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11 January 2019

Mr R Baker
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Baker

Short inspection of St Wilfrid's Catholic Junior and Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 19 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 April 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 have led the school effectively and successfully through a period of change and challenge. Since the previous inspection, the school building has been extended and developed to accommodate an additional 150 pupils. The demographic of the school's intake has changed to include significant numbers of disadvantaged pupils, a greater proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language and many pupils from outside the catchment area due to the lack of school places elsewhere. An increase in pupil mobility has seen higher numbers of pupils join and leave the school at times other than are usual. Several new staff have joined the school each year as it has doubled in size. Strong, stable senior leadership has enabled the school to manage all these changes without losing the positive ethos and unique St Wilfrid's 'way of doing things'.

The working partnership between senior leaders is very effective. It is mutually supportive and leaders are determined to provide the best education for all pupils. Together, you carefully reflect on outcomes and empower leaders at all levels to help drive the improvements necessary to ensure all pupils are appropriately challenged and supported. Following a dip in outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in 2017, you took action to do things differently rather than continue with what you have always done. New initiatives were introduced to improve the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, outcomes in 2018 improved and were much closer to national averages.

Your self-evaluation is accurate and identifies the priorities for improvement. You communicate your expectations effectively and have built a committed team of staff who share your vision and ambition for pupils. A comprehensive cycle of school improvement is securely embedded across the school. Actions are carefully monitored at regular intervals and the impact is evaluated before any further action is taken. You actively engage and collaborate with a range of external partners. You welcome the challenge and scrutiny they provide and use the feedback to refine your own next steps for development.

You ensure staff development and training are given a high priority. Staff value the opportunities to develop their skills and subject knowledge. Staff who are new to the school are helped to learn the school's systems and leaders' expectations quickly. This approach is effective in ensuring consistency across the school and has been essential as the school expands.

Governors bring a range of skills and expertise to their role. They provide suitable support and challenge. They do not accept at face value what leaders say but take time to visit the school to check things out for themselves. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They ensure they access training to hone their own skills and deepen their understanding of aspects of the school's performance.

Pupils have well-developed attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. Behaviour is good, and pupils cooperate and support one another well in lessons. Relationships are highly positive; pupils show great respect to all those they meet. For example, Year 6 pupils offered me their hand to shake as a sign of welcome and acknowledgement. The school's Christian values are deeply embedded in the culture of the school and acted out on a daily basis by staff and pupils alike. There is evidence of great maturity and thoughtfulness in pupils' responses to others.

You have successfully addressed most of the areas identified for improvement at the last inspection. Parents state that they are well informed about their children's progress and receive useful information on how to help them at home. Responses to homework on display across the school are high quality and have obviously been produced with thought and care. Work in pupils' books shows how they improve and refine their work over time in response to feedback from teachers. You quite rightly continue to focus on improving the progress pupils make in the core subjects of English and mathematics. This is what you, your leaders at all levels and the whole staff team strive for each day.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, staff and governors demonstrate a strong commitment to keeping pupils safe. Regular and timely training ensure that all staff understand their responsibilities and know what action to take when they have a concern about a child. Designated safeguarding leaders are tenacious in following up concerns referred to external agencies such as the Children Missing in Education service.

Leaders have a good understanding of the issues facing the local community and ensure vulnerable children and their families receive appropriate support when they need it.

The family support worker and pastoral team know their families well. They support families effectively and build up positive relationships based on mutual respect and trust. Pupils receive high-quality support to help them deal with emotional and mental health issues. Staff ensure that pupils' well-being is at the heart of their work.

Pupils are extremely knowledgeable about internet and mobile phone safety. They say they feel safe and secure at school. Their parents agree, with all those who spoke to the inspector saying that the school looks after their children effectively.

Inspection findings

- Children get a good start to school in the early years. Relationships are positive and behaviour is good because children soon get to understand the rules and know what is expected of them. Adults encourage independence from the outset. For example, three boys helped each another put on coats and high visibility jackets while getting ready to use the outdoor learning space. Although provision is appropriate and meets children's needs, leaders acknowledge that more can be done to enhance the learning environment to increase the opportunities children have to explore, develop resilience and to think deeply about what they are learning. On occasions, learning intentions are not made clear and this limits the progress some children make.
- Through regular observations and assessments, adults build up a comprehensive picture of what each child knows and can do. Leaders use the information effectively to identify children at risk of not making expected progress. Additional help and timely support are provided to enable children to reach a good level of development. For example, one-to-one support for reading enables children to practise their key words, talk about what they have read and develop a love of reading. Adults are also skilled at providing instant support, such as correcting pencil grip and letter formation when children are writing. Children make good progress from their low starting points.
- Leaders are successfully implementing strategies to improve writing outcomes for pupils, especially boys and those who are disadvantaged. The curriculum is regularly reviewed and adapted to engage all pupils. A new approach to planning ensures that writing opportunities are consistently identified across all subjects and in the topics being studied. As a result of pupils being able to choose what to write about, they are enthusiastic about achieving well. For example, boys talked enthusiastically about studying the Second World War, the Romans and the Ancient Egyptians. They have greater ownership of their work and take pride in what they do. Current pupils' workbooks are well presented and demonstrate pupils' ability to write fluently in detail to a high standard.
- The leader for English is also the pupil premium champion. As part of the drive to improve writing, she ensures a focus on improving the progress of disadvantaged

pupils. The introduction of a specific approach to reading and writing in Years 5 and 6 is successfully helping pupils to secure basic skills and develop the confidence to write. Key strategies such as marking work first, accessing small group support and teachers asking probing questions help disadvantaged pupils make better progress.

- A similar strategic approach is being taken to improve outcomes in mathematics. Through their own passion and enthusiasm for mathematics, leaders support all staff to implement new approaches to the teaching of mathematics. As a result of high-quality training, staff develop confidence and good subject knowledge. Teachers challenge pupils' thinking. They ask pupils to 'prove it, show me, tell me how you know'. The development of reasoning and explaining is becoming embedded across the school. Evidence in pupils' books indicates that more pupils are currently working at greater depth than previously, although this is not yet reflected in the assessment data.
- The curriculum is rich and engaging. Pupils have a wealth of opportunities to develop skills, knowledge and understanding across a broad range of subjects. Pupils talk confidently about their art work in the style of the pre-Raphaelites, Rosetti and Mondrian; express their delight in learning to play the ukulele; and represent their school at sporting events. Leaders ensure best use is made of specialist skills such as in the teaching of computing, physical education or English as an additional language. A wide variety of trips and visits linked to key themes is used effectively to provide first-hand experiences for pupils. Written work in pupils' books is of a high standard reflecting their knowledge and experiences. Leaders are keen to ensure that the curriculum widens pupils' horizons and opens their eyes to what is possible.
- Attendance continues to be an area of concern and is a key priority in the school development plan. Although improving, rates of attendance are below national averages. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is much lower than that of other pupils in the school. Leaders use all available means to tackle poor attendance. They meet with parents, carry out home visits and issue fixed penalty notices. Working with 39 families, the attendance officer supports parents to get their children to school more regularly and on time. Green shoots of better attendance are now evident.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- learning intentions are more explicit in the continuous provision in the early years, especially in the outdoor learning environment, so that children continue to be challenged and even more reach a good level of development
- the new approaches in mathematics continue to be embedded so that pupils make better progress and continue to develop the ability to reason and explain in great detail
- they continue to challenge and support parents of pupils who do not attend school regularly or on time.

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

Yours sincerely

Nicola Harwood
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and other leaders. I met with four members of the governing body and spoke to the chair of governors on the telephone. I had a meeting with the school improvement partner from the Catholic diocese.

Accompanied by you and the deputy headteacher, I made short visits to most classrooms and spoke to pupils informally. I met a group of pupils to talk about their learning more formally. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at lunchtime. I scrutinised their work books.

I spoke to parents at the start of the school day. I considered 26 responses to Parent View and eight free-text comments. I also considered the 34 responses to the staff questionnaire.

I scrutinised a variety of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety. I checked documents relating to safeguarding and looked at published information on the school's website.