

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Sandra Burgess
Headteacher
St Teresa's RC Primary School
5 Macdonald Road
Irlam
Manchester
M44 5LH

Dear Mrs Burgess

Short inspection of St Teresa's RC Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 2 March 2017, 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have ensured that the school's positive and empowering ethos permeates all aspects of school life. Pupils and staff enthusiastically subscribe to the vision that all members of the community are 'growing together'. You and your leadership team have created a culture in which all members of staff care deeply for the children and are fully committed to helping them be the very best they can be. You have established an inclusive, harmonious and united school community. Pupils and parents greatly value the work of the school and appreciate the improvements you have made. Parents speak glowingly about different aspects of the school's work and every respondent to the online questionnaire indicated that they would recommend the school to another parent. Members of staff feel that you are quickly improving the school and it is clear that you have taken appropriate action to address the areas identified as needing development in the previous inspection report.

You rejoined the school as headteacher in September 2013. Since that time you have embarked upon an ambitious journey to reform and modernise many aspects of the school's work. You have increased the expectations of staff and pupils alike and you have embraced opportunities to become more outward facing. You have strengthened leadership at all levels and leaders are now driving improvements within their areas. They value the support and direction you provide and they feel trusted and empowered to make a difference. You and your leaders know the school well and have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. You know your

strengths and weaknesses and are taking steps to make improvements where needed. Despite this, leaders' plans for improvement do not consistently focus on addressing the areas most urgently needing attention. Furthermore, these plans do not include specific and measurable targets by which leaders can measure progress.

Leadership of teaching is a particular strength. Teachers spoke enthusiastically about the training they receive and the sustained focus on improving standards of teaching. You initially prioritised developing the teaching of mathematics and teaching in this area has been transformed over the last two years. As a result, pupils of all abilities are now making much faster progress in mathematics. You were disappointed by the progress pupils made with their writing last year. Consequently, you have focused on improving the teaching of writing and there is clear evidence to indicate that the quality of pupils' writing has improved significantly. However, you realise that this new approach needs embedding to ensure that pupils continue to make rapid improvement in their writing.

You and your leadership team have ensured that teaching is effective for pupils of all abilities. Teachers have high expectations. They question pupils effectively and ensure that pupils are challenged. You have ensured that pupil premium funds are now used carefully to remove barriers to achievement and quicken the progress made by disadvantaged pupils. The most able pupils are also making faster progress as the new approaches to teaching become embedded. They also benefit from enrichment opportunities that extend their learning. For example, many have joined the mathematics reasoning club and others benefit from partnership work with a local secondary school. You do, however, recognise that teachers need to maintain a consistent focus on challenging the most able to ensure that a greater proportion of pupils achieve higher levels of attainment throughout the school.

You have been capably supported by governors since rejoining the school. Governors share a tangible commitment to providing the best possible school for the community. They have used your appointment as a springboard for evaluating their own effectiveness. They have refined and developed their own practices in a way which has mirrored the wider changes that have been instigated across the school. Governors have extended the ways in which they support leaders. They have ensured that their roles and responsibilities are carefully matched to the skills and experience of governors. Governors have undertaken training in a range of areas that has helped them to hold leaders more rigorously to account for the school's performance in different areas.

Safeguarding is effective.

Your commitment to safeguarding has ensured that all members of staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. There is a culture of vigilance throughout the school and staff are alert to signs of abuse and neglect. All staff receive regular training to increase their awareness of different risks. Leadership of safeguarding is proactive. Leaders liaise effectively with a range of external agencies to ensure that pupils receive the support they need. Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe effectively. For example, members of the fire service have delivered assemblies on

railway safety and leaders use the 'life bus' initiative to support the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum to help pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of different risks.

Inspection findings

- Last year, pupils made faster progress in mathematics and this culminated in pupils' attainment being much better than the national average by the time they left the school. This quicker progress was the result of far-reaching improvements being made to teaching in this area.
- Pupils who left for secondary school last year made slightly slower progress with their reading and writing, although rates of progress were still in line with national averages. Leaders have prioritised development in these areas and pupils are now making much faster progress, particularly with their writing. Pupils have been inspired to develop a love of writing and they write enthusiastically for a range of different audiences and purposes.
- There is no discernible difference in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils compared to others. Although only a small group within the school, leaders have ensured that the disadvantaged are well supported. Members of staff plan carefully to ensure that disadvantaged pupils receive the support and guidance they need to flourish.
- Girls in Year 2 and Year 6 made slower progress last year in some areas in comparison to boys. Leaders are mindful of this discrepancy and have ensured that teachers are alert to any potential issues regarding the underperformance of girls. Reassuringly, leaders were able to present information about current progress that clearly indicates that girls are now making strong progress throughout the school.
- Children in the early years attain well. The proportion of pupils who attain a good level of development has compared favourably to national averages for a number of years. Early years provision is therefore a strength of the school and the school's work in this area is heralded as an example of good practice in the local area. As a result, children get off to a flying start at the school.
- Leaders have taken steps to improve the teaching of science. Pupils undertake scientific experiments more regularly. They are inquisitive and keen to discover why the world functions as it does. For example, pupils in one Year 4 class watched in awe and wonder as the teacher presented evidence to demonstrate the connection between the frequency of vibrations and the pitch of different sounds. Leaders have also ensured that there are more robust systems in place for monitoring pupils' progress in science. As a result of these actions, pupils are now making dramatically quicker gains in their scientific learning.
- Leaders have also developed the role of subject coordinators and this is helping to improve the quality of teaching and assessment outside of English and mathematics. Teachers deliver cross-curricular topics based around intriguing key questions and this approach is complemented by a rigorous approach to developing subject-specific skills in different areas of the curriculum.

- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable in lessons and around the site. Pupils are caring and considerate towards each other. They are respectful of others and hugely receptive to the school's work to promote equality. Pupils' attendance is excellent and still improving. Leaders have ensured that no groups of pupils are disadvantaged by regular absence.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils benefit from a range of much-loved enrichment opportunities. For example, the school has extended the range of sporting opportunities and pupils are particularly fond of the 'Glee' singing club.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- plans to improve the school focus sharply on the areas needing development and reflect the work of leaders
- improvements to the teaching of writing are embedded so that pupils continue to make faster progress in this area
- the most able pupils are consistently challenged so that a greater proportion of them make rapid progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Will Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- The inspector undertook 'learning walks' with you and another senior leader to observe teaching and learning throughout the school.
- Meetings took place with you, members of staff, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and groups of pupils. I also spoke to a national leader of education who is working with the school.
- Informal discussions were held with pupils to gather their views on behaviour and learning.
- The inspector worked with two of the school's senior leaders to scrutinise the work in pupils' books.
- The inspector examined a range of supporting documentation such as the school's self-evaluation and development plan.

- The inspector took into account 11 responses to the staff questionnaire and 17 responses to the pupil questionnaire. He also considered 49 responses to the online parental questionnaire and the 45 comments made by parents through Ofsted's freetext service.