

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



7 March 2019

Mrs Catherine Horton
Headteacher
Blessed Mother Teresa's Catholic Primary School
Somerset Road
Highfields
Stafford
ST17 9UZ

Dear Mrs Horton

Short inspection of Blessed Mother Teresa's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 26 February 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the quality of education that the school provides. You, ably supported by the assistant headteacher, staff, the local governing body and the multi-academy company (MAC), have built on the strengths identified at the time of the previous inspection and improved the school further.

Teaching is consistently strong and there is evidence of exemplary practice in the early years setting. Teachers in every year group routinely plan activities that stretch and challenge all groups of pupils. Staff give pupils clear guidance on how to improve the quality of their work and pupils of all ages are encouraged to complete tasks independently. For example, pupils use displays around their classrooms to help them resolve difficult challenges.

Pupils work well with staff and other pupils. They support each other's learning and usually concentrate fully on their studies. Pupils are encouraged to use academic language and staff use the technical language of English well. This helps pupils to discuss their writing more effectively than at the time of your

predecessor school's inspection. However, although improving, staff have not always helped pupils to develop higher order skills in English and mathematics over time.

Pupils behave very well in class and around the school. They enter the school grounds calmly and sensibly at the start of the day and play with consideration for others during social time. Pupils are polite, helpful, curious and respectful. They are proud of their school and value the support that they are given by staff.

Pupils enjoy being at school and they are happy. Most pupils have excellent attendance and punctuality has improved since the time of the last inspection. However, a very small number of parents do not ensure that their children attend regularly or arrive at school on time.

Despite this, parental engagement is strong. Leaders have taken effective action to build on the positive relationships that staff develop with parents in Reception. Staff have regular informal contact with parents at the start and end of the day and the home-school link worker supports the school's work with families very well. During the inspection, parents praised the school's communication with them and almost all, who made their views known, would recommend the school to another parent.

Members of the local governing body and the board of directors of the Painsley Catholic Academy MAC offer strong support and appropriate challenge to leaders. They are helping to improve the school. The MAC has enhanced capacity in the school, provided leadership development opportunities and increased accountability at all levels. There are now more rigorous procedures in place to evaluate the school's effectiveness than were evident at the time of the previous inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You lead this aspect of the school's work well. You are supported effectively by the home-school link worker and all staff. There is a strong culture of keeping children safe embedded throughout the school.

Staff are well trained and kept up to date about safeguarding matters. Issues that are pertinent to the local area are covered in their training. Processes for reporting concerns are clear, referrals are timely and appropriate action is taken if required. Leaders have a thorough understanding of their responsibilities and they follow up issues tenaciously.

Thorough records are stored securely. Appropriate checks are made on staff and visitors. The maintenance of the single central record of recruitment meets requirements.

Staff work well with parents and outside agencies to help to protect pupils. Pupils

are taught how to keep safe. For example, they learn about healthy relationships, road safety, the dangers of drugs and alcohol and how to stay safe online. Pupils, staff and parents who made their views known during the inspection believe that pupils are safe in school.

Inspection findings

- Pupils enjoy learning as teachers consistently provide interesting activities that build on pupils' prior knowledge. As tasks are set at the correct level for pupils they are appropriately challenged to make sustained progress. Staff use questions effectively to help pupils develop their understanding. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to support the learning of all groups of pupils.
- Leaders have correctly identified improving pupils' higher-order skills in English and mathematics as a main area for development. Pupils are now being given more opportunities to write at length, make inferences from their reading, summarise the main ideas from different paragraphs of texts, develop their mathematical reasoning skills and improve their understanding of ratio, proportion, fractions, decimals and percentages. However, it is too early to evaluate fully the impact of these actions on pupils' progress.
- Pupils make strong progress in a range of subjects during their time in the school. Many children enter Reception with skills below those typical for their age. However, they thrive in this high-quality setting. As a result, a large majority of pupils achieve a good level of development and most are well prepared for future learning. Year 6 pupils who started in the school's Reception regularly achieve excellent outcomes.
- Over time, attainment of the expected standard at the end of key stage 2 has been consistently high and pupils have made substantial progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Current pupils continue to make excellent progress.
- Attendance and punctuality have improved since the previous inspection. The school uses a range of appropriate actions to reduce absence and pupils value the rewards that they are given for regular attendance. However, a few pupils are frequently absent, and a small number are late too often.
- Pupils usually behave well, and most pupils display excellent conduct. Permanent exclusions are very rare, but a small number of pupils have been excluded from the school for a short period of time.
- Pupils are taught about equality as part of the Catholic ethos of the school. They learn about a range of cultures and religions and they are tolerant and respectful of people who are different. Pupils have a clear understanding of British values and they believe that people are treated fairly in the school. Pupils are confident that opportunities are not restricted in the school as a result of anyone's gender, background or beliefs.
- The school has a comprehensive and up-to-date equality policy that complies with the public sector equality duty.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that staff:

- work closely with families and outside agencies to reduce lateness and persistent absence further
- continue to help pupils develop higher-order skills in English and mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of directors and the chief executive officer (CEO) of the MAC, 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

Simon Mosley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Meetings were held with you, the assistant headteacher and the CEO of the Painsley Catholic Academy MAC. I also met with two members of the local governing body, including the chair, the chair and vice-chair of directors and the senior education improvement advisor for the Diocese of Birmingham.

I made short visits to every classroom with you and the assistant headteacher. I looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils. Behaviour was observed in lessons and during social time. I reviewed 16 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

I considered 10 returns of Ofsted's staff questionnaire and I analysed 32 responses and 16 free-text comments made on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

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