

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



27 June 2016

Mrs Julie McGrath
St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School
Lady Pit Lane
Beeston
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS11 6RX

Dear Mrs McGrath

Short inspection of St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 25 May 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 the school was judged to be good in June 2011.

This school continues to be good.

Since your appointment as headteacher in September 2014 you have promptly identified the next steps to improve the school. Working alongside the acting deputy headteacher and other school leaders, you have created a leadership team that can readily identify the school's strengths and priorities for further improvement. These are clearly outlined in the school's self-evaluation and development plan. The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You and your staff have created a harmonious, friendly school where pupils are happy and they are highly motivated to attend. Pupils develop good learning behaviours and grow in confidence. Equally, you, your staff and governors set high expectations for pupils' achievements and developing their aspirations. Pupils respond well to this and can excitedly describe the various aspects of what makes their school a wonderful place to learn.

Overall, the school has successfully tackled the two areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. Firstly, in 2015 pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 improved significantly and was close to or above that found nationally. Pupils' progress between key stage 1 and key stage 2 matched that found nationally for reading and mathematics and was significantly better than national progress in writing. Last year's dip in pupils' attainment in mathematics was swiftly identified by the school and you have put in place actions which are beginning to address this. You quite rightly identify this as an area for further work.

The second area to address has also been tackled and governors now have a greater strategic impact on school improvement. There have been several changes to the composition of the governing body since the last inspection, including a new chair of governors. Training has helped to strengthen governors' understanding of school assessment information, which has increased their capacity to hold you and school leaders more accountable for pupils' outcomes. Governors' greater involvement with improvement planning has made them better informed about the school's priorities and they are now more influential in determining its strategic direction. You and your governors recognise that recently appointed governors will need well-planned induction to maintain the level of experience and expertise which has been developed.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your senior team afford the highest priority to keeping pupils safe. Leaders and governors have ensured that current safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are of high quality. Careful checks are carried out for all staff, governors and volunteers. Safeguarding and behaviour policies have been updated to ensure that all requirements are met and all staff understand the procedures and their own responsibilities. Staff and governors receive regular and appropriate training so that they know how to keep pupils safe. Referral to other agencies is well managed. Close links with external agencies ensure that pupils and their families receive the help and support they need to keep pupils safe and in education. Where it is necessary for any pupils to attend alternative education, the school has effective systems to check that this meets their educational, personal development and welfare needs.

Pupils are taught effectively about how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. They have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying can take and know to whom they can talk if they ever have concerns. Pupils say that bullying is rare in their school. The school's records show that incidents of misbehaviour and bullying are infrequent and that these are quickly addressed by the staff. Pupils and staff agree that behaviour at the school is good.

Inspection findings

- You have successfully identified the priorities for further improving the school. Working with governors, you have established a leadership structure which is enabling you to drive the required improvements. Your self-evaluation, which now has greater involvement of other leaders and governors, is accurate and well linked to the school's development plan. You recognise that a sharper link between the agreed timescales for actions in the plan and related checking activities would further improve levels of accountability for leaders.
- English subject leaders have a good understanding of the school's development priorities. They take effective actions to improve pupils' outcomes and check carefully to see if these are having the required impact. As a result, pupils' progress in phonics (the sounds letters make), reading and particularly writing is good.

- While progress in mathematics is similar to that found nationally, you rightly identify that not enough pupils achieve the standards expected by the end of Year 6. The mathematics subject leader has begun to implement changes to improve pupils' attainment in mathematics. Appropriate actions have been taken to improve pupils' mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills. However, these are not yet fully embedded across the school. You correctly identify that greater involvement by senior leaders is required to drive the necessary improvements forward more promptly.
- The teaching of phonics is well structured and pupils work in small groups which are carefully matched to their level of development. As a result, the proportion of pupils who are achieving the expected standard in Year 1 is generally close to that found nationally. You work well with parents to help them in supporting their children with these early reading skills.
- The recently introduced systems for measuring and recording pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics are generating useful information. Staff are using this information with increasing confidence to support teaching and identify gaps in pupils' learning. Regular reviews are enabling you to respond promptly if pupils are no longer on track to achieve at least the expectations for their age.
- The school's marking system helps pupils to identify readily where they are demonstrating learning and informs them how to improve their work. Pupils understand how this works and respond positively in response to teachers' challenges. There is still some work to be completed to ensure that the school's approach is used consistently in mathematics.
- From their starting points, children make good progress in Nursery and Reception classes. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has improved and matches that found nationally. Your analysis of children's outcomes in early years has shown that recently boys have not achieved as well as girls. You have taken steps to improve the indoor learning environment to make it highly motivational for both boys' and girls' learning. This vibrant and well-resourced provision has clear opportunities for high-quality learning across the early years curriculum and particularly for developing reading, writing and mathematics skills. You have plans to develop the quality of outdoor learning provision to match that found indoors.
- At the start of the inspection, the school's website did not meet requirements for the publication of information about the curriculum, charging and remissions policy, governors' details or the report on special educational needs. While these documents were promptly made available on the website, it is important that leaders and governors ensure that the school's website continues to meet requirements.
- You have made effective use of the additional funding for sport and physical education (PE). There are increased opportunities for pupils to enjoy physical activities and learn from specialist coaches. Teachers' PE teaching expertise is also well developed by working alongside the coaches. This is providing pupils with access to a wider range of sports, increasing participation and helping them to develop healthy lifestyles. During the inspection pupils were proud to share how well their school cricket team had performed in a recent competition.

- Your school provides good opportunities for the growth of pupils' personal development and welfare. Involvement with the Children's University has raised pupils' aspirations and widened their horizons. This work, along with the school's curriculum and very effective provision for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, has enabled pupils to be well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and at playtimes is good. They work hard and are keen to share their learning with adults. Pupils are proud of the responsibilities that they hold. For example, pupils were keen to explain how the school council was involved with the development of the library.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- actions taken to improve pupils' progress in mathematics are fully embedded and leaders regularly check that agreed actions are consistently implemented across the school
- the quality of early years provision outdoors is of the same high standard found in the indoor learning environment.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael Reeves
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection, I discussed the work of the school with you, the acting deputy headteacher and the school's leaders for assessment, English and mathematics. I talked with pupils about what it feels like to be a member of the school community and looked at the responses from six parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire. I observed and spoke with pupils during playtime and at other times during the day. I held discussions with a representative of the local authority, the diocesan representative and with two governors who were able to provide me with additional information. I also took into account school documentation, assessment information, policies and information posted on the school website. I considered the responses to the staff questionnaires. Alongside you, I visited five classes to observe teaching and learning. We looked at children's and pupils' work to consider the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.