

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



24 October 2017

Mrs Angela O'Hara
Headteacher
St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School
School Close
Queen Elizabeth Avenue
Burgess Hill
West Sussex
RH15 9RJ

Dear Mrs O'Hara

Short inspection of St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 October 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 January 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, your staff and governors have a clear vision for the school that promotes the achievement of every pupil within a caring community based on Christian values. There is a strong culture of nurturing and support, as well as high expectations. Staff are fully supportive of the direction you set for your school. Staff who completed the online survey feel proud to work at St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School and many say that the school has improved since it was last inspected.

Pupils learn in a calm, friendly atmosphere. During my visits to classrooms, the atmosphere was purposeful and pupils were appropriately engaged in a range of learning activities. Pupils are keen to help one another and strong relationships throughout the school build trust and confidence. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire would recommend the school to others. Virtually all parents are highly positive about the school and appreciate the teaching, care and support their children receive. Many parents admire the strong leadership shown by you and your senior team.

Senior leaders are well aware of the strengths of the school and those aspects which could be even better. Self-evaluation is accurate and well argued. This leads into a sensible number of priorities for improvement in the school's development

plan. This document, supported by your concise termly reports, helps governors acquire a detailed knowledge and understanding of the school. Skilled governors conduct regular, focused visits to the school to see for themselves the impact of actions taken by leaders. Governors are aware of the level of care shown for individual pupils and the steps taken to support those in danger of falling behind. However, the performance of groups, such as pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils (including the most able disadvantaged), is less well understood. School development plans do not identify targets or milestones for groups of pupils. This makes it difficult for governors to hold senior leaders to account for the actions they have taken to improve the progress of specific groups of pupils.

In 2016, there was a fall in the proportion of Year 1 pupils meeting the phonics screening check standard and outcomes at the end of Year 2 were lower than you would have liked. You acted decisively to increase the rate of pupils' progress throughout key stage 1. Your senior leader with oversight of key stage 1 accurately identified the actions required to improve teaching, particularly of phonics. She led staff training and checked carefully how well pupils were acquiring new skills. Provisional results show that achievement rose in 2017. A much higher proportion of Year 1 pupils met the phonics screening check standard and more pupils attained the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Improvements to the teaching of phonics also helped more children than previously reach a good level of development by the end of Reception Year.

In 2016, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics was above national levels. However, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was in line with national averages. Pupils' progress in writing and mathematics was not as strong as in reading. A couple of years ago, leaders decided to change the way mathematics was taught. The subject leader introduced a new approach, designed to provide greater challenge, promote deeper thinking and encourage pupils to choose for themselves which tasks to attempt. This approach has been introduced over the last two years and pupils report how much they are enjoying their mathematics lessons. Provisional results show that attainment in mathematics, at both expected and higher standards, rose in 2017, with more pupils reaching the expected standard at the end of key stage 2 and an increase in the number of pupils reaching the higher standards in both key stages 1 and 2. However, since the prior attainment of the 2017 Year 6 cohort was higher than previously, pupils' progress in mathematics is still in line with national levels. Clearly, there are positive signs of improvement, but the full impact of the steps taken is not yet evident.

You, senior leaders and governors are determined to improve the performance of the most able pupils further. This is being driven by middle leaders and has been given useful impetus by the appointment of some new leaders. In addition to the extra challenges provided for pupils in mathematics, your new English subject leader is introducing more opportunities for extended writing across the curriculum to encourage pupils to be more adventurous. Your science subject leader checks that skills such as scientific enquiry are being developed securely as pupils move up

the school. Your newly appointed leader with oversight of other curriculum subjects has plans to ensure that the teaching of foundation subjects extends pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills as they progress through the school, and that teaching does not simply repeat prior learning. Encouragingly, outcomes in writing and science reached higher standards last year, and the quality of writing in pupils' books has improved, but there is still more to do.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of high quality. You are committed to ensuring that pupils are safe at all times and that a culture of safeguarding permeates the school. Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training and that designated leaders hold relevant qualifications. Parents, staff and pupils are united in their view that pupils are safe in school. There are well-planned opportunities for pupils to learn to keep themselves safe, including developing pupils' awareness of e-safety. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of the risks associated with accessing or sharing information online. Almost all pupils are confident that any concerns about bullying will be followed up rapidly and effectively. Staff take an active approach to safeguarding, following up concerns swiftly. Leaders ensure that they seek the right advice when necessary and do all they can to enable pupils and their families to receive the support they need from other agencies.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, we looked closely at specific aspects of the school's provision, including the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, pupils' achievements in phonics and mathematics and the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils.
- At the last inspection, inspectors identified the need to improve the quality of teaching. You have taken effective action to address this. On my tour, your deputy headteacher and senior leader both pointed out positive changes to teaching resulting from staff training or changing teachers' roles to maximise their expertise. The improvement in pupils' performance in phonics is one example of the positive impact of these successful strategies.
- Pupils speak positively about their learning experiences and life at the school. This is because there is a great deal of high-quality teaching within the school. Teachers regularly assess the progress pupils are making and plan tasks that are well matched to pupils' starting points. During activities, teachers carefully check pupils' depth of understanding, appropriately readjusting activities if required. For example, when pupils work on different 'chilli-challenges' in mathematics lessons, teachers and teaching assistants monitor whether the tasks are too hard or too easy for individual pupils. During the inspection, pupils throughout the school were enjoying using practical resources to help their learning in mathematics.
- A review of pupils' work with English and mathematics leaders showed teaching focused on increasing the stretch and challenge for pupils in both mathematics and writing. This has enabled the most able pupils in Years 2 and 6 to reach a

higher standard. Most feedback meets leaders' expectations, urging pupils to think more deeply about their work and to take responsibility for improving it themselves, with teachers' support. Pupils respond with enthusiasm by correcting work and also by explaining their thinking, particularly in mathematics.

- Leaders and your specialist 'pupil premium' teacher use detailed knowledge about the difficulties faced by some disadvantaged pupils to devise strategies to help them. These actions are generally successful and the performance of disadvantaged pupils is improving.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been an increase in the number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Having identified that some of these pupils are not making good enough progress, your newly appointed special educational needs coordinator is conducting a range of assessments designed to check how well the provision for these pupils is meeting their learning needs.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvement planning sets precise success criteria and milestones for pupils' progress, particularly for groups of pupils, including the most able, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

Yours sincerely

Theresa Phillips
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, your deputy headteacher, your senior leader and your leaders for English, mathematics, science and the foundation subjects. I also met with your pupil premium teacher and four governors, including the chair and vice-chair. A meeting was held with your special educational needs coordinator and the special educational needs coordinator from St Wilfrid's Secondary School, who has been supporting the school since April. I visited classes across all year groups in the school with your deputy headteacher and senior leader. I reviewed samples of pupils' work across key stages 1 and 2. I considered 45 responses by staff to Ofsted's online survey. I took careful account of 109 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including free-text comments, and conversations with parents picking up their children at the end of the school day. I

spoke with pupils during playtime and reviewed 60 responses by pupils to Ofsted's online survey. I looked at documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, information about pupils' learning and progress, minutes of meetings and records regarding safeguarding.