

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



18 May 2016

Mrs Amanda Wassell
Headteacher
St Bede's Catholic Primary School
Wortley Road
Rotherham
South Yorkshire
S61 1PD

Dear Mrs Wassell

Short inspection of St Bede's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 26 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 April 2013.

This school continues to be good.

Your dynamic leadership is a driving force for change within the school. You have a strong vision of what learning should feel like for pupils and are effectively raising the quality of teaching. You accurately evaluate the quality of education provided as good, but your actions demonstrate your strong ambition for St Bede's to be even better. Middle leaders are capably supporting the drive to 'grow' and develop teachers through an effective process of coaching and mentoring. In acknowledgement of successful governance at St Bede's, the chair of governors has become a national leader of governance, supporting governors in other schools to improve their practice. Governors share your vision and are effectively holding you and other school leaders to account.

You demonstrate passion and commitment to deliver the best possible daily 'diet' for pupils. This is very evident through the quality of the curriculum, which is rich and vibrant, helping pupils to thrive and learn well. Teachers are particularly creative in the links that they are making to other areas of learning to enrich lessons in mathematics, reading and writing.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding records are detailed and up to date. Safeguarding procedures are closely adhered to, ensuring that pupils are as safe as possible. Risk assessments are in place, ensuring vigilance about safety in all areas in school.

Inspection findings

- Pupils' attainment is improving. Pupils enter school with skills broadly typical or slightly below those expected for their age. A greater proportion of children attain a good level of development than seen nationally. Pupils in key stage 1 have made only sound progress in the past, but changes to teaching have ensured that progress for current pupils is good. Progress through key stage 2 continues to be good, so pupils attain levels above national averages in reading and mathematics and broadly average in writing. The most-able pupils in both key stage 1 and 2 achieve well in reading and mathematics, but a proportion of these pupils do not achieve high levels in writing.
- Most teachers use creative approaches that impact well on pupils' enjoyment and learning. The teaching of mathematics is a strength, leading to attainment above national averages by the end of key stage 2. Accurate assessment is helping teachers to plan well to meet pupils' needs in key stages 1 and 2, particularly in mathematics. The teaching of science is strong, with excellent use of outdoor spaces. For example, the youngest children were observed hunting for mini-beasts, identifying and recording their discoveries on a well-placed board. Pupils in Year 4 were observed engrossed in conducting an experiment to compare the growth of 'space' seeds with ordinary 'earth' seeds, sent to them via astronaut Tim Peake. It is clear from looking at pupils' books that imaginative experiences are normal at St Bede's.
- You have ensured that the pupil premium grant is spent appropriately to improve the quality of learning for disadvantaged pupils. In some classes, disadvantaged pupils are making better progress and, as a result, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and others is closing. By the end of key stage 2, good progress has been made so that pupils attain standards in reading and mathematics above others nationally. However, standards in writing are slightly below those achieved by other pupils nationally. Gaps between boys and girls have been similarly addressed and are closing in almost all classes.
- Leaders and teachers have given much attention to improving the quality of feedback to pupils so that they know how to improve their work. This was an area identified during the previous inspection. Work seen in pupils' books shows that some of this feedback is effectively supporting pupils. However, feedback to support writing is not having the impact seen in other subjects. Teachers regularly check the accuracy of their assessments in reading, writing and mathematics and have worked with the local authority and Catholic cluster of schools to secure accurate and reliable assessment.
- Pupils are articulate, polite and well behaved around school and in lessons. Pupils demonstrate good attitudes towards their learning, taking care with presentation in their books. When pupils do need to check their behaviour, adults quickly intervene to support them to do the right thing. Teachers' consistent promotion of social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is successfully supporting pupils to develop as all-round citizens. The school has attained the Rotherham International Global Award, communicating with pupils in South Africa during the process. Through a range of well-planned lessons and visitors to school, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain, developing their understanding of cultures or families that are

different from their own. Some pupils are part of the 'human rights group' and wrote to and spoke with the Member of Parliament about local issues. One pupil won a competition to meet with the Prime Minister in Downing Street, asking him what life will be like in the north of Britain in 10 years' time. Leaders and teachers have made full use of these experiences to help pupils learn about the democratic process.

- Leaders in the early years are providing an inviting, stimulating setting that is supporting children to feel secure and to develop in confidence. As a result, the behaviour of children in the early years is good. Risk assessments are in place and efforts to ensure that the setting is safe for children are effective. Teachers ensure plenty of opportunity for children to develop their skills both indoors and outside and great care has been taken to ensure that activities appeal to boys and girls equally. Consequently, children make good progress. However, assessment is not currently as robust as it might be, meaning that provision is not always adapted to ensure that children make more rapid progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the teaching of writing continues to improve so that all pupils, particularly the most able, achieve the highest levels of which they are capable
- teachers' assessments of children in the early years more robustly inform the next steps in learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Butcher
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 classrooms together to observe teaching and learning. I was able to look at pupils' work in books and to speak with pupils throughout the day. Discussions with the school improvement partner and two members of the governing body helped to provide additional information. School documentation, assessment information, policies and information posted on the school website were also taken into account. I looked at the online questionnaire (Parent View) to gather 69 parents' views about the school and took into account the views of 23 staff members through online questionnaires.