

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Julie Sutherland
Executive Headteacher
St Mary's Market Weighton, Roman Catholic Primary School
Sancton Road
Market Weighton
York
North Yorkshire
YO43 3DB

Dear Mrs Sutherland

Short inspection of St Mary's Market Weighton, Roman Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 15 November 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, your staff and the governors are highly committed to serving the school and its community well and you are doing that effectively. Parents and pupils praise and value the happy, friendly ethos that permeates all that the school does to support pupils' personal and academic development. You take good care of pupils; they feel safe and secure at school and know that all staff are there to look after their needs. In addition, you ensure that school improvement is effective in supporting all pupils, irrespective of their starting points and individual needs, to achieve well. This does not go unnoticed. Parents are very happy with the way their children grow and flourish at school in readiness for their secondary school education. At the end of Year 6, when they leave your school, pupils have the knowledge and skills to achieve well in their learning and the personal attributes to be valuable members of society in the future.

The school is a well-ordered, welcoming environment, and strong Christian values underpin much that the school aspires to achieve. Through the engaging and often high-quality displays of pupils' work around the school, it is evident that pupils' efforts are valued and celebrated as they explore the world beyond the school. For example, pupils' poems on Remembrance Day show that they have considered acts of sacrifice and heroism in a very mature way; the quality of writing is an inspiration to others.

Extensive examples of pupils' work in science, history, mathematics and other subjects reflect a rich curriculum, creatively knitted together to build on pupils' previous learning. It promotes independence and confidence for pupils to think for themselves. A number of pupils need specific additional support in their learning. The funding to support these pupils is effectively used to ensure their good progress. Where staff identify pupils at risk of falling behind, leaders take prompt action to make sure that these pupils catch up quickly. All pupils know that if they try their best staff will step in to help them. They also know whom to go to if they feel worried about anything at school or home, be it their personal well-being or their learning. As one pupil eloquently said, 'I love school; it is like a big family here. Teachers are strict but fair and always kind. They look after you because they care about you. I am so lucky to be at this school.'

Since the school formalised its collaboration with St Mary & St Joseph RC School, Pocklington, in September 2014, you, as executive headteacher of the two schools, have provided strong leadership to staff, and good opportunities for them to work with partner colleagues beyond the school in order to establish consistent, good practice. Your commitment to school improvement has been diligent; all leaders have embraced their new roles and responsibilities enthusiastically. Their professionalism is evident in the way they support all staff and check that the actions they take to make improvements have the impact they should in raising outcomes for pupils. All staff understand fully what you want to achieve. You have fostered strong teamwork among staff so that all are engaged in supporting school improvement. You have high expectations of pupils and staff and you provide the right level of support and guidance for all to contribute to the school's success. You ensure that staff have access to good training to extend their skills, for example, to develop pupils' mental agility, fluency and reasoning skills in mathematics. Staff are very positive about the school and proud to work there.

Governors have a very clear picture of what they want the school to be and lend their support and expertise effectively to manage school improvement. They check the school's performance through reports from senior leaders and the local authority and by visiting pupils in lessons and discussing their learning with them. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's performance and are effective in holding leaders to account if there are issues. They check that any action to make improvements is effective in raising standards and know there is capacity to improve the school further.

As headteacher, you lead the school effectively. Through your good example, you inspire your leaders to monitor the quality of teaching and learning effectively, always focusing on making sure that pupils have the support they need to achieve well. Everyone has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas in need of further improvement; meticulous plans are in place to address these. Despite recent revisions in the curriculum and assessment and the changes in staffing, you make sure that the focus on raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics, as well as other subjects, is high priority. An increasing number of pupils are working at greater depth throughout the school. This is because checks on pupils' progress are accurate and reliable. Occasionally, staff are not deployed to maximum effect in all parts of the lesson to support faster progress. This is particularly among less-confident learners

who find it difficult to think and respond as quickly as the more able, who are challenged well.

The school offers pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, those learning English as an additional language, or those who are disadvantaged, effective support. The funding for these pupils is used to maximum effect. Consequently, all groups make good progress. A few pupils who join late in key stage 2, particularly disadvantaged pupils, although they make good progress, are not always at the school long enough to benefit from all that it offers. You and your staff examine closely what pupils already know and can do when they join the school and plan work to close any gaps as quickly as possible. Parents appreciate this inclusive approach to meeting the needs of every child.

Areas for improvement from the previous inspection included setting work at an appropriate level for more-able learners, providing pupils with appropriate feedback to improve their work and providing pupils with more opportunities to undertake longer pieces of writing. All these aspects are being addressed well. Your expectations of pupils are high, and teachers plan appropriate activities to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. An increasing proportion of pupils are achieving at greater depth in all subjects. Pupils who are particularly gifted and talented receive work to challenge them well. The feedback pupils receive through marking to improve their work is often good. However, there is insufficient focus on making sure that pupils apply their basic literacy skills accurately in English and other subjects. Work in pupils' books shows that pupils enjoy science and topics that fire their enthusiasm, but errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation detract from the overall quality of their written work.

Safeguarding is effective.

The culture of care and kindness is very evident throughout the school. You make sure that all those who work with the pupils understand fully their duty of care and carry out their responsibilities effectively. Staff training is up to date and all safeguarding arrangements fit for purpose. All staff, including those newly appointed, have a secure knowledge and understanding of current safeguarding guidance and procedures. Pre-employment checks on adults working at the school meet statutory requirements. Governors conduct appropriate checks on safeguarding regularly. Systems to check that pupils arrive safely each day are effective, with particular diligence around the more vulnerable pupils and their families. Staff support pupils' well-being without compromise and report any concerns they may have appropriately. Records of individual pupils are comprehensive in their detail. Leaders work closely with other agencies to keep pupils safe and seek guidance where concerns arise, making sure that any incidents are managed sensitively and effectively.

Pupils are very clear about what to do and whom to go to if they are worried or upset. Trusting relationships between staff and pupils support high confidence among pupils to seek help if they need it. Regular reminders wherever appropriate help pupils know how to stay safe at home and school and what to do if emergencies arise. Pupils are particularly well versed in the dangers posed by the internet, particularly social media sites. They explained in detail that posting personal details or photographs online is not

sensible because anybody can use that information 'to find out personal things about you and your family and that might be dangerous or harmful'.

Inspection findings

- The first area we agreed to examine through the inspection was how well the school tracks the progress of pupils over time, what leaders do to make sure that all pupils achieve well and to ascertain how well pupils in the school are doing currently from their different starting points. The numbers of pupils in each year group vary considerably, and this results in fluctuations in the national test results from year to year. With the published data not always comparable from year to year, the school's in-house assessment information confirms that pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Occasionally, one or two pupils fall short of this, but the school can explain why this might occur in individual cases.
- As all classes in the school are of mixed age, teachers are very adept at planning work that pupils of different ages and abilities need to do to achieve well. Teaching is good over time and, because planning is meticulous and teachers are very clear about what pupils need to build on from previous learning, the level of challenge is appropriate to meet pupils' needs and extend their knowledge and skills effectively. Some teaching is of very high quality. Standards are rising in all subjects, and the proportion of pupils working at greater depth is above the national average.
- Leaders have established very effective procedures to check the quality of teaching and learning and to ensure that teacher assessments are accurate and reliable. All staff understand what is expected of pupils at different ages and what they need to do to make sure that pupils work to the targets set for them to reflect good progress. Where teaching needs strengthening, leaders provide training and support to help staff improve their skills. For example, much has been done to increase staff confidence in developing pupils' skills in number and problem solving. Pupils are beginning to understand why they have to tackle complex, multi-step calculations systematically rather than taking short cuts that lead to errors.
- Leaders analyse assessment data carefully and set ambitious but realistic targets for teachers and pupils. Expectations are high and outcomes are rising strongly because pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. Pupils know that effective learning is important if they want to do well in the future. On most occasions, teachers and teaching assistants work together effectively to make sure that pupils have the help they need to complete work successfully. However, there are occasions when pupils' progress slows. This is sometimes because staff are not always deployed to maximum effect in all parts of the lesson or do not always have the precise skills to help pupils understand their work.
- The second area of focus for the inspection was to evaluate the impact of the school's actions to improve the teaching of mathematics across the school. This was mainly because, over time, the proportion of pupils reaching and/or exceeding the expected standard in mathematics at the end of both key stages lagged behind that in reading and writing. The strategies to address this disparity are proving effective. There is a much greater focus on speeding up pupils' mental agility and increasing their confidence to apply what they know to tackle complex operations requiring numerous steps. Some pupils, mainly less confident learners, still struggle to master

logical thinking and setting their work out correctly to minimise errors, but the overall picture for mathematics has improved significantly in 2017.

- The teaching of mathematics is good. The curriculum has been redesigned, with greater emphasis on pupils applying their mathematics skill in other subjects, such as data handling in science, for example. This is helping pupils understand why logical thinking and reasoning are important skills to master in everyday life. Staff focus strongly on the basics of learning tables and understanding the relationships between multiplication-division and addition-subtraction. They encourage pupils to take the time to apply number rules in the right sequence and to explain why they may have used their specific chosen methods. An edge of competitiveness to improve pupils' personal best time, for example when completing multiplication grids, is proving highly popular. Pupils enjoy the challenge but a number do struggle to identify patterns quickly or to explain the strategies with confidence.
- I also looked at how well pupils apply their basic skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling, as this was a relative weakness in the 2016 outcomes. From work in pupils' books, it is evident that many errors still occur when pupils write, not just in English but even more so in other subjects. This is often because teachers' attention is more on the learning of that subject rather than accuracy in pupils' literacy skills. The teaching of phonics is good from the early years onwards. In 2016, pupils, particularly the disadvantaged pupils, did not achieve as well as pupils nationally in the phonics test that year. There has been marked improvement this year, and the school's current data shows that 100% of the pupils are on track to achieve the national standard in phonics at the end of Year 1 in 2018. While pupils read well and have the skills to tackle unfamiliar vocabulary, they do not always take sufficient care to spell accurately. The same applies to using grammar and punctuation correctly. These errors persist even as late as Year 6 and, when they go unchecked, pupils continue to make the same mistakes. On occasions, when staff do not model correct English or letter sounds, a few pupils repeat these mistakes in their responses.
- Other than these minor areas that require more attention, the school is well placed to improve further. Pupils said that 'teachers make learning interesting and fun'. Pupils' attendance, at 98%, is well above the national average. This reflects their enjoyment of school and their enthusiasm to learn and achieve. Parents are very positive about the school and the quality of education their children receive.
- Pupils' personal development and well-being are high priority; the school's care arrangements are strong. Pupils have a very good understanding of what constitute fundamental British values, recognise the rich diversity of cultures and traditions represented in Britain today and understand why they should respect the views of others. Pupils know what is expected of them and behave well at all times. They are quick to help each other in lessons, at playtimes and in the dining hall. The 'family' ethos, that pupils prize, underpins the very kind, considerate and mature manner in which they take on responsibilities and work sensibly when left to manage their learning independently. There is mutual respect between staff and pupils and this underpins the school's happy, busy environment. Pupils include everyone in their friendship groups equitably and are particularly understanding of those who have SEN and/or disabilities or who join the school part way in the year.

- Children in the early years are introduced to school effectively and settle into routines quickly and happily because they feel safe and secure. Those facing any challenges in their lives, including those who are disadvantaged, receive timely support to develop confidence in their learning and achieve well. Good teaching provides a firm foundation to children's early learning for teachers to build on in subsequent years. You are very ambitious for your pupils and want to provide them with the best education possible. To this end, you have established an infrastructure to sustain good improvement and raise standards further for all pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all staff are deployed to maximum effect in all parts of each lesson and have the precise skills they need to support even better progress, particularly among pupils who find learning especially difficult
- staff model correct English at all times and have higher expectations of pupils in their speaking skills
- pupils apply their skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling accurately in their written work in all subjects and check for careless errors before handing work in.

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

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the assistant headteacher, the chair of the governing body and three other governors, key subject leaders and all staff. I also met with a representative from the local authority. I examined a range of documentation, including information about pupils' achievement over time, safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. We discussed your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and current improvement priorities. I observed pupils around school, as they came into school and in their classes. I visited all classes with you and the assistant headteacher and observed some small group work. I looked at books, spoke to pupils about their work and listened to them read. I also met with pupils formally and informally to get their views of the school. I took into account the five responses to the online questionnaire that staff submitted. I spoke to a number of parents at the start of the school day and considered the views of the 45 responses submitted by parents to Parent View and the 37 text messages they sent in to Ofsted.