

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Ms Sue Clarke
Headteacher
Broughton Hall Catholic High School
Yew Tree Lane
West Derby
Liverpool
Merseyside
L12 9HJ

Dear Ms Clarke

Short inspection of Broughton Hall Catholic High School

Following my visit to the school on 23 January 2019 with Paul Edmondson, Ofsted Inspector, and Christine Veitch, Ofsted Inspector, 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 2013.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Since the last inspection, standards at the school have suffered a decline. You have been working to bring about improvement and have been successful in some areas. For example, pupils' progress in both science and geography has improved. However, pupils' progress in mathematics and science continues to be below national averages.

You have recently reorganised your leadership team and now feel that you have the right people in the appropriate roles. New policies and practices are in place for behaviour as well as teaching and learning. There is evidence that teaching is improving and some groups of pupils are beginning to make better progress as a result. For example, disadvantaged pupils' progress has shown a steady improvement for the last three years.

You have empowered middle leaders and hold them to account for the quality of teaching and learning in their areas. Where departments have strong leadership, this has worked well. However, there are some middle leaders whose leadership is not as effective, and as a result, there is inconsistency in the impact of improvement across the different subject areas.

In social areas around the school, the atmosphere is lively and friendly. Pupils are respectful to adults and follow instructions promptly. In classrooms, pupils are typically attentive and enjoy their learning. Many are keen to be involved in class discussions. Pupils are articulate and give their views with confidence. However, some pupils do not consistently demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. These pupils do not focus carefully on their work during learning or share in classroom discussions. Although they do not cause disruption, their own learning is limited.

Teachers are proud to work in the school. They value the consultations that take place before you initiate a change in policy. As a result, they know and understand the school's priorities for improvement, as well as the balance between the need for change and workload.

Parents and carers say that their children enjoy school and are safe. They expressed their confidence in you and the other leaders at the school. Parents said that their children are well looked after, and that any concerns they have are addressed promptly. They particularly value the extra-curricular opportunities that you provide for their children.

Governors are proud to serve the school. They bring a range of skills to the governance of the school, including a number of governors who have experience of working in education. They understand the importance of their role and do challenge leaders when they have concerns. However, they have not responded quickly enough to successfully stem the decline in standards since the last inspection.

At the time of the last inspection, you were asked to improve the quality of teaching and learning. You have brought about some improvement in this area. For example, teaching and learning in geography have improved considerably. However, there are areas where teaching is not as effective and does not allow pupils to make the progress of which they are capable. You are aware of this. You have started to take action, but the changes that you have put in place have not had time to demonstrate sustained improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

The regular and frequent training of staff, together with effective policies and practices, ensure that you have created a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff are vigilant and any concerns they raise are followed up promptly.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and told me that bullying is rare and dealt with effectively when it happens. They enjoy coming to school and feel safe when they are there. They trust their teachers and know whom to talk to when they have any concerns. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the Parent View survey confirmed that the school is a safe place for their children.

Inspection findings

- The inspection was based around several lines of enquiry. My first line of enquiry was to see how well teachers' questioning challenged pupils to think deeply and how effectively good teaching practice is shared across the school. There is some good practice and where this is seen, teachers use questioning well and pupils are engaged in their learning. They think carefully about their answers and can explain why they have reached their conclusions. However, this good practice has not been shared effectively across the school and pupils do not consistently benefit from high-quality teaching as a result.
- In some subjects, such as mathematics and science, teachers do not consistently use assessment to ensure that teaching accurately meets the needs of pupils. In these cases, activities can lack challenge and sometimes learning is repeated unnecessarily. Teachers' questioning does not encourage pupils to think deeply and make connections between new learning and things that they already know. Consequently, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- You have introduced new quality assurance processes to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are strong across the school. However, the lack of consistency in leadership across subject areas does not allow you to target appropriate training and support to bring about improvement in all subject areas.
- I was interested to see how you were improving the progress of disadvantaged pupils to bring their progress closer to that of other pupils nationally. You have been successful in raising the profile of disadvantaged pupils among staff. You have also provided training so that teachers are aware of effective strategies to offer help and support to these pupils. These actions are helping pupils to overcome barriers to learning. While you are aware that there is still more work to do, disadvantaged pupils' progress is steadily increasing over time and moving closer to that of other pupils nationally.
- I was also interested in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. Your attendance officer and pastoral teams closely track pupils' attendance and provide appropriate support to help improve pupils' attendance. As a result, disadvantaged pupils' overall attendance is improving and is now only slightly below that of all pupils nationally. Despite this success, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils that are regularly absent from school remains stubbornly high.
- I was keen to see how you are supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to improve their progress. You have maintained a high level of support for pupils with SEND. You and your special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) monitor the progress and attendance of pupils with SEND and provide appropriate interventions when needed. As a result, these pupils are making steady progress.
- My final line of enquiry was to see how you help pupils to understand and appreciate the importance of British values. You have a comprehensive curriculum for pupils' personal, social, health and economic education, which is delivered through dedicated lessons. This is supplemented by a number of assemblies and educational visits that help pupils to understand the cultural

diversity of modern Britain. Pupils were able to talk confidently about prejudice and the protected characteristics. They were aware of the different types of bullying and whom to talk to if they had concerns. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality assurance of teaching, learning and assessment is consistent across the school and leads to appropriate training and support for teachers
- they secure improvements in outcomes, particularly in mathematics and science, by making sure that teachers make better use of assessment information to match teaching to pupils' needs, and use questioning more effectively to move pupils' learning forward
- teaching consistently engages pupils, so that they remain focused on their learning
- they focus on overcoming disadvantaged pupils' barriers to learning, so that their progress continues to move closer to that of other pupils nationally and fewer are persistently absent from school.

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

Yours sincerely

Erica Sharman
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors examined a range of documents, including: safeguarding records and policies; information on pupils' performance and attendance; and the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan. We met with you and other members of your leadership team. I met with six governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. Jointly with school leaders, inspectors observed learning in several subject areas, looked at work in pupils' books and examined the work across a range of subjects of a group of current pupils. We spoke formally and informally to groups of pupils from all year groups. We observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during social times. We reviewed the 14 responses to the pupil survey and the 54 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 34 free-text responses. We also considered 70 responses to the staff questionnaire.