

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



1 November 2017

Mrs Ewa Ostrynska
Headteacher
St Bede's Catholic Infant School
Thornton Road
London
SW12 0LF

Dear Mrs Ostrynska

Short inspection of St Bede's Catholic Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 17 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 July 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 are an experienced headteacher. You work with a clear moral purpose to ensure that the best possible provision and practice are in place to support pupils' learning. You have taken effective action to raise standards and to improve attendance by bringing in new teachers to strengthen the staff team. The school has good capacity to continue moving forward. You and your governors have set ambitious targets, and these are reflected in your plans for improvement. These plans are based on clear evidence and are fit for purpose. The school's evaluation of its effectiveness is accurate.

Working successfully with your leaders and governors, you have addressed the key priorities for improvement identified at the last inspection. You are now driving the school to the next level. For example, teachers now ensure that there is a high level of challenge in all lessons. As a result, more pupils make substantial progress and reach higher standards. Teachers share their good practice across the school with good effect. For example, teachers across all year groups now work together to ensure that pupils consistently and securely learn, use and apply their knowledge of letters and sounds. Following the 2016 national assessments, you identified that reading for understanding was an issue. To address this, you have put in place new materials, approaches and staff training. This has improved the teaching of reading and introduced a tight focus on reading comprehension. Nevertheless, you accept that there is more to be done to make sure that these improvements become fully established.

The well-balanced curriculum is carefully matched to pupils' needs so that they can readily develop new interests and skills. For example, pupils have visited the local supermarket, Kew Gardens and Lambeth Music Festival. These experiences have enabled them to become more confident and secure learners. During the inspection, pupils were seen learning the recorder. The variety and range of extra-curricular clubs – for example, gymnastics, football, street dance, tennis, salsa and ballet – promote the pupils' interests and are very popular.

Pupils say that they enjoy being part of the school's community. Many nationalities are represented. Pupils are happy to come to school and be with their friends. A boy from the Nursery explained that he comes to school and 'likes to share'. A girl in Year 2 explained that new children are welcomed freely, no matter what their background. These are good examples of the typically thoughtful, generous and positive attitudes which pupils have. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They are friendly and polite, reflecting the school's core values.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders work closely with outside agencies and liaise with them quickly when the need arises. Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of current safeguarding guidance and procedures as a result of regular training and updates. Leaders have made sure that pupils know whom to speak to if they have any safeguarding concerns. Pupils have a clear understanding of the action they can take to keep themselves safe from harm. For example, pupils from Year 2 told me that the school taught them how to keep safe on the internet. They knew what to do should any problems occur. The safeguarding governor regularly checks that all statutory requirements are met, including the single central record of recruitment checks.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to focus on how effective you and your leaders are in raising attendance across the school, because there had been a history of pupils not attending regularly enough.
- You have taken effective action to improve attendance which has risen significantly and is now above national figures.
- However, there remains a small group of pupils who do not attend school as well as they should. Your success in raising attendance overall should encourage you to focus your efforts on this group.
- While the school has a consistently strong record in teaching phonics at Year 1, in 2016, there was a dip in standards in reading in the Year 2 assessments. We discussed your actions to raise standards in reading and reading comprehension.
- The majority of the youngest children enter school with skills and aptitudes that are below what are typical for their age. In some cases, children do not speak at all as they begin school. As the youngest pupils start their schooling, every attempt is made to engage with parents and to secure their involvement

regarding mathematical knowledge, speaking and listening, and reading.

- You and your team have taken a firm lead in tackling the issues arising from the 2016 Year 2 reading assessments, putting in place new methods and materials. Evidence in books, talking to pupils in classes and hearing them read show that pupils have been taught well, and that standards in reading have risen sharply since 2016.
- Pupils from all backgrounds enjoy reading. The older pupils read with accuracy, enthusiasm and understanding. They use the knowledge of letters and sounds that they have been taught in order to work out new or unfamiliar words.
- Although improved, leaders accept that there is more to be done in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension. They know that the gains must be embedded so that there is no lowering of standards.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the attendance of groups of pupils is checked carefully in order to identify any trends or patterns in absence, and that action is carefully targeted so that all pupils attend regularly
- there is sharing of good practice in the teaching of reading comprehension so that standards continue to rise.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Roberts
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspector carried out the following activities during the inspection. He:

- held meetings with the headteacher and assistant headteacher
- held meetings with safeguarding leaders and pupils
- met a member of staff who had recently joined the school
- observed lessons in all year groups
- evaluated progress over time by looking at pupils' books

- had a discussion with four governors
- listened to pupils read
- evaluated recent information about pupils' attendance and progress
- considered the views of parents through discussions and responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.