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Mrs Barbara Lee
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Lee

Short inspection of St Bernadette Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 September 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You provide a welcoming, safe and happy environment for pupils and understand their needs. This means that you support pupils well. All leaders, including governors, have a clear understanding of the school's priorities and are committed to the ongoing journey of improvement. Your training and advice for middle leaders and teachers is improving their skills. As a result, all are contributing well to school improvement and staff morale is high. The quality of teaching continues to improve and this is leading to notable gains in pupils' achievement.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to focus on the progress of groups and improve teaching to challenge pupils of different abilities. You continue to successfully address these priorities. Teachers consistently use assessment to plan work which challenges and supports pupils. As a result, pupils make good progress in a range of subjects. Leaders at all levels regularly monitor the quality of teaching which allows them to swiftly identify when teaching needs to improve. When this is the case, you provide additional support and adapt teaching so that it meet pupils' needs effectively. This leads to rapid progress for many pupils. You realise that some disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make slower progress. This is also the case for some pupils in key stage 1. Therefore leaders have developed precisely targeted plans to help more pupils make the progress they are capable of.

Adults have very positive relationships with pupils and teachers plan challenging and exciting learning activities. You provide effective support, particularly for pupils who have

complex needs, and are committed to helping all pupils to achieve their best. Consequently, pupils feel well supported and are motivated to work hard. Pupils enjoy taking on positions of responsibility and are very proud of their school. The vast majority of parents are very happy with the school. Comments typically include 'There is a lovely family atmosphere at the school', 'The headteacher takes time to get to know everyone' and 'I cannot speak highly enough of the school... our children love it here.'

Safeguarding is effective.

You have successfully created a culture of safeguarding in the school because pupils' welfare is at the heart of everything you do. You know your families well and parents comment that you deal with issues quickly. They say that the school is a caring and safe learning environment. When pupils need extra help you provide emotional and behavioural support which improves their well-being and safety. You work closely with all staff to provide effective safeguarding training and regular updates. This ensures that staff can recognise when a pupil might be at risk and understand the actions they should take. You keep detailed safeguarding records and make swift referrals to external agencies when pupils require specialist support. You rigorously follow up concerns, which helps you to identify when further action is necessary.

Pupils understand the different types of bullying and know how to stay safe in different situations, such as when using the internet. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and know whom to turn to if they have problems. One pupil commented, typical of many, 'Our teachers know us well.' All staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils are kind and respectful to others. On the rare occasions that pupils do not follow the school's expectations, you encourage them to reflect on their behaviour and 'do the right thing' next time. Pupils say that behaviour is good and this helps them to enjoy their learning.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry explored how you challenge pupils in all key stages to reach higher standards in all subjects. I focused on this because few key stage 1 and 2 pupils achieved higher standards in 2016. You understand that teaching needs to deepen pupils' learning and all leaders carry out robust monitoring to check that teaching is improving. Middle leaders use the support of the Aquinas cluster group, which enables them to gain ideas from leaders in other schools. As a result, they know how to support teachers to plan challenging activities to help pupils reach higher standards. Leaders' actions have contributed to considerable improvements and pupils' work reveals that teaching provides appropriate levels of challenge. Consequently, pupils in most year groups are making strong progress in all subjects.
- Improved teaching has led to notable gains in achievement over time. In 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving expected and higher standards in all subjects in Year 6 improved from the previous year and is higher than pupils nationally.
- Training and support available to staff continue to make a positive difference. As a result of better teaching, outcomes in phonics and the early years have improved year on year. The number of pupils meeting expected standards has been above the

national figure for the past three years.

- When we conducted our learning walk together, it was clear that the attainment and progress of current pupils continues to improve. Adults have consistently high expectations of pupils and activities encourage them to think hard. You have been quick to identify that too few pupils go on from their starting points to reach greater depth by the end of Year 2. You have effective plans in place to address this issue.
- My second line of enquiry focused on checking the effectiveness of the support you provide for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The majority of current pupils are progressing well and there are some striking examples of strong progress. This is because the special educational needs coordinator identifies pupils' needs early and supports teachers and teaching assistants well. This helps them to adapt and refine teaching to help pupils catch up. Adults typically explain and demonstrate tasks effectively, which helps pupils understand what to do. For instance, pupils listen carefully and enjoy writing instructions for 'how to train a dragon' using phrases such as 'consequently' and 'as a result of'.
- Some disadvantaged pupils with complex needs make slower progress and you recognise that these pupils need further support. You are taking appropriate action to make sure that their physical, emotional or behavioural needs are met. This helps them to access and positively engage in learning. However, you recognise that further improving the quality of teaching for these pupils will allow them to make more rapid progress.
- My third line of enquiry explored the progress pupils make in early reading and phonics during their time in key stage 1. Over time, good teaching results in high proportions of pupils reaching expected standards at the end of the early years and Year 1. The proportion of pupils meeting expected standards in reading in Year 2 is rising each year. However, teaching does not routinely challenge the most able pupils to reach the standards they are capable of.
- When teaching is well targeted, it sparks pupils' enthusiasm and supports reading and writing development well. Younger children enjoy using magnetic letters to make and read words and excitedly practise writing letters using chalk. Middle leaders regularly check if teaching is having enough impact so that they can provide further support if it is required. Pupils who read to the inspector did so with enjoyment, good phonic awareness and fluency. They can explain the meaning of words and recall events in stories.
- My fourth line of enquiry involved checking the school's attendance information because over time absence has been higher for disadvantaged pupils. You work hard to follow up absence and celebrate good attendance. As a result, attendance is improving. However, you know that attendance needs to improve further. Therefore you continue to communicate sensitively with families so that pupils can attend school more regularly and maximise their time at school.
- An additional line of enquiry involved checking governors' understanding of their duty to ensure that the school's website is compliant with statutory requirements. Many aspects of the school's website are very informative. This helps leaders share important information with parents who are mostly very pleased with the communication they receive from the school. Governors are aware that some

elements of the website are missing, such as this year's test results and evaluations of the impact of pupil premium spending. This limits parents' ability to check how effectively the school is supporting their children. You are taking the necessary steps to update the website so that parents are fully informed of the work of the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- absence continues to be robustly tackled so that attendance improves for disadvantaged pupils
- teaching across key stage 1 provides greater challenge so that more pupils meet expected and higher standards in all subjects
- teaching improves for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who are making slower progress
- the school's website is further developed so that communication with parents is improved and they are better informed of the impact of the school's work.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Beeks
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held several meetings with you and the deputy headteacher. I also held meetings with middle leaders and governors. I spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone. You joined me in a learning walk across several classes and I looked at pupils' books in a range of subjects. You and your deputy headteacher discussed safeguarding and current assessment information with me. I scrutinised documentation from the school such as safeguarding information, attendance records and the school's evaluation of its work. I met with a group of pupils and listened to pupils read. I gathered the views of a number of parents through informal discussions, responses to your own parent survey and 31 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also took account of the views of 17 pupils and 15 staff who responded to the online questionnaires.