

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



8 September 2018

Mr Matthew Condon
School of Christ The King Catholic Primary
Hartcliffe Road
Filwood Park
Bristol
BS4 1HD

Dear Mr Condon

Short inspection of School of Christ The King Catholic Primary

Following my visit to the school on 19 July 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 October 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You lead the school with determination and passion and are held in high regard by staff and parents. Since you joined the school two years ago, you have built highly effective teams, including a talented group of senior leaders. They share your commitment to ensure that the school provides the very best for all pupils.

You have set the school on an ambitious path of improvement. Pupils' progress has improved significantly in reading, writing and especially in mathematics in recent years. In 2017, the progress made by pupils in mathematics in Year 6 was in the top 12% of schools nationally. The high proportion of disadvantaged pupils at the school now make better progress than their peers.

Despite the strong gains of recent years, you show no signs of complacency. You and your governors have a very good understanding of what the school does well, and what it needs to do to improve. For instance, you are acutely aware that although pupils' progress has improved, too few pupils are reaching the higher standards in reading and writing in key stage 2 or working at greater depth at key stage 1. Providing greater challenge for all pupils has been the thrust of your work with leaders over the last year, and this is now starting to pay dividends, although there is much still to do.

Governors are highly ambitious for the school. There is a positive, professional relationship between governors and staff. Governors provide the right balance of

support and challenge to leaders. They understand the importance of holding leaders to account and are very well informed about how well the school is doing.

The School of Christ The King is a welcoming, caring school. Staff make every effort to ensure that any obstacles to learning that are placed in the way of its pupils are overcome. There is a very positive atmosphere in classrooms and teachers have high expectations of pupils.

You reach out to your local community in a very real way. Parents speak highly of the school, with one parent echoing the views of many when saying: 'I couldn't wish for a better school for my children. All of them love coming to school here, all [are] doing brilliantly academically and should any worries or concerns arise they are always dealt with amazingly well.'

At the last inspection, you were asked to improve the effectiveness of your middle leaders. You have built an enthusiastic and dedicated team of subject leaders. They are champions of their subjects, and are diligent and eager in their sharing of good practice with other staff. They check pupils' attainment and progress collaboratively and effectively and have played a major role in helping the school improve.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your staff are vigilant in ensuring that pupils are kept safe and protected. All pupils, but especially those who are vulnerable or at risk, are kept safe and out of harm as a result of strong pastoral and multi-agency work. The deployment of key personnel, especially the very effective learning mentor, provides effective support to pupils. They make prompt referrals of any concerns, reliably using the school's well-established reporting systems and their comprehensive knowledge of their local community.

Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that effective action is taken to safeguard pupils. Training is up to date, records are meticulously maintained and the pre-employment checks on teachers and other staff are thorough.

You have made sure that pupils have access to a wealth of curriculum, pastoral and online guidance that ensures that they know how to keep themselves safe. You review the needs of your vulnerable pupils daily. Staff use the full range of information available to them to focus on pupils with the most need, including those at risk of low attendance.

Inspection findings

- The first line of enquiry considered how well leaders are improving pupils' overall attendance and reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent. Attendance has been below the national average and persistent absence has been high for a number of years. You have tackled this problem of weak attendance with energy, imagination and, in the last 12 months, increasing

success. Your highly effective inclusion manager and your learning mentor have reached out to parents of pupils who have weak attendance in an empathetic, yet uncompromising way. They have used a wide range of strategies to make sure that such pupils attend school regularly. Persistent absence has been substantially reduced and overall attendance has improved.

- Leaders have a good knowledge and understanding of the circumstances of each of the persistent absentees and do all they can to ensure that the progress of pupils is not held back by poor attendance. However, you recognise that more remains to be done to improve the regularity with which these pupils attend school.
- In 2017, the progress pupils made in their reading and writing was similar to that seen nationally, while their progress in mathematics was above that in most other schools. Pupils' attainment in reading and writing at the end of Year 6 was just below average, but the proportion working at the higher standard was much lower than that seen nationally. Similarly, the number of pupils in Year 2 who worked at greater depth in reading and writing was also below national figures.
- The key reason for pupils' slower progress in writing is linked to some weaknesses in their reading skills, which emerge from a paucity of language skills and a weak vocabulary. Over the last year you have introduced a range of strategies to raise teachers' expectations and improve challenge in writing. You have provided stimulating experiences to boost pupils' writing skills, such as the recent Year 5 trip to The Malverns, which one pupil said was the 'best experience of my life'. The inspector saw pupils eagerly engaged in their first drafts of recording this visit using vibrant and well-chosen vocabulary.
- The number and range of fiction and non-fiction books available to pupils in class has greatly increased. Pupils are now developing habits of becoming regular and enthusiastic readers. Pupils readily answered literal questions when asked about their reading, but found questions on interpretation difficult, reflecting their weaker comprehensions skills.
- You are making sure that there is a consistent approach to reading and writing across all classes. Our scrutiny of pupils' writing showed that pupils are developing a secure understanding of grammar and increasing fluency in their writing.
- Pupils are improving their spelling and the most able pupils can spell difficult words that allow them to write expressively. Pupils' workbooks show a steady improvement in their handwriting. Throughout the last year, pupils are becoming increasingly proficient at writing for a variety of audiences and in various styles by using grammatical constructions closely linked to their age.
- Our examination of pupils' work and your school records confirm that progress in writing and reading is improving and more pupils are working at the standards expected for their age. However, not enough pupils are reaching the higher standards in reading and writing by becoming better able to comprehend what they read and to write fluently at length across a range of topics and styles.
- The third line of enquiry assessed how well leaders are developing the wider curriculum so that it provides sufficient stimulation and challenge for pupils.

Pupils told us that they now have more opportunities to read at length in subjects outside English.

- You have made sure that staff are now acutely aware of the need to ensure that the wider curriculum provides the stimulating experiences that will prompt pupils to write high-quality text. Subject leaders have responded to this challenge with energy and imagination. The curriculum is now increasingly enriched with lively topics in history and geography, which is providing more interest to pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- continue to work with families to improve pupils' attendance
- consolidate the improvements to the teaching of reading and writing so that a greater proportion of pupils reach the higher standards.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael Merchant
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your senior leaders, governors and the school improvement adviser from the local authority. I also met with a group of your subject leaders and your learning support mentor. We visited all classrooms to assess the progress being made by pupils. We looked at pupils' workbooks and talked with pupils in lessons. The inspector also had a discussion with a group of pupils from Years 5 and 6. We considered the school's information on the progress being made by current pupils.

We looked at a range of documentary evidence. This included the school's evaluation of its own performance and plans for improvement. I looked at various documents related to safeguarding, including the central record and examples of recent referrals made to an external agency. We also assessed current rates of attendance for specific groups of pupils.

We gathered views from parents and took account of 22 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. I received several free-text responses from parents and results of the staff questionnaires. I met with a group of seven parents at the end of the school day.