

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



4 September 2019

Mr Frank Barratt
Headteacher
St John Fisher Primary, A Catholic Voluntary Academy
Spring Water Avenue
Hackenthorpe
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S12 4HJ

Dear Mr Barratt

Short inspection of St John Fisher Primary, A Catholic Voluntary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 17 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 May 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 and your leaders have an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's own self-evaluation of its performance is accurate and fully informs school development plan priorities. You are using your experience and the skills of leaders to drive improvements. Tangible improvements to both pastoral care and teaching and learning have been made.

You and your team know the pupils and their families extremely well. You have a clear understanding of their individual needs and have plans in place to ensure that all pupils are given the best opportunities to achieve well. You strive to ensure that all pupils feel 'happy, safe and loved'. These core values permeate the school. The pupils recognise this and, as a result, enjoy coming to school. This view is also reflected by parents and carers, who are overwhelmingly happy with the school. One parent said:

'My two children attend this school and are very happy and doing very well. The headteacher, teachers and staff genuinely care and go above and beyond to make the school a very special place where the children feel happy, safe and loved. Mr Barratt is often at the gate at home time to talk to parents and knows every child by name. My children look forward to going to school every day.'

This is a happy school. Pupils are polite and courteous. Overwhelmingly, they talk positively about their school and their teachers. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons and like their

teachers. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils behave well in lessons and follow instructions diligently. They are proud of their work and are eager to talk about their learning. Pupils say they feel safe in school and know who they can talk to if they have a concern. Pupils can talk with a secure knowledge about online safety and are confident that any issues with bullying are dealt with effectively. They enjoy the range of roles and responsibilities, including as school councillors, members of the chaplaincy team and 'Wake-Up, Shake-Up' leaders. Pupils wear their uniform with pride, including for physical education (PE), where all pupils wear the correct uniform.

Leaders use the pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils effectively. Governors know how the funding is spent and leaders evaluate the difference that this spending is making to pupils' outcomes. As well as providing academic support, leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils have access to a range of enrichment opportunities to support their wider development. The inclusion team works very effectively to ensure that the progress of disadvantaged pupils is tracked and that class teachers are clear about strategies to support them. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are generally achieving as well as their peers.

The school environment is attractive and purposeful. The corridor spaces are used well. Classrooms are well organised and prompts for learning are used effectively by pupils. Displays throughout the school celebrate pupils' learning and achievements. The school's ethos and values are demonstrated in every aspect of school life.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have rightly focused on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes in writing. Following training, teachers make sure that pupils have access to high-quality reading books on which writing is based. Teachers challenge pupils to use a range of interesting vocabulary and punctuation to make their written work more interesting. Presentation of work is usually very strong, both in writing books and other curriculum areas. However, there are too many spelling and grammar mistakes in pupils' work as pupils are not given the opportunity to edit and improve their work. As a result, pupils are not achieving as well as they could.

Safeguarding is effective.

All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and there is a strong culture in the school of keeping pupils safe. Leaders and staff are vigilant and tenacious in ensuring that pupils are kept safe. All staff have relevant training and know how to raise a safeguarding concern.

Leaders check the effectiveness of this training through regular updates and reviews. You ensure that safeguarding has a high profile at the school. It is discussed in each staff meeting.

Pupils say they feel very safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe online. There is always an adult there if they have a worry. One pupil explained: 'If we have a worry bubble, which is a worry in our tummy, we know that talking makes us feel better. We are told to tell, tell and tell again.'

Pupils say they feel valued and all pupils are made to feel equal, no matter their religion, race or any difference. One pupil said, 'We feel happy, safe and loved and we make sure that all pupils feel that way too.'

Leaders tackle any absence with vigour through the work of the inclusion team. Specific strategies have had a positive impact on general attendance and lateness, such as the 'Wake-Up, Shake-Up' morning session and fining families for holidays taken in term time. Some staff go the extra mile through home visits to get pupils to come to school. Systems for following up first-day absence are rigorous and effective. As a result, the vast majority of pupils attend school regularly and attendance is consistently above the national average.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I focused on a number of key lines of enquiry. The first was to consider the actions leaders are taking to ensure that all pupils are challenged in mathematics. The recent focus on improving pupils' mental calculation strategies and mathematical recall facts has paid dividends. As a result, pupils' arithmetic is strong and the vast majority of pupils are making good progress across the school. Pupils calculate numbers very well and have a firm grasp of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They think through their work carefully and find correct answers to tricky calculations.
- Some teachers are making good use of the knowledge and techniques gained from recent training to plan more challenging reasoning problems. However, this challenge is not consistent across all classes. Pupils do not consistently get the chance to apply their learning to more complex reasoning problems and, as a result, are not being challenged as much as they could be.
- My next key line of enquiry was to ascertain how well boys achieve in the early years. In 2018, fewer boys reached a good level of development than girls. This was due to boys not achieving as well as girls in writing. To improve boys' achievement, the early years leader has worked in conjunction with the local authority to develop a project about encouraging boys to mark-make using drawing as a way into writing. This approach has had a positive effect on their confidence in and enthusiasm for writing. Boys are far more confident when beginning to link their phonics learning to writing letters and have become more confident and enthusiastic about writing real words.
- Leaders carefully consider the needs of all children and match the provision so that they make strong progress. As a result, since 2016, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of the early years has steadily increased and, in 2018, was above the national average. Current school assessment information shows that boys now achieve as well as girls.
- Finally, I looked at how leaders are developing the curriculum across the school. The curriculum that leaders have designed contributes significantly to pupils' enjoyment of their school life. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about different topics and can confidently recall previous learning. The curriculum is broad and balanced and there are lots of opportunities for pupils to develop writing skills. However, the standards in writing are not as high as they could be as basic skills of spelling and grammar are not being reinforced in writing across the curriculum.

- Middle leaders are hard-working and enthusiastic and contribute effectively to the development of their subjects. However, some middle leaders are not able to take initiative in developing their subjects. They are over-reliant on senior leaders. Making sure that they can work more autonomously to raise the standards of teaching and learning in their subjects is an important next step.
- PE has a high profile in the school and is supported well by additional funding. This is reflected in the wide variety of extra-curricular activities that are offered to pupils, including dance, hockey, taekwondo, athletics and family fit club.
- The curriculum allows pupils to enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as well as their understanding of British values. This is seen in the very positive relationships that exist across the school. Pupils say there is no bullying or discriminatory behaviour. Pupils also demonstrate empathy for people in different situations and often fundraise for different charities, such as the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the skills of middle leaders continue to develop so that their work has a stronger impact on improving pupils' progress
- pupils' grammar and spelling improve at a faster rate in writing across the curriculum
- pupils are given time to edit and improve their work
- teaching further develops pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of Hallam Schools' Partnership Academy Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Hallam, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Sheffield. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Eve Morris
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders and discussed my lines of enquiry. I also met with members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, a range of subject leaders and members of the safeguarding team. I considered the 77 responses from parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I also took into account the seven responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 35 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. I visited all classes in the school and I looked at extensive examples of pupils' work.

I spoke to pupils and I also studied a range of documentation covering different aspects of the school's work.