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Mr Robert Mundy
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mr Mundy

Short inspection of Bishop Parker Catholic School

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 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 last inspection. In September 2014, following the previous headteacher's departure, you stepped up to the role of executive headteacher and federated two Catholic schools to work in close partnership. You have established high expectations in all aspects of school life and demonstrate a comprehensive grasp of what the school could do to improve further. You have positioned staff wisely to ensure that pupils receive high-quality teaching and that their pastoral needs are met. Many parents comment positively about the school's work, highlighting the good progress that their children make, the strong community spirit and the recent improvement in provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/disabilities.

You have accurately identified the key priorities for improvement. For example, you are happy with assessment information that you have regarding pupils' progress in mathematics and English. However, you think there is more you can do to evaluate pupils' progress across the wider curriculum.

At the last inspection, inspectors identified strengths in the progress made by pupils in the nursery and reception classes. This has been maintained. Children in the early years make good, and sometimes rapid, progress from their starting points. The teaching of phonics is strong and standards are rising so that, in 2017, all Year 1 pupils met the standard required in the Year 1 phonics screening check. At the time of the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve the use of assessment information to strengthen the quality of teaching so that teachers provide a greater

level of challenge for the most able pupils. In 2017, more pupils attained the higher standards in reading and mathematics at the end of both key stage 1 and key stage 2. Nevertheless, too few of the most able pupils exceed the standard expected for their age in writing. Increasing the level of challenge for pupils is an area that the school is beginning to make good headway in developing. However, you rightly acknowledge that there is more to be done.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding procedures and policies are fit for purpose. You have carefully considered all aspects of safeguarding and have a range of effective strategies to ensure that pupils are kept safe in school. These include the additional fencing around the Year 1 classroom to provide a safe outdoor learning environment and the use of an electronic information system on which any member of staff can record a concern. This can be seen immediately by the designated safeguarding leader and your records show that appropriate action is taken promptly.

You make thorough checks when recruiting new staff and your records are comprehensive. Information for pupils with medical needs is thorough, up to date and information is easily available to those who need it. Medicine is stored correctly and clearly labelled with expiry dates and who to notify for reordering. Staff know how to refer any concerns they have and these are tenaciously followed up by school leaders. You and your staff work effectively to ensure that pupils receive the help they need if, and when, required. For example, you use a range of professionals to support families with a variety of needs.

The curriculum supports pupils' safety well. The pupils I spoke to know how to keep themselves safe online and recalled sessions led by community police officers which helped them. They also remembered the posters which are displayed in most classes and by school computers. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 enjoy their visits to a local safety centre and told me about the basic first aid they had learned there as well as how to stay safe if approached by a stranger

The pupils told me that Bishop Parker is a friendly school where bullying is rare. One group of pupils told me, very honestly, that sometimes they have teased or ostracised fellow pupils but recalled leaders' actions to address issues and told me that 'everyone listened and it doesn't happen any more'. Many of the pupils I spoke to told me about how problems with behaviour have been consistently and fairly dealt with. They told me that where they had previously felt safe 'most of the time', they now feel safe 'always'. Parents I spoke to echoed these comments, telling me that, when there had been a problem, staff had listened and taken effective action. Issues were resolved and there have been no further problems. One parent stated, 'I feel happy and enjoy knowing that my child is happy and enjoys coming to school.'

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, we looked closely at specific aspects of the school's provision, including the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements,

the achievement of all pupils in writing, the achievement of key stage 1 pupils in mathematics and the breadth and balance of the school's curriculum.

- School leaders acknowledge that standards in writing are below the standard seen nationally, particularly at the end of key stage 1. You have provided strong support for pupils who speak English as an additional language from the time they enter the school's nursery and reception classes. This continues throughout key stage 1. Although the impact of this support is not seen at the end of key stage 1, pupils make good and sometimes rapid progress in key stage 2 so that they close the gap and achieve almost as well as their peers. However, the most able writers do not always make the progress that they are capable of.
- Pupils speak positively about their learning experiences in mathematics, describing their teachers as 'challenging but very encouraging'. This is because school leaders have analysed pupils' needs and introduced effective strategies to improve the teaching and learning of mathematics. You have trained staff on effective methods of teaching these skills and how to provide a greater degree of challenge. For example, pupils' books show a greater focus on reasoning and problem solving and I observed a good range of mathematical activities on offer in most classes. As a result, current pupils are making good progress.
- With the staff, you have worked to ensure that pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils have enjoyed the work they have done while working towards assessment for an arts award and they also enjoyed the cross-curricular work when they designed the town of 'Buggington'. They also commented that they 'get a lot of worksheets', which they find less interesting. Although books show that pupils' work is at an appropriate standard, leaders agree that it lacks challenge, particularly for more able pupils. You are aware of the need to assess pupils' progress in all curriculum subjects so that the needs of all learners, particularly the most able, can be met.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the teaching of writing is improved so that the most able pupils make even better progress
- pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics is evaluated so that the needs of all learners, particularly the most able pupils, are met.

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

Yours sincerely

Clare Morgan
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you headteacher, your assistant headteachers, governors, the local authority school improvement advisor and the consultant school improvement advisor. I observed lessons during learning walks across the school – all but two jointly with senior leaders. I looked at work in a wide range of books and discussed pupils' progress and attainment with you and the assistant headteachers and some pupils. I spoke to pupils informally at breaktimes and also observed behaviour as they moved around the school. Parents' views were taken into account through face-to-face, informal discussions before school and 14 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I read six comments and one letter written by parents. I also took account of 21 survey responses submitted by staff. I checked records and documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, minutes of meetings and monitoring and improvement. I reviewed the checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children.