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4 September 2019

Mrs Nicola Grant
Headteacher
St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Batley
Upton Street
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Dear Mrs Grant

Short inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Batley

Following my visit to the school on 16 July 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 July 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You successfully lead your friendly and welcoming school. You are keen to continue the family character of the school and this is supported by parents and carers, pupils and staff. Your dedication to the school and your pupils is clear. Together with your deputy headteacher, you have correctly evaluated the school, and this has enabled you to accurately identify school improvement priorities. Regular evaluations mean that you can effectively judge the success of your actions.

Your very able deputy headteacher supports you well to maintain the good quality of teaching at the school. You work closely together to ensure that your high standards and expectations are met. Your staff support you well. They appreciate the support you provide and the thought you give to ensuring their well-being.

Your school is a very welcoming place. The ethos of the school clearly shines through. Pupils are happy and thriving and are very enthusiastic learners. They describe the school as, 'fun,' and their teachers as, 'helpful and kind'. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their experiences and the array of opportunities they have. They are confident that they all have someone they can talk to if the need arises. Pupils' excellent behaviour, attitudes and pride in their work positively echo the high standards set by yourself and the staff.

Teachers plan interesting and motivating lessons that engage and interest pupils.

The quality of teaching at the school is good, expectations are high and, as a result, pupils make good progress towards achieving their targets.

The vast majority of parents support the school. They are very happy with the progress their children make in both their work and their personal development. These parents' comments are typical of those received about the school:

'St Mary's is a lovely school and I feel my child is able to develop and reach his full potential, he is happy in school and enjoys going, he has gained confidence within himself both emotionally and socially. This is down to the good support of the headteacher and all the staff. He has come on leaps and bounds.'

and:

'My children are happy, content and doing amazingly well academically and socially. I feel that St Mary's is well managed, and I am confident that my children are happy and well cared for whilst there.'

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. A focus on mathematics teaching has led to a significant improvement in the progress of pupils in key stage 1. You expect plans to introduce the same initiatives in key stage 2 will lead to similar levels of improved pupil progress. Pupils understand and can use their grammar, punctuation and spelling well across all areas of the curriculum. Similarly, pupils have many opportunities to write for different purposes in the variety of different subjects that the curriculum offers.

Leaders recognise that the teaching of reading is not yet as positive as it could be. Plans to increase opportunities for pupils to access a range of high-quality and interesting books are in process. Teachers are working hard to encourage parents to read at home with their children, particularly in early years. Leaders and teachers understand that this is an area that must be prioritised in order to give their pupils the best opportunities in their learning.

Governors are very supportive of the school. Many have a long history with the school, including attending themselves, and they wish to continue to support the school and the pupils. However, they do not have thorough knowledge and understanding of how leaders monitor and assess pupils' progress. They do not have enough understanding of how pupils make progress in their learning to hold leaders to account effectively.

Most pupils attend school every day. However, there are a small number of parents who do not make sure that their child attends regularly enough. Leaders take quick action to address this; however, there is further attention required to make sure that attendance for the school increases.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders make sure that all relevant checks required for those working with children are in place. All staff receive regular and effective training and are up to date with current legislation. Staff are clear and confident on the procedures they must follow if they have any concerns.

Pupils understand how to keep safe in and out of school, and online. They understand the importance of staying safe. Pupils know how to keep healthy. Pupils are knowledgeable about what they should eat and drink and readily identify the concerns about a diet that is high in sugar. Pupils trust adults at school and every pupil has someone to talk to if necessary. Parents, who made their views known, are generally happy that their children are safe, happy and well cared for at the school. One parent said that her children are 'surrounded by teachers and all staff who care about the children's happiness and well-being whilst in school.'

Pupils' behaviour around school is very good. They are kind, respectful and caring children who enjoy all aspects of their school experiences. Occasions of inappropriate behaviour are rare and where these do occur, leaders take swift action. These actions address and reinforce the high expectations of the school.

Inspection findings

- Children in early years make good progress. They are active and happy in their learning. Staff plan a wide range of fun and interesting activities for the children to take part in. Children are happy to share their experiences with visitors and are proud of their achievements. They can explain what they are doing and why they are doing it. Staff encourage children to use appropriate social skills and, due to this, the children engage well with each other, sharing and taking turns in their learning activities. Staff have very strong relationships with the children.
- Lessons are well planned and motivating. They take into account the differences in learning styles, interests and abilities of pupils. Staff think carefully about the activities that they provide. They make sure there are opportunities, not only for learning and development, but for pupils to apply the skills and knowledge they have already gained to increase and enhance their learning. Pupils can talk clearly about their learning; they can explain complex problem-solving activities and they understand how their knowledge helps them when approaching something new. Pupils enjoy their lessons and their learning. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils. Pupils present their work to a high standard as they know teachers expect them to do their best.
- Staff effectively share their specialist subject knowledge with others. This is increasing the confidence and abilities of staff to teach non-specialist subjects with a good depth of understanding. Staff communicate with each other well and share their good practice. Staff assess pupils accurately. They use this information well to correctly plan activities that both encourage learning and provide challenge to pupils. Consequently, pupils make good progress.
- The school has a very inclusive ethos. Pupils with special educational needs

and/or disabilities (SEND) are very well supported throughout the school. Their learning activities and workspaces accurately reflect their individual needs and, as a result, they can make good progress towards their targets. Staff positively encourage pupils with SEND to be independent learners where possible.

- Leaders identify that the attendance of some pupils has not been high enough. They have taken positive action to improve the attendance of these pupils, including following the local authority's policy on taking legal action. Unfortunately, there are several parents who are not ensuring their children attend school every day, and attendance is not high enough.
- Governors, though extremely supportive, do not yet have the knowledge to fully understand how the quality of teaching and the decisions made by leaders affect the progress pupils make. They currently give priority to the pastoral and personal development needs of pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- governors sharpen their knowledge and understanding of the impact of the school's actions on the progress and outcomes for all groups of pupils
- they develop further initiatives to increase attendance and reduce the incidence of term-time holidays
- they build on initiatives to increase pupils' progress in reading to further maximise the progress pupils can make.

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

Yours sincerely

Sara Roe
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your deputy headteacher. You and I visited classrooms to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. I met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke to pupils informally in lessons and around school and met formally with a group of pupils to discuss their views of the school. I scrutinised a range of pupils' workbooks.

I evaluated a range of school documents, including those relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and outcomes for pupils. Before the inspection, I analysed

the school's website and evaluated a range of additional documentation. I considered the 33 responses from parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Responses from 29 members of staff and 26 pupils to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys were also taken into account.