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19 March 2018

Miss Ann Slavin
Headteacher
St Charles Catholic Primary School
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Dear Miss Slavin

Short inspection of St Charles Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 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 March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You work closely and effectively with a strong governing body which shares your high aspirations for pupils. Your expectations are clear and staff respond to them well. In 2017, pupils achieved well at the end of key stages 1 and 2. Progress of key stage 2 pupils has improved and is well above average in reading and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher standard in reading and mathematics in 2017 was above average. Good progress is evident in pupils' books. However, currently the most able pupils are not challenged consistently to enable them to achieve their best in reading and mathematics.

Leaders have secured a strong team of teachers committed to improving pupils' outcomes. You and other senior leaders know the strengths of teaching and were accurate in the evaluations you shared with inspectors. Staff and parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. One teacher said, 'It's a wonderful place to be.' You acknowledge that some work remains to be done to ensure that additional adults are consistently effective in supporting learning.

You and other leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. The vast majority of pupils behave well in class and when moving around school. Effective behaviour management was particularly noticeable during the inspection, given pupils' excitement following a heavy snowfall. Pupils learn and play well together. Pupils said that bullying is rare. When incidents do happen, they are dealt with swiftly.

You acknowledge that the attendance of some groups of pupils is too low and

leaders work tirelessly to tackle poor attendance. You provide support for families and have a rigorous system to challenge persistent absence. As a result, attendance is improving for these groups.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leadership of safeguarding is effective. Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The school's work with external agencies is a strength and is seen as pivotal to keeping pupils safe. Leaders make effective contributions to multi-agency meetings, providing comprehensive reports. Effective intervention for pupils and their families is provided at the earliest opportunity through work with the local authority and family support services. Referrals to social care are handled in a timely manner. Records are detailed, although minor administrative shortcomings identified in the single central record of staff checks were rectified during the inspection.

The large majority of parents said that they believe that their children are safe in school and pupils said that they feel safe. They know how to keep themselves safe and have a good understanding of how to use the internet safely. Pupils know which adults they can speak to if they have a concern.

Staff and governors have received appropriate training, including on the 'Prevent' duty and how to recognise the signs that pupils may be at risk of abuse, including female genital mutilation. Leaders demonstrate a sound understanding of the local community and its needs. Staff training has taken place in response to local issues and the impact these may have on pupils.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed four areas of focus. The first of these was to look at how leaders are improving pupils' progress in writing. In 2017, progress in writing was in line with national figures, but not as strong as in reading and mathematics. Leaders responded swiftly to these outcomes and introduced new approaches to the teaching of writing. This has had a positive impact.
- Leaders have introduced a variety of texts to support and develop pupils' writing skills. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils will write and they provide a good level of challenge. They often link writing meaningfully to discussions which develop pupils' personal, emotional and social skills. For example, in Year 6, pupils discussed the morality of buying clothes made by workers in Bangladesh. Since the previous inspection, teachers have provided pupils with more opportunity to reflect on their work and improve it, with a positive impact on fluency and accuracy of writing.
- Overall, progress in writing is now consistently strong across year groups and ability groups. The progress of those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is exceptional; they are given full access to learning and make the progress of which they are capable. Their progress is strong in no small part

because of the effective support provided by dedicated teaching assistants. However, the quality of general support by learning support assistants is inconsistent. At times, they are not deployed effectively to work with pupils. This is the case in both English and mathematics lessons.

- Our second focus was to explore how leaders ensure that the most able pupils across the school are challenged to meet their potential in reading and mathematics. Although in 2017 an above-average proportion of pupils achieved the higher standards in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2, this was not the case in key stage 1.
- Inspectors read with pupils from three different year groups. Year 6 pupils read well, demonstrating strong language and comprehension skills with challenging texts. Pupils talked about their books confidently and could give appropriate reasons for their choice of texts. However, in other year groups texts were not challenging for the most able pupils. They contained few difficult words to develop their reading skills; pupils said that the texts were often too easy. In key stage 1, the teaching of phonics lacked challenge for the most able pupils.
- Progress across all year groups in mathematics is evident in pupils' books. A range of resources and strategies support pupils' progress and the development of their skills. However, within this broadly good picture, provision for the most able pupils is inconsistent. In some classes, but not all, pupils develop their understanding by applying what they know to reasoning activities. In others, the work set is often too easy. At times most-able pupils have to complete many simple questions before being offered a challenge that matches their ability level. When pupils are not being challenged, they become distracted and attempt to distract others.
- The next focus of the inspection was to explore how effectively boys are supported to achieve well in early years. This was because a lower proportion of boys than girls achieved the expected standard in the early learning goals in 2017.
- Leaders know children's ability and plan provision that meets their different learning needs, including the most able. Leaders also ensure that children from different nurseries who had not begun to learn phonics, for example, are supported to catch up. Boys as well as girls engage in purposeful activities and show some levels of independence and resilience. Their success is celebrated and their work is displayed in the classroom. Work in books suggests that boys are making the same good progress from their different starting points as girls. Provision to support boys' achievement in the early years is good.
- The final focus was to explore the impact of the school's work with the wider community on pupils' personal development. This was because leaders said that this is a strength of the school.
- Pupils are involved in many activities in and beyond the local community. Visits to the nearby universities raise aspirations for pupils and get them to think about opportunities beyond school. Working with people who are less fortunate helps pupils to understand the diversity of the community. In addition, it helps them to understand how unforeseen circumstances can affect the lives of others. This

was evident in a discussion, where pupils discussed what 'being freed from poverty' could mean. Pupils understand the importance of respecting others and appreciate having opportunities 'to give something back' to their community. Many pupils are involved in the choir and orchestra and enjoy performing at a variety of venues.

- Opportunities for pupils are extensive and pupils are keen to be involved. Leaders are right when they say that this is a strength of the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics, through providing consistent challenge in lessons across the school
- additional adults are used effectively to support learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Donna Chambers
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspection began with a discussion about your self-evaluation of the school. This included what leaders considered to be the current strengths of the school. We also discussed areas for improvement and agreed the key lines of enquiry. Discussion with governors was focused on the key lines of enquiry. I also met with the designated safeguarding lead, a group of staff and a group of middle leaders. I looked at school documentation, including school improvement planning, minutes of meetings of the governing body and attendance logs. I visited classrooms with you, your deputy and assistant headteacher, speaking with pupils and looking at their work. I considered the views of parents through the 50 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, the 15 responses to the staff survey were considered. Inspectors reviewed a large sample of books to look at the standards of pupils' work.