

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



21 December 2018

Mrs Rose Harrison
Headteacher
St Francis Catholic Primary School, Morley
Highcliffe Road
Morley
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS27 9LX

Dear Mrs Harrison

Short inspection of St Francis Catholic Primary School, Morley

Following my visit to the school on 11 December 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 November 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

St Francis Roman Catholic Primary School is a warm, welcoming place where pupils enjoy learning. The environment is well organised and attractive and reflects a sense of high quality and pride. You and your leadership team have accurately identified what needs to be done to improve. You have detailed plans in place to make the necessary improvements to the school. You are ably supported by the assistant headteachers, who are reflective and forward-thinking. The staff team is committed to helping you to improve the school. They appreciate your support and feel that the school has continued to improve since the last inspection. It is a happy place for both staff and pupils. You have developed strong links with the community and are rightly proud of the quality of education you provide for your pupils.

Pupils enjoy excellent relationships with staff. The care of your pupils is at the heart of the culture you have created. From the moment they start the school day, to the moment they leave for home, pupils are encouraged to try their best. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers would recommend your school to other families. One parent said, 'St Francis Primary is more than a school, it is a community. It teaches fantastic values to our children as well as giving them fantastic learning opportunities.' In classrooms, pupils work with enthusiasm, focusing on their work throughout lessons and providing each other with good support.

During your previous inspection, inspectors identified that teachers needed to further increase pupils' achievement. They advised that you ensure that tasks in lessons were planned well enough for them to be able to tackle them. You and your leadership team have supported staff to help them to plan activities more carefully for pupils who have low prior attainment. Teachers now plan tasks that meet these pupils' needs. They select resources that help pupils to complete their work successfully. For example, teachers use a wide range of equipment to help pupils understand mathematical concepts or provide them with useful words for their writing. Teaching assistants provide a good level of support for these pupils. They guide them through their activities, skilfully, while encouraging them to develop good levels of independence. As a result, low-prior-attaining pupils make good progress across the school in reading, writing and mathematics.

Following the last inspection, inspectors also identified that teachers needed to ensure that extension work provides sufficient challenge for the most able pupils, in order to increase their achievement. Leaders have worked with staff to help them to provide additional challenge for the most able pupils. You now check assessment information thoroughly and teachers use this to inform their planning. Teachers use short assessments at the start of each mathematics unit to determine what pupils already know. This allows them to plan tasks that enable pupils to take their next steps and is particularly effective in key stage 2. Teaching assistants provide further challenge for groups of most-able pupils, prompting pupils to extend their answers or to provide thorough explanations. However, evidence in books shows that some of the most able pupils in key stage 1 are not yet sufficiently challenged in writing and mathematics. As a result, provisional outcomes show that the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards at the end of key stage 1 remains below the national average.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding requirements are fit for purpose. As a result, staff are vigilant and know what they need to do, should they have any concerns about pupils or the conduct of adults. You have formed good partnerships with external agencies to offer pupils the support they need. You make appropriate checks to ensure that newly appointed staff are fit to work with children. A detailed recruitment checklist helps to ensure that you have all relevant information about new staff. Those responsible for governance provide you with appropriate challenge to ensure that your safeguarding procedures are adhered to.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and also say that bullying is rare. They know that you will act swiftly if they come to you with any concerns they may have and that their problems will be resolved. Pupils speak with confidence when talking about how to stay safe online. You provide the pupils with a wide range of information about how they can stay safe through planned opportunities in the curriculum. For example, pupils in key stage 2 enjoy learning about road safety through the cycle training you provide.

Pupils' attendance was in line with the national average in 2018 last year. The

proportion of pupils who were persistently absent was low. There are clear procedures in place to ensure that families do not take holidays during term time. You have reviewed what the school does to encourage pupils to attend and introduced a range of different strategies, including rewards. As a result, pupils' attendance has continued to rise this year

Inspection findings

- Provisional outcomes show that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected and higher standards, at the end of key stage 2, was high in 2018. The progress that pupils made across key stage 2 last year was well above the national average and this has been sustained for several years. I wanted to find out what you have done to reach these high standards and sustain them over time. The leader for mathematics is knowledgeable about the subject and has reviewed the content of the curriculum. Curriculum plans give opportunities for pupils to build on their learning as they move through the school. There are good opportunities for pupils to identify how mathematics links to other subject areas. For example, pupils in Year 2 used their knowledge of shapes to create artwork in the style of Kandinsky.
- You have provided teachers and other adults with high-quality training. The leader for mathematics has worked alongside staff to plan activities and provide useful advice. There is now more evidence of pupils using their skills to solve problems and reason about mathematics, particularly in key stage 2. Teachers use equipment effectively to help pupils to understand tricky mathematical concepts. Teachers use questioning well to encourage pupils to reason about their answers so that they have a deeper understanding of number. Evidence in books shows that pupils continue to make strong progress, particularly in upper key stage 2. Sometimes, the most able pupils in key stage 1 are not sufficiently challenged and complete their work quickly. There are not as many opportunities, compared with key stage 2, for them to give reasons for their answers and extend their understanding. This limits the progress that they make. You recognise that this remains an important area for improvement.
- I wanted to find out whether pupils in key stage 1 are sufficiently challenged in writing. Provisional outcomes showed that the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards at the end of key stage 1 in reading and writing in 2018 was below the national average. When we visited lessons, we found that the questions that adults ask are used well to help pupils to clarify their thoughts. Pupils are encouraged to build on the ideas of their peers and this helps them to extend their thinking. Teaching assistants provide timely support for low-prior-attaining pupils and this helps them to make good progress. Pupils in upper key stage 2 really challenged each other's ideas when discussing characters from Charles Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol'. Skilful prompts from the teacher guided pupils' debates and encouraged them to justify their ideas using evidence from the text.
- Tasks are well planned for most groups of pupils, although evidence in books suggests that the most able pupils in key stage 1 are sometimes not challenged enough. Often, pupils in key stage 1 are encouraged to focus on the accuracy of

punctuation or presentation and there is not enough opportunity to think about the content of their writing. This means that they do not think about their choices of vocabulary and the structure of their writing well enough in order to make improvements to their work. Sometimes, teachers do not pay enough attention to what pupils can already do and plan activities that do not enable them to make their next steps. As a result, the most able pupils make limited progress in writing in key stage 1.

- Provisional outcomes for 2018 show that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average for both key stage 1 and key stage 2. I wanted to find out whether pupils reach these same high standards in subjects other than English and mathematics. Evidence of work in books shows that pupils have good opportunities to apply their writing skills in other subjects, particularly in upper key stage 2. The quality of pupils' presentation and handwriting is of a high standard and pupils use their knowledge of punctuation and grammar to complete work accurately. Pupils have good opportunities to take part in visits that enrich their learning in the classroom. They talk enthusiastically about what they have studied and say that these experiences really help them to learn.
- Leaders have reviewed the content of different subjects. This means that pupils, in most subjects, are able to build on what they have previously learned as they move through the school. Evidence of work in books shows that pupils are given good opportunities to deepen their learning in subjects such as history, science and religious education. For example, pupils have good opportunities to develop their knowledge of science and use this to undertake scientific investigations. However, some subjects, such as geography and art, are less well developed. In these subjects, pupils do not get enough opportunity to fully develop their knowledge and apply the skills that they have learned. As a result, the quality of pupils' work varies across the curriculum.
- Subject leaders have begun to carry out checks on the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility; they look at books, visit classrooms, talk to pupils and check learning environments. This is in the early stages of development and the quality of these checks varies across subjects. This means that sometimes, the information that is gathered is not detailed enough to help them to make the improvements that are needed. The impact of their work is inconsistent. This means that there are still areas of the curriculum that need to develop. You recognise that the further development of subject leadership is an important next step to raise standards in all subjects.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers plan work that is sufficiently challenging for the most able pupils in key stage 1, so that more pupils reach the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics
- pupils are given further opportunities to deepen their knowledge and

understanding of subjects across the curriculum

- all subject leaders carry out thorough checks and use the information they gather to make improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the Director of Education for the diocese of Leeds (RC), the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Leeds. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jaimie Holbrook
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met you and other senior leaders and explained my lines of enquiry. I also met with members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, the subject leaders for English, history, science and religious education and the designated safeguarding leader. There were 49 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 36 free-text comments. There were three responses to Ofsted's questionnaires for staff and 26 responses from pupils. We visited classes together in key stage 1 and key stage 2. We observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. We viewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance and its plans for further improvement. I considered a number of policy documents, including those for safeguarding. I examined the school's website to check that it meets statutory requirements on the publication of specified information.