

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



5 March 2018

Mr Kevin Quigley
Headteacher
Holy Family Catholic Primary School
Arncliffe Road
Halewood
Liverpool
Merseyside
L25 9PA

Dear Mr Quigley

Short inspection of Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 February 2018, 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 September 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your ambition for the pupils, staff and the school shines through in all that you do. Every effort is made to ensure that all pupils in the school achieve to their very best, both academically and socially. Each child is valued as an individual and their uniqueness respected.

You and your deputy headteacher work very well together. This strong partnership is highly valued by all your staff across the school. They feel well supported, respected and work very well as a team. Staff share your passion for the school and are very aware of key priorities for development. Like you, they recognise that although pupils do make good progress as a result of effective teaching, outcomes, particularly for boys in early years and pupils reaching the higher standards at the end key stage 1, could be even higher. Your staff went out of their way to tell me how you ensure that the mental health of all the staff and pupils is promoted well.

Your self-evaluation is honest, insightful and accurate. There is no room for complacency and any underperformance is dealt with swiftly. You recognise the value of the school development plan in helping you to monitor the progress that the school is making towards achieving its goals. However, we both agree that it is not as precise as it could be.

Parents and carers hold you and your staff in the highest regard. They particularly appreciate the introduction of 'democracy days', which gives their children a voice

within the school. They are quite rightly pleased with the progress that their children are making and with the quality of education that you and your staff provide. The following comment, I believe, sums up quite eloquently how parents feel about your school: 'As parents we have the absolute pleasure of sending our children to Holy Family Catholic Primary School.'

The standards of behaviour that I observed in classes and around the school were impeccable. Pupils are very proud of their school and display a real thirst for knowledge. They are polite, respectful and caring. Pupils told me that, 'learning is fun,' and that they, 'have the best teachers in the world'. They really appreciate that their teachers mark their work in front of them and give them advice on what they need to do to improve. With great enthusiasm, they talked about the 'Aspire Group', which comprises famous people such as Mo Farah, Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, Oscar Romero, Malala Yousafzai and Team Chavasse. Pupils have identified special qualities in these people that they want to aspire to.

Pupils relish the opportunities that you give them to contribute to decision making within the school. For example, as members of the school council, they raise money for charity, run clubs at lunchtimes for younger pupils, support homeless people in Liverpool and organise donations to local foodbanks. Pupils also took great delight in telling me about the wonderful range of trips and out-of-school clubs that you and your staff provide to broaden further their educational experiences and ignite their passion for learning. From my discussions with pupils, it is very evident that British values and the school's motto of 'only the best is good enough' thread through all aspects of the school's work. Such effective practice ensures that pupils are equipped with the skills to be responsible citizens in modern Britain.

Governors are as passionate about the school as you are and are proud of its achievements. They bring a wealth of experience and skills to their roles. As governors, they act as a critical friend, offering you effective levels of support and challenge, in equal measure.

At the last inspection you were asked to provide as many opportunities as possible for pupils to learn about a wide variety of faiths and cultures. You and your staff have embraced this challenge with vigour. Pupils now take part in a wide range of multicultural events on a regular basis, such as Black History Month. Books, posters and additional resources have been purchased to enhance pupils' awareness of different faiths and cultures. Pupils' cultural backgrounds are celebrated at every opportunity. Such good practice helps to give pupils a greater understanding of the diversity of the world in which they live.

The school was also asked to ensure that the needs of children who were leaving early years and were not ready for a Year 1 curriculum were met. Effective action has been taken. For example, staff in key stage 1 have received training on the early years curriculum and have a good awareness of how to support the needs of these children.

Safeguarding is effective.

Keeping pupils safe is at the heart of the school's work. Staff and parents are united in their view that their children are safe at your school. The premises are secure and the identity of visitors to the school is closely checked. All staff have completed safeguarding training, including in the 'Prevent' duty. In addition, they have all read part 1 of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. As a result, they have a good awareness of safeguarding procedures and talk confidently about extremism and radicalisation. Those responsible for taking a lead role in safeguarding and recruitment have also completed appropriate training. Examples of referrals that I examined confirm that staff record concerns well and prompt action is taken to alert outside agencies, should the need arise. There are comprehensive procedures in place for the recruitment and selection of staff. No one is allowed to start working at the school until all relevant checks have been completed.

Children have a good awareness of the different forms of bullying and they have a secure understanding of how to stay safe when online.

Inspection findings

- Although the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception has risen steadily in recent years, provisional published data in 2017 highlighted that girls were performing significantly better than boys in reading, writing and mathematics. Prompt action has been taken. For example, books have been purchased which appeal to boys' interests. Resources, such as paint, felt-tip pens and themed paper have been placed in independent play areas to encourage boys to write. Outdoors, boys are making marks in foam and on the ground using chalk. The range of mathematical activities in independent play areas has also been reviewed to encourage more boys to participate. Support has also been given to parents to help them promote their child's reading, writing and mathematical development at home. As a result, current school data shows that boys are making strong gains in their reading, writing and mathematics. Plans are also afoot to develop the outdoor area further to support boys' reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- Taking into consideration that there were several pupils who have complex special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 in 2017 was above the national average. However, the proportion of pupils, including those who were disadvantaged, reaching the higher standards was below the national average. Boys' writing was also a concern. Again, swift action was taken by the school to address all of these matters. For example, staff have accessed additional training to enhance their skills in teaching reading, writing and mathematics. Extra handwriting lessons now take place to encourage the correct formation of letters. Boys' achievements in writing are now celebrated in class and through displays. Good-quality texts, linked to boys' interests, have been introduced to encourage boys to write. A higher profile has been given to developing pupils' reasoning skills, and mathematical concepts are revisited each day to consolidate learning. These are affectionately known as 're-visits'. To

improve outcomes in reading, groups of pupils have been targeted to develop their comprehension skills. From listening to children read, looking at work in pupils' books, observing lessons and reviewing school tracking, it is clear that these initiatives are having a positive impact for all groups of current pupils in key stage 1.

- Provisional results in 2017 show that progress in writing at the end of key stage 2 was not as strong as that of reading and mathematics, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Again, the school did not rest on its laurels and immediate action was taken. For example, staff now ensure that stronger links between grammar and writing are made more explicit. Work in pupils' books and the school's own assessment information show that these initiatives are now bearing fruit.
- You and I both agree that the challenge for the school is to ensure that these improvements across the school are sustained until the end of the academic year and over time.
- Pupils study subjects such as geography and history in depth. Subjects are taught discretely. The role of the middle leaders of these subjects is developing well. They monitor their subjects closely in a number of ways, such as reviewing planning, book scrutiny, observing teaching in their areas of responsibility and tracking pupils' progress as they move through the school.
- You are in full agreement that although the school development plan is aimed at addressing the school's key priorities, at times, targets are not sharp enough or measurable. This makes it more difficult for you and your governors to monitor with rigour the progress the school is making towards achieving its goals.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the recent initiatives to improve outcomes further across the school, particularly in early years and at key stage 1, are sustained
- the targets in the school development are short, sharp and, when appropriate, measurable.

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

Yours sincerely

Sheila Iwaskow
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, your deputy headteacher, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. I also had discussions with staff and pupils from key stages 1 and 2. Accompanied by you, I visited classrooms in early years and key stage 1 to see the learning that was taking place. I looked at examples of pupils' work in their books and on display. I listened to pupils from Years 1 and 2 read. A range of documentation was considered, including the single central record, the school development plan and the school's own assessment information relating to current pupils' progress. I took account of 76 parental responses to Parent View, the online Ofsted questionnaire. I also took account of the Ofsted online questionnaires completed by 20 staff and 124 pupils.