prompt at following up any concerns with the appropriate agencies so that the most vulnerable pupils get the right support when they need it.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' curriculum plans across subjects are not sequenced logically to help pupils build on previous learning and develop their knowledge and skills further.

Leaders have not considered specifically what their pupils need to know for each year group. Subject plans need to consider what leaders want pupils to know over the course of their primary education. They need to ensure that pupils learn more about subject content and in doing so remember more.

- Leaders' reading curriculum does not yet set out how teaching will build on pupils' vocabulary or develop pupils' reading skills over time. Teachers do not teach phonics well enough to those pupils who find reading difficult so that they catch up quickly. Leaders must ensure that the teaching of reading is well sequenced so that pupils can build on previous learning to develop their reading skills as they move through the years. They also need to make sure that teaching is helping pupils who fall behind in their phonics understanding to catch up more quickly.
- Not all pupils apply their writing skills consistently in their work. This is hindering some pupils from achieving as well as they should. Leaders need to ensure that teachers are providing pupils with enough opportunities to practise their writing skills across all curriculum areas.
- Pupils are not yet having enough opportunities to apply their number skills routinely to problem-solving and reasoning tasks. This needs to happen so that pupils are secure in their knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts.
- Children in Reception do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders need to ensure that curriculum plans ensure children make better progress from the start, particularly in reading.
- Leaders do not demonstrate high enough expectations within their curriculum plans. Plans need to be ambitious so that all pupils, including those with SEND, are supported to achieve as well as they can from the time they enter the school.

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	139515
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10110344
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	404
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christopher Donnellan
Headteacher	Michele McGettigan
Website	www.stjohnrigby.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is the first inspection since the school joined the St Francis of Assisi Academies Trust in 2013. It is also the first inspection since moving from a lower school to a primary school.
- This school is larger than the average-sized school that serves mainly Roman Catholic pupils from Bedford.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND who have an education, health and care plan is above the national average. The proportions who require additional support and who are disadvantaged are both below the national average.
- The current headteacher took up the permanent post in May 2019.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- During the inspection, we met with the headteacher, assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator and teachers from all year groups. We also

spoke to several groups of pupils to talk about their learning across the curriculum. The lead inspector met with three members of local governing body, and the executive principal of the governing body.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, writing, mathematics, geography, history and science. We spoke to leaders of these subjects, visited lessons, spoke with pupils and teachers, and carried out work scrutinies to understand the quality of education.
- We looked at the school's systems and processes for checking adults' suitability to work with children. Inspectors spoke with teachers, pupils and parents to check safeguarding arrangements.
- We considered the 30 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. We spoke with parents on the playground at the beginning of the day.

Inspection team

Cindy Impey, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kay Tims

Ofsted Inspector

Lesley Stevens

Ofsted Inspector

Debbie Rogan

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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