

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



18 December 2015

Mr D Copley
Executive headteacher
St Cuthbert and the First Martyrs' Catholic Primary School
Scotchman Road
Bradford
BD9 5AT

Dear Mr Copley

Short inspection of St Cuthbert and the First Martyrs' Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on Tuesday 8 December, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in February 2012.

This school continues to be good.

Your recent appointment as executive headteacher has not only enabled the school to maintain its good standard of education, but has brought renewed rigour and focus to its work. The staff have been re-energised by your 'fresh pair of eyes' and the clarity of your actions. They value the opportunities to contribute fully to the development of the school, because from the outset you created a real sense of 'team'. You have quickly gained everyone's confidence and respect, which means they have bought into working towards achieving the very best for pupils.

You quickly, thoroughly and accurately evaluated the school's work, which resulted in a plan of action focused precisely on what needs to improve further. You have recognised and celebrated the many strengths the school has and used this as a foundation for the work planned. Pivotal to sustaining and building on the school's success has been your recognition of the quality and potential of other senior leaders, which has resulted in a newly formed team who are securing further improvements in the school's work. You and your leaders have ensured that areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been addressed.

You are outward looking and actively seek to work with schools in the Catholic partnership of schools, other schools in Bradford and external consultants, to support and challenge your work. One aspect of this work has been to improve and

secure the accuracy of teacher assessment in line with the new standards from the National Curriculum.

Pupils feel safe and happy, recognise they are well educated and afforded many opportunities. Many parents echo this view. Pupils spoke about their visit to France to explore the life and culture there and the opportunity to use their language skills to enhance their studies. They also talked about how much they enjoy their music and singing lessons and science investigations. I was delighted to listen to the high-quality singing of traditional Christmas carols as I worked!

The school provides exceptionally well for the growing number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, in particular those who are on the autistic spectrum. This is also the case for the growing number of pupils with English as an additional language. Support staff play an essential role in ensuring these pupils feel valued and fully included in lessons. High-quality teaching and provision ensures pupils do very well indeed.

Parents speak of the school's commitment to the 'whole child' and this is clearly a strength which prepares pupils very well for the next stage of their learning and life in modern Britain. One parent echoed many others' views when they wrote, 'My children's schooling journey at this school has moulded an exceptional attitude towards learning, socialising and understanding their community.' The celebration of diversity and the respect and tolerance for their own and others' culture and faith is very prominent.

Governors are not afraid to make tough decisions, as seen in the decision not to appoint a headteacher earlier this year. From this, governors actively sought to find the best possible solution for the school to ensure the good standard of leadership could be maintained and improved upon. The Chair of the Governing Body is passionate about the school and provides strong leadership and direction. She ensures members of the governing body have the knowledge and skills to think and act strategically, challenge leaders and make close and accurate checks on the school's work and progress.

The local authority has maintained a watching brief of the school's work, and has kept a close eye in recent months because of the changes in leadership.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is effective. No stone is left unturned in seeking to ensure pupils are safe in school. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The work of the 'Team around the child' means that, even when referrals to social care are not taken further, the school is proactive in seeking to engage agencies to support them in their work with children and families. This helps some very vulnerable pupils to

engage and succeed in their learning. Staff are very well informed of the risks to pupils and are vigilant, often recording small things that may prove to be pieces of a bigger picture. Pupils say they feel very safe and secure and the curriculum ensures they know how to keep safe from harm. The school does not shy away from tackling sensitive issues with pupils, so they are fully informed and prepared for life outside of school.

Inspection findings

- You and your leaders, despite recent changes, have sustained good standards of teaching since the last inspection. You have wasted no time in ensuring newly qualified teachers and teachers new to the school have had the support they need to improve.
- Standards remain consistently high at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils make good progress from their starting points, particularly the least able and those with special educational needs. There are clear strengths in the teaching of reading and mathematics. Your decisive action to tackle a dip in standards at the end of Key Stage 1 has ensured pupils are gaining ground. You are determined that more of the most-able pupils will achieve the higher levels they are capable of and you are holding staff to account for the progress of this group of pupils.
- The proportion of children in early years achieving a good level of development is steadily increasing. Communication and language are school priorities given the increasing number of children who are new to English and those with communication and language difficulties. Children make good progress in this aspect as well as in their personal, social and emotional development. Adults know children well and use assessment to ensure good and better progress from children's starting points. This is having an impact on the progress they make in reading and writing.
- You have ensured all staff contribute fully to school improvement through their leadership of curriculum subjects. Staff say 'everyone has something to give' in this school.
- Over time, leaders' actions have increased pupils' attainment in, and enjoyment of, writing. The youngest and oldest pupils have ample opportunities within the areas of learning and the foundation subjects to write for a purpose and at length so they can use, apply and demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills. You are clear that standards in writing could be even higher, because we saw that these opportunities were not used consistently in some classes and in subjects other than religious education.
- The subject leader has been instrumental in driving forward improvements in mathematics teaching. Teachers are linking number concepts to other areas of mathematical learning, so that pupils have an opportunity to use and apply their learning in a different context and explore patterns or relationships between numbers and operations. Through their marking and daily assessment, teachers identify misconceptions and errors and ensure these are addressed at the earliest opportunity. However, on occasions, pupils spend too long on tasks which are planned to identify any gaps in their learning. These tasks do not

always get to the heart of their understanding. We agreed that this is slowing progress for some pupils.

- The school has become increasingly skilled and effective in providing high-quality support for a number of pupils with complex needs. One parent took the time to write about the 'excellent support, care and attention' the school gives and says this has enabled her child to make great progress and flourish.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- all teachers provide pupils with the opportunities they need to use and apply their knowledge and skills to writing in other subject areas
- the activities teachers plan in order to assess gaps in pupils' learning in mathematics get to the heart of pupils' knowledge and understanding quickly, so that lesson time is used more efficiently to maximise pupils' learning.

Yours sincerely

Anne Bowyer

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection I was able to discuss the work of the school with you and your staff. We visited all classrooms to observe teaching and learning and looked at pupils' work to consider the progress they are making and to gather a view of teaching over time. I talked with pupils and parents and looked at the online questionnaire (Parent View) to gather their views of the school. I observed and spoke with pupils throughout the day and in a short meeting with eight of them. Discussions with a representative of the local authority and two school governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, helped to provide additional information. School documentation, assessment information, policies and information posted on the school website were taken into account.