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Mrs Joanne Hanslip
Executive Headteacher
St Teresa's Catholic Primary Academy
Malins Road
Parkfields
Wolverhampton
WV4 6AW

Dear Mrs Hanslip

Short inspection of St Teresa's Catholic Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 20 April 2016, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in March 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment in February 2016, you have built on effective action taken by previous leaders and improved aspects of leadership and management, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, personal development, behaviour and welfare and the progress of pupils throughout the school.

You have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas requiring development, and you have used this to improve the school. For example, you have taken action to ensure that the good behaviour that was evident at the time of the predecessor school's last inspection has been maintained. Pupils, staff and parents all told me that behaviour is good.

Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They are polite and considerate and enjoy coming to school. Most pupils have high attendance and all staff, parents and pupils who communicated with me told me that pupils are safe.

There is evidence of good teaching in every key stage. The strongest teaching reflects a passion for learning, which staff share with pupils. It is lively and engaging and leads to rapid progress. High-quality questioning develops deeper understanding, and teachers and teaching assistants work well together to help pupils learn effectively.

Pupils are given good opportunities to develop their writing skills in a range of subjects but numeracy is not promoted as well as literacy across the curriculum. There is evidence of teachers providing suitable challenge for pupils in their classes but this is not yet done consistently. As a result, the most able pupils do not make rapid progress in some classes.

Many children make outstanding progress in the Reception class and progress during key stage 2 has been consistently above the national average. However, progress in key stage 1 has been slower than elsewhere in the school and results in lower attainment than that found nationally. Leaders are aware of this and the action they have taken has led to improved progress by pupils currently in key stage 1.

There is a positive and ambitious culture within the school. Leaders have taken effective action to maintain strengths and address weaknesses since the last inspection. You, and other leaders, have been well supported by staff and those responsible for governance to improve the standard of education.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school has a culture for keeping children safe and leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Established routines are in place to keep children safe in the school, including in the early years provision. Records are secure and thorough. Up-to-date policies, which make reference to the most recent guidance, are implemented effectively. Staff have received relevant information and training about keeping children safe so prompt and appropriate action is taken if required. Staff are clear about what they should do if a concern arises.

School staff work well with others within the Bishop Cleary Multi Academy Company and involve outside agencies as required. Staff make timely referrals to the appropriate local authority officers and ensure that thorough safeguarding checks have taken place. These are very well maintained and updated regularly.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in ways that are age appropriate. They have learned about a range of topics, including e-safety and fire safety, and they told me that they feel safe in the school. Staff have also had training on relevant issues such as preventing extremism. However, the training that they have received on forced marriage does not match the depth of other training in which they have taken part.

Inspection findings

- Leaders know the school well. The executive headteacher and those responsible for governance have high expectations of staff and pupils, and demonstrate the capacity to improve the school further.
- Leadership at all levels is being developed. The early years provision is very well led and new leaders with responsibility for mathematics and for pupils who have special educational needs or disability are beginning to have an impact. All leaders are benefiting from meetings with other leaders from across the trust about their areas of responsibility.

- The arrangements for managing staff performance are most effective. Staff are set appropriate targets and leaders reward good-quality teaching and outcomes. Targets are linked to the impact teaching has on the achievement of pupils and they reflect the teachers' standards. Training and development are actively encouraged.
- Almost all teaching is of a high quality in the school. Where teaching has weaknesses, leaders have put support in place in order to secure improvement. Good and outstanding practice is shared across the multi academy company. Staff have taken opportunities to watch the best practitioners teach.
- School leaders have identified encouraging independence by creating more opportunities for pupils to work on their own as an area for development. However, the learning environment is not used fully to address this relative weakness. For example, information on walls is not used systematically to help pupils carry out their own research, and displays in classrooms rarely celebrate pupils' achievements.
- Assessment information indicates that the vast majority of current pupils are making at least good progress. The accuracy of this information has been checked through consultation with colleagues in school, across the multi academy company and beyond. Progress is better in some year groups than others, but leaders are aware of this issue and they are taking action to address it.
- The exceptionally strong progress in the early years setting and during key stage 2 has been maintained and progress in key stage 1 has improved. School leaders have information that shows a much greater proportion of Year 2 pupils are on track to reach age-related expectations this year.
- Outcomes in mathematics have not matched those in reading and writing since the last inspection. As a result of less effective teaching than that seen in English, pupils have made slower progress in this subject. Action has been taken to address this but leaders acknowledge that the teaching of mathematics is still an area requiring further development.
- Disadvantaged pupils have made slower progress than their classmates in mathematics and their progress in all subjects has not matched the accelerated progress achieved by others in Years 5 and 6. Additional funding is now being used more effectively to close these gaps.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are well supported and make similar progress from their starting points to other pupils in the school. However, although they make the progress expected of them, very few of the most able pupils make rapid progress across a range of subjects.
- School leaders have chosen to follow the national curriculum in order to provide a range of subjects designed to develop academic, technical and sporting skills. Classroom learning is supported by a number of enrichment activities and the executive headteacher has plans to develop the curriculum further.

- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed and fundamental British values are promoted effectively. The pupils are particularly knowledgeable about democracy and current affairs. They could explain voting to me and knew the name and role of the Prime Minister.
- Tolerance and respect are fundamental to the virtues the school upholds. Staff promote equality of opportunity and diversity exceptionally well. Pupils learn about all the major world religions and they are accepting of others. Pupils told me that bullying is rare and they are confident that any unkindness would be dealt with quickly and effectively if it happened.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in class and during social times. They enjoy positive relationships with the staff and each other and older pupils take care of younger children, both informally and through the 'playground police' system. They are proud of the school and wear their uniform with pride.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection and it is above the national average. School staff work closely with families of the few children who do not attend regularly, and persistent absence has declined. There are now no particular groups of pupils with low attendance.
- Almost all parents who made their views known to me are very positive about the school. They value the close working relationship with staff and feel that their children are well taught, make good progress, behave well and are safe. During the inspection, 19 parents attended a phonics session with their children in the Reception class. This indicates that staff have positive relationships with parents and that parents value the work that takes place in the school.
- Children in the early years enjoy high-quality teaching in a safe and stimulating environment. The range of subjects provides varied and imaginative experiences leading to at least good rates of progress. Most children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Additional funding is used effectively. The pupil premium provides additional support, resources and activities, which have led to improved outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Sports funding has been used to increase participation rates in a range of sporting activities and to provide more competitive sporting opportunities. It has increased the proportion of pupils who can swim 25 metres.
- The school's website contains a range of relevant information and policies. Leaders are aware that some of this information needs updating.
- The academy committee and the board of directors are responsible for governance of the school. Members of both groups know the school well and have provided high-quality support and challenge to leaders. They have an appropriate range of skills, knowledge and understanding, and have taken opportunities to develop these further. They are committed to the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school and perform their statutory duties effectively.

- The Bishop Cleary Multi Academy Company has also provided high-quality support to the school. Leaders have benefited from the range of services that are available through the company, such as education welfare, child protection, finance, administration and staffing. The company has also commissioned an external adviser who has produced accurate and useful reports which have aided school improvement.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently of the highest standard so that:

- attainment in key stage 1 improves
- outcomes in mathematics improve across the school
- the most able pupils are challenged to make accelerated progress in all subjects.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wolverhampton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Simon Mosley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, other leaders, the chair of the board of directors, the chair of the academy committee and three other representatives of the Bishop Cleary Multi Academy Company. I met formally with a group of staff and a group of pupils, and you and I made short visits to every classroom. I spoke to some parents at the start of the day and considered parental opinion through responses to the school questionnaire and two additional comments made through Parent View. I evaluated information on pupils' progress and scrutinised other records about keeping pupils safe, their behaviour and the attendance of groups. I also looked at minutes of meetings of the board of directors, the school's self-evaluation and development planning, staff training records and information about managing teachers' performance.