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28 January 2019

Mrs Julie Miles
Headteacher
St Brigid's Roman Catholic Primary School
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Dear Mrs Miles

Short inspection of St Brigid's Roman Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 January 2019, 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

You and the leadership team have maintained the good quality of education since the last inspection. You have established a culture in which there are high expectations of pupils and in which developing pupils' skills in reading is a very high priority. Two comments made by staff reflected the culture of high expectations in the school. One was that, 'every child has the right to attain the standard.' The other comment was that, 'we feel personally responsible' for the success of each child. You and other leaders know each family and each child, so that you are able to break down any barriers to their learning and they can be well prepared for their future.

The strengths in leadership and management that were identified at the last inspection have been maintained. You provide highly effective leadership. Teaching, learning and the curriculum in Nursery and Reception have improved and are now of the highest quality. Children make excellent progress from low starting points, particularly in reading and in personal, social and emotional development. Across the school, teaching in music and in Spanish is excellent.

At the last inspection, you were asked to improve the outcomes for the most able pupils. In reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, a higher percentage of pupils now attain the standards at a greater depth or attain a high standard. Approximately a quarter of every class, for example, attain the higher standard in reading. In history, geography and science, however, some most-able pupils do not complete work to the same high standard as they do in English and mathematics.

St Brigid's is a very welcoming school. Pupils' views and their ideas are at the forefront of your decisions. Pupils designed the reading areas and the images for the stained-glass windows in the chapel, and they take a very active role in the school. Pupils socialise harmoniously. Boys and girls work and play together very cooperatively, as do pupils from different ethnic heritages. There is still a little more work to do to make sure that teachers teach about the breadth of people living in modern Britain in the curriculum, for example people who are transgender and those with different sexualities.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and the leadership team have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Pupils feel safe. You make sure that staff are well trained in how to protect pupils; in how to safely interview adults to work at the school; and in how to tackle any pupils' medical needs. There are weekly meetings and updates to report on any national or local changes and also to share information or concerns about any pupils. There is also a very good system to record safeguarding incidents and to follow these up with specialist services. You and other leaders share information very well with other agencies, such as social services, and you are persistent when you feel that another agency is not responding appropriately. A very good feature is the sharing of information with the school nurse, who readily shares information with you. There are many opportunities in the curriculum to teach pupils about how to stay safe and these often reflect local circumstances, such as gangs and knife crime, and how to stay safe when playing or working online.

Inspection findings

- I followed up four lines of enquiry in this inspection. The first, as a result of two complaints to Ofsted, was to look at provision for pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). You monitor closely, with other leaders, how each pupil who has a disability or who has SEN is taught and how well they make progress. There is specialist teaching for each child, for example, in speech and language therapy, building structures with toy bricks, or play therapy, and specialist teaching for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. Because you have such a detailed knowledge of each child, you are able to identify what each pupil needs to tackle any barriers to learning. You evaluate the impact of the specialist teaching frequently to make sure that it is working for each pupil. Importantly, in lessons, teachers have high expectations for pupils who have a disability and those who have SEN. The pupils are supported by, but not solely taught by, teaching assistants. Teachers are determined to enable these pupils to become independent learners. Pupils' work is sometimes, but not always, slightly different from that of other pupils in the class. Their work is not limiting, which means that pupils are able to show a higher level in their answers when they are capable of doing so. In conclusion, pupils with SEND are catered for very well.
- My second line of enquiry was to consider how well the most able pupils achieve. The school's assessment information suggests that over the course of their time at school, pupils' knowledge and understanding build up well, so that by the end

of Year 6, a higher proportion of the most able pupils attain high standards. In lessons, teachers build up pupils' vocabulary very well. They have high expectations and use correct technical terminology with the pupils. The most able are challenged very well in a range of subjects, such as reading, writing, Spanish and music. In a few classes, the most able pupils, particularly in mathematics, geography, history and science, are not challenged as much as they could be to deepen their understanding and knowledge. For example, in mathematics, they were asked to complete a very simple chart, whereas in history, the same pupils were asked to analyse a complicated line graph. Similarly, in English, the most able pupils wrote complex sentences with a high level of grammatical accuracy, but in science, the level of writing and expectations were much lower. To conclude, the most able pupils achieve well, but could achieve more.

- The third line of enquiry, because of a lack of information on the school's website, was to look at teaching, learning and the curriculum in music. The website does not do your school justice in relation to music provision. It says that Year 6 pupils do nothing in music, Year 5 pupils sing all year and that the only music Year 4 and Year 3 pupils do is to play the recorder. There is a full range of musical resources, including African drums, guitars and xylophones. Music specialists come into school to teach pupils, including specialist music teachers from across Greater Manchester. Next week, international students studying at the prestigious Royal Northern College of Music will be teaching in the school. Teachers follow music schemes that are progressive in developing pupils' musical skills and knowledge. There are three choirs, and singing has a high focus across the school. Music teaching is of a high quality. In one lesson, the teacher with a group of Reception children developed their rhythm, timing, singing, timbre and pitch. My conclusion is that music is a strength of the school, but this is not explained well on the website.
- The fourth line of enquiry, because of a lack of information on the school website, was to look at how well the school covers the full range of diversity found in modern Britain. It is clear that St Brigid's is an inclusive school. The curriculum develops pupils' understanding of different countries and people from different races and cultures, people who are disabled and famous people of different genders. Pupils study, for example, Rosa Parks and Mary Seacole and followed a range of activities around Black History Month. By the end of the inspection, you had made sure that the diversity information on the website met requirements. The school has not made sure, however, that the full range of diversity found in modern Britain is covered in the curriculum. For example, there is no teaching about transgender people and sparse coverage of people with different sexualities.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils' work in geography, history and science is of a high quality and reflects what they can do in English and mathematics
- the curriculum fully reflects the full range of diversity found in modern Britain,

including people with different sexualities and people who are transgender.

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

Yours sincerely

Allan Torr
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met a range of people during the inspection, including you, senior leaders, five members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority and a representative of the diocese.

Together, we conducted visits to every class and observed teaching in a range of subjects, including mathematics, English, Spanish, music and personal, social and health education. We also made a visit to the breakfast club. We looked through pupils' work. I check the single central record to make sure that the correct checks have been made on adults working with pupils. I discussed some case studies of how the school is working with agencies to keep individual pupils safe.

I took into account the 15 responses to the Ofsted survey for staff, and responses from 40 pupils and 22 parents to their respective surveys. I also looked at the parent survey that you conducted at parents' evening.