

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



12 February 2019

Mrs Keegan-Hobbs
Headteacher
St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School
Lindale Drive
Wombourne
Wolverhampton
West Midlands
WV5 8DZ

Dear Mrs Keegan-Hobbs

Short inspection of St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 29 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 January 2015.

This school continues to be good.

Under your leadership the school has maintained and built on the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. It is continuing to improve.

Parents, staff and pupils were overwhelmingly positive about the school and its leaders. All parents responding to parent view said they would recommend the school to another parent. All staff responding to their survey said they were proud to be a member of the school. All pupils spoken to said they feel very safe in a school, where they said there is no bullying and behaviour is of the highest order. Progress and standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 are consistently high for the large majority of pupils as a result of strong teaching.

At the time of the last inspection inspectors recommended that pupils have more opportunities to practise their numeracy skills in other subjects. You have succeeded in raising standards and accelerating progress in mathematics by promoting numeracy more widely through other subjects such as science and geography. These subjects now have a high profile on the curriculum.

Inspectors also recommended that the school should broaden pupils' understanding of cultural diversity. You have had some successes in this by promoting trips to other places of worship and drawing on the parents of the growing diverse nature of the pupil intake when celebrating festivals of other faiths. However, you recognise there is more to do in deepening pupils' understanding of diversity in modern Britain and the wider world.

Although subjects such as history, geography science, music, physical education (PE) and religious education (RE) are covered extensively by the curriculum, coverage is less extensive for art, design and technology, information and communication technology and modern foreign languages.

The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard was low in reading and, especially, writing at the end of the key stage 1 in 2018. The extent to which those pupils who were below the expected standard are now progressing is variable although most are doing very well.

Safeguarding is effective.

Designated safeguarding leaders place a very strong emphasis on maintaining the culture of safeguarding in the school. They keep up to date with training and guidance to ensure that they are well informed to respond to any risk. Although there have been no safeguarding referrals for some time, staff know what to do should a need for one arise. Leaders are alert and vigilant to any concerns and are swift to seek advice from external agencies and specialists if required. Records of any concerns are held securely.

Governors draw on their expertise to hold leaders to account to ensure that they meet their statutory responsibilities. Parents, staff and pupils who responded were unanimous in their view that the school keeps children safe and secure. They said the school prepares pupils well for keeping safe when out of school. Pupils that inspectors spoke to were reassured by the gates and security arrangements at the front door. They knew what to do if contacted by a stranger on social media and were well briefed on what to do during a fire drill and in road safety.

Pupils said that although bullying was not an issue in the school they appreciated anti-bullying week and e-safety day. They knew what to do if they experienced or witnessed any bullying taking place. They valued the worry box, where they could communicate any concerns they had to staff.

Inspection findings

- You have designed a curriculum rooted in the Catholic Christian faith. The extensive provision of time for reading, writing and mathematics, and the high quality of teaching, ensures that progress and standards by the end of Year 6 are consistently high. Year 6 test results in mathematics are particularly high. The design of the curriculum enables history and RE to promote literacy through extended writing. Science and geography lessons promote numeracy through, for example, coordinates and line graphs. During the inspection visit, pupils were experiencing science week, where they thoroughly enjoyed experiments on fair tests, materials and patterns.
- All pupils in every class experience specialist music lessons, including studying composers through the ages. They learn to play hand bells, glockenspiels and keyboards, and participate in a range of extra-curricular activities, including the

school choir and music festivals.

- Pupils appreciate the rich PE curriculum which is enhanced by sports clubs, including hockey, gym, street dance and football. Pupils are enthusiastic about the team games and competitions with other schools. All pupils in each year group in key stage 2 have regular swimming lessons every year. The PE and sport premium is used well to employ sports coaches who model lessons for teachers to observe. The coaches in turn then observe and support class teachers, who subsequently take on responsibility for the teaching of PE themselves. The subject is well led, and governors receive detailed information to evaluate the impact of the funding.
- Design and technology, modern foreign languages, art and information and communication technology are less well developed. Pupils reported that they have few opportunities to use computers in their learning, apart from occasionally to support their research. You have recently strengthened leadership of information and communication technology and invested in further resources, but it is too early to see the impact of this yet. You are developing design and technology, for example, by older pupils planning, designing and evaluating a rocket, while imagining that they are working at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. However, pupils reported that until very recently they had had little experience of design and technology. Some pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are now learning Spanish but this is at an early stage of development. There is no curriculum programme in place for art because this is left to individual teachers to weave into the topic being studied. Information about the curriculum published on the school's website is not complete. Governors do not have a full picture of the subjects studied.
- You have worked hard to promote diversity in RE through trips to local Sikh, Hindu and Jewish places of worship. You have involved parents from the school's growing ethnic diversity in celebrating festivals such as Diwali, and you have introduced stories from different cultures into literacy lessons. You have sought to widen pupils' understanding of the wider world, for example in studying Canada, the rain forests in South America and Aborigines in Australia, with the latter raising issues of colonialism and imperialism. However, pupils' knowledge of other faiths and their wider knowledge of diversity in the United Kingdom and the modern world is still underdeveloped.
- The numbers on the special educational needs register are too small to comment on their progress. Their individual progress is tracked closely by leaders. These pupils' progress is a key focus of the regular pupil progress meetings between leaders and class teachers. Governors receive regular updates on the impact of the additional funding for special educational needs. The expertise on the governing body enables governors to ask challenging questions of leaders.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils in key stage 1 who achieved the expected standard in reading and writing was below average, and most markedly in writing. Most pupils currently in the school are doing well, including in Reception where a revamped approach to teaching has led to rapidly improved learning. Most pupils in key stages 1 and 2 have made strong progress since the start of this academic year. Of the pupils who are behind their chronological age in

reading and are working below the expected standard in writing, most have made considerable progress as a result of the guided reading programme, strong teaching and effective additional support.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- progress is consistently good for pupils who are working below the expected standard in reading and writing
- there are wider opportunities in the curriculum for pupils to study art, design and technology, information and communication technology and modern foreign languages
- the curriculum taught in the classroom extends pupils' knowledge further of diversity in modern Britain and the wider world
- information on every subject studied in each year group is available on the school's website so that parents and governors are well informed about the curriculum content.

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 Staffordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, other senior and middle leaders, and other members of the teaching staff. I also met with two members of the governing body. I spoke by telephone to a representative from the local authority and also to a representative from the diocese.

I carried out a learning walk of lessons in each of the four classes jointly with you, which included scrutinising pupils' books and talking to pupils.

I observed pupils' behaviour around the school. I spoke to a group of pupils from key stages 1 and 2.

I took account of 27 responses to the Parent View free-text service. I also reviewed 29 responses to the Parent View survey and seven responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

I scrutinised the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, pupil

performance information, behaviour information, and school policy documents, as well as safeguarding and child protection records. I also checked the school's website.