

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



3 May 2018

Miss Claire Hedley
Headteacher
St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School Aided
Wallsend Road
Chirton
North Shields
Tyne and Wear
NE29 7BT

Dear Miss Hedley

Short inspection of St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School Aided

Following my visit to the school on 19 April 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 June 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment, you have been resolute in your ambition to eradicate weakness, showing a steely determination to tackle all areas that need to be improved. You have been very well supported by the dedicated and experienced deputy headteacher, and you are developing a skilled team of senior leaders. You have sought an external evaluation of many aspects of the school from the local authority. They have provided appropriate and well-targeted support and training, and effective links are being made with nearby primary schools.

It is clear that you know the school extremely well. You are open and honest about the school's strengths, but also the areas in which improvements are still needed. The school improvement plan is detailed and clear, and tackles areas of weakness head on. You have been determined to ensure that high-quality provision is guaranteed for pupils in St Joseph's. Despite the challenges faced and the changes made, the sense of teamwork is tangible, and staff morale appears to be high.

You have ensured that areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been successfully tackled. Children in the early years benefit from a much-improved outdoor learning environment, access to which is just outside the classroom. Although the teaching team is much changed, there is a consistent approach across the school. Displays in classrooms are engaging and purposeful. Many initiatives and changes are still very new, so their positive effect is not fully in place. You acknowledge that there is still work to be undertaken to ensure that

leaders of creative and foundation subjects have the necessary skills to make the improvements needed and accurately monitor provision.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The quality of these arrangements is a significant strength of the school. Pupils have full trust in their teachers and teaching assistants who look after them and report feeling safe all of the time. They are knowledgeable about keeping safe online and how to stay safe when not at school. During the inspection, the pupils I spoke with were able to confidently discuss issues such as road safety and the need to use the crossing patrol, and the danger presented by railway lines.

Under the watchful eye of all staff at your inclusive school, no stone is left unturned to ensure that all pupils are safe and have opportunities to thrive. Staff and governor safeguarding training is up to date. All procedures and records are of good quality and are regularly updated and reviewed by the senior leadership team. The extensive and detailed online system ensures that absolutely nothing is missed that may affect pupils' safety and well-being.

Inspection findings

- Pupils' consistently good behaviour and extremely positive attitudes to learning are no fluke. You have ensured that the investment made to support pupils' emotional well-being, personal development and healthy lifestyles allows them every opportunity to thrive and excel. Pupils are polite, respectful and very friendly without being over-familiar or disrespectful. Breaktime and lunchtime are sociable and friendly occasions, with pupils mixing and playing happily together. They line up sensibly and re-enter school without a fuss. The whole school, including the adults, appeared to be enjoying running their daily mile, despite the unexpected heat.
- You acknowledge that it has been difficult for governors to hold leaders to account regarding the effective use of the pupil premium grant to support disadvantaged pupils' learning. This has been because assessment systems were not sufficiently robust to judge if progress had been made. You have very recently addressed this issue, but consequently current progress data is limited and does not cover the whole academic year.
- You have ensured that pupils across the school are benefiting from consistently strong teaching, beginning in the early years. Your leadership team has accurately identified main barriers to learning for younger pupils, especially with regard to their speaking and listening skills. For older pupils, a narrow range of vocabulary often limits their ability to write creatively and extensively. Teachers have ensured that specific strategies are tailored to address these barriers to learning. The progress made by children in the Nursery Year, since September, with regard to retelling a well-known story from picture clues, was remarkable. Pupils' writing in books and on display around school clearly demonstrates that specific approaches and changes to teaching are having an immediate effect.

- Many of the approaches and strategies to improve pupils' experiences and allow them to reach their full potential are new. Consequently, time is needed to refine and embed these actions to ensure that they have the maximum positive effect on pupils' learning. This includes planning support and intervention strategies for pupils at risk of falling behind to help them to quickly catch up. You acknowledge that accelerating pupils' progress and raising their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been a priority for the school. As such, developing the skills of subject leaders other than in English and mathematics has not been sufficiently well addressed.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- recently introduced strategies to improve further the quality of teaching and learning are refined and embedded to ensure a continuing positive effect on pupils' rates of progress and the standards they attain
- current assessment and tracking systems are embedded to ensure that the school has accurate information on pupils' progress and in particular that of disadvantaged pupils, and that challenge and support for pupils is based on rigorous and detailed analysis of assessment information
- skills of leaders of creative and foundation subjects are developed so that they are able to make the improvements needed and effectively monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Scott
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the mathematics leader and the early years leader. I also met with the school business manager, a group of governors, the school improvement partner and a headteacher from a nearby outstanding school. Alongside you, I visited lessons in each key stage and reviewed a sample of pupils' workbooks in lessons. I spoke to pupils about their work and their views of the school. I observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime. A range of documents was considered relating to safeguarding. I examined the school development plan, the school's monitoring of its own performance and its assessment and tracking of current pupils' progress and attainment. I also scrutinised pupils' achievement in the 2016 and 2017 statutory

assessments, the 76 responses to the school's own recent questionnaire for parents and carers and the school's website.