

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



4 April 2017

Mrs E Taylor  
Headteacher  
St Philip's Catholic Primary and Nursery School  
St Philips Avenue  
Leeds  
West Yorkshire  
LS10 3SL

Dear Mrs Taylor

### **Short inspection of St Philip's Catholic Primary and Nursery School**

Following my visit to the school on 23 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 June 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You provide strong and caring leadership and have a clear vision for the school. Since the previous inspection, you have extended the Reception classes. You work tirelessly to support staff development to benefit pupils. As a result, some teachers have moved on to new promotions elsewhere. You explained how you have reorganised teaching to take account of these changes so that teachers are in classes to best suit their skills and abilities. We discussed the additional responsibilities that your key stage coordinators have to guide and develop three new teachers who began their careers in teaching in September. I am satisfied that you are ensuring they are being supported well.

Pupils' behaviour remains exemplary: they listen to teachers' instruction and are focused on their work in lessons. When we visited lessons together, we witnessed behaviour that was consistently well managed by staff. The school is a calm, well ordered and welcoming place to learn. High levels of concentration are sustained very well even by the youngest children in Nursery and Reception. Since the previous inspection, pupils' attitudes to learning have developed further and pupils want to achieve well. At breaktime and lunchtime, pupils play happily together. Recent investments by the governing body have added to the range of activities and play equipment. Pupils' enjoyment of active sports and board games has increased. Many pupils are developing new interests and skills such as mastering chess and

draughts as a result.

Parents, staff and pupils are very positive about the school. Parents value the school and support its caring yet rigorous academic emphasis. Parents I spoke to said teachers were 'friendly and approachable'. Staff are proud to work at the school and feel well supported. Most pupils enjoy school and especially the broad curriculum and enrichment opportunities provided. As a result of the carefully structured curriculum, pupils are learning much about their world and the values and ethics the school teaches them. Almost all pupils who responded to the inspection survey said the school encouraged them to respect people from other backgrounds and to treat everyone equally.

The chair of governors is committed and passionate for pupils to have a good education in its fullest sense. However, vacancies and absences are reducing the capacity of the governing body to keep on top of all its work. Their focus on the impact funding is making to improve the learning and progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has slipped from their agenda. Some policies have not been reviewed or kept up to date. Governors have prioritised their work and continue to ensure a safe and secure environment for pupils. They manage the budget judiciously and have supported you in your work to tackle the areas for improvement from the previous inspection.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff recruiting and vetting procedures are thorough and systematically maintained. Training is up to date and all staff know the latest guidance. Lunchtime supervisors know how to identify children at risk and the school procedures for reporting concerns. As the designated lead for safeguarding, you take firm action to make sure that any concerns are reported quickly and pupils are supported. Together with governors, you ensure safeguarding procedures are regularly audited so that pupils at St Philip's benefit from the latest recommendations and expertise in this area. You took action during this inspection to ensure that the current safeguarding policies were published on the school website. Parents trust the school in the effective care of their children. The care is reflected well and typified in a comment from a parent who said, 'The school is caring and they ring me to see how my child is after they had been sent home ill.'

### **Inspection findings**

The following areas were discussed in detail as the focus of the inspection:

- I investigated the teaching of mathematics to check whether girls and the most able pupils were making good progress. Staff are becoming skilled in recognising girls who are quiet and they draw them into mathematics activities through individual tuition and working in small groups. Well-planned activities in Nursery and Reception classes are developing early skills. Additional support is encouraging girls to 'find their voice', and we saw that children were successfully

responding to identify numbers and learning to estimate and differentiate between different sizes. Records of their achievements show that they are rapidly developing their skills and understanding to count, calculate, recognise shapes and measures. School information shows that the gaps between girls' achievement in mathematics and that of boys are diminishing from this early stage.

- Evidence from observations, scrutiny of pupils' books and discussions shows teaching of specific skills and strategies is effective and confidence is deepening as girls move through the school. Teachers have worked hard and creatively to engage pupils and demonstrate the richness and depth of the subject. Many girls told me they find mathematics fun and enjoy it. For example, one girl explained, 'It gets my brain moving and I like calculations and looking for patterns.' Another said, 'Number problems are really challenging. You've got think.'
- Awareness of the need to identify pupils whose progress starts to drop now has higher priority in the school. All pupils, particularly the most able, are challenged well and are increasingly able to explain their thinking and to check the accuracy of their work. These skills are currently taught well throughout the school. Leaders are ensuring that those new to teaching are supported well to enable pupils to make rapid progress in mathematics.
- Some girls with high prior attainment did not realise that same achievement in 2016. Current pupils are making strong progress. Teaching in Year 6 is fast paced: pupils respond very well to the high level of challenge to solve increasingly complex problems. Pupils said, 'I've got used to explaining my thinking as I've moved up through the school. I've found I think like this in other subjects.' We saw evidence of this during our visits to classrooms and saw pupils applying these approaches in writing to explain their ideas, the reasons for them and checking the quality of their work before they presented it to their teachers.
- I reviewed the progress the school had made to improve assessment. Revised assessment systems are firmly established in the early years. Checks I made show that detailed assessments diagnose children's strengths and weaknesses. Teachers use the information to inform their teaching plans. Consequently, children make a strong start to reading. Progress in mathematics is a little slower initially but school information shows that the pace has picked up this term.
- Assessment records set out small steps that individual pupils need to make in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, key stage 2 pupils are more aware of what their next step is and they are proud of the progress they have made over time. You know there is more to do to refine assessment systems to keep a rigorous check on the progress that groups of pupils are making across the school, especially disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- In response to a high proportion of persistent absence in 2015 of disadvantaged pupils, we discussed the strategies you are using to improve attendance. I examined the current attendance and progress of the group of disadvantaged pupils and it is clear that strategies to raise their attendance have been successful. These pupils have caught up. Gaps in their reading, writing and mathematics are quickly diminishing.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- analysis and reporting of current pupils' performance, especially disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is sharper in order to identify dips in performance earlier and take swift action to address
- attendance at governing body meetings improves and vacancies are filled swiftly in order that the governing body is more effective in holding the school to account.

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

Yours sincerely

Gina White  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and we talked about the improvements that had been made since the last inspection and examined the school's self-evaluation document. I also looked at all safeguarding records and explored your recruitment and vetting procedures. Together, we visited a number of classes including the Nursery, and classes in key stage 1 and 2. I met with members of your leadership team, teachers and the chair and a member of the governing body. I had a discussion with six pupils from Year 3 and Year 4. I also took account of the views of pupils through the 109 responses to the inspection's online survey available to pupils. I also considered 10 responses from staff and the 45 responses submitted by parents through Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Additionally, I spoke to a few parents during the inspection.