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Mr Daniel Copley
Executive Headteacher
St Cuthbert and The First Martyrs' Catholic Primary School
Scotchman Road
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Dear Mr Copley

Short inspection of St Cuthbert and The First Martyrs' Catholic Primary School

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 second short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in February 2012.

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.

During your head of school's current absence, your assistant headteacher has capably stepped in as acting head of school. It is a testament to the strength in your school's leadership and the whole staff that this has been a seamless transition.

At the last inspection, one of the areas you were asked to improve was the use of learning time in mathematics. You started by reviewing the mathematics curriculum to allow for opportunities to develop fluency, as well as reasoning skills. You supported teachers with this and, as a result, teachers are assessing pupils' learning more quickly. They, therefore, can move pupils on in their learning more quickly too. There are also chances throughout the year for pupils to go back and revisit previous learning. As a result of the work you have done, pupils' progress in mathematics across the school is exceptionally strong.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They are pleased

with the progress their children make, as well as the aspirations that you and your staff have for them. In their text responses to me, several used the word 'fantastic' to describe the school. They also say that the school is caring and they really value the 'family feel'.

The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils learn well in all subject areas. I saw, for example, lots of pupils' impressive artwork displayed around the school. Pupils particularly value the music lessons and were keen to tell me about the instruments that they have opportunities to learn to play. I was also lucky enough to hear some of the pupils' wonderful singing at the end-of-year celebration event. You shared the plans to tailor the curriculum even further by adding more enterprise events. These events, such as an art gallery opening, support pupils in learning skills for life and business, as well as improving their knowledge.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Pupils are respectful and polite to visitors and they behaved in a very courteous way when they spoke to me. They play well together on the playground, enjoying a range of activities. They move around the school quietly and calmly and listen carefully to adults in school.

Governors are ambitious for the school. They understand their roles well and feel that the challenge they offer is valued by all leaders. They know the school well and, as a result, are able to drive improvements, for example the transition work they are planning with the high school.

Safeguarding is effective.

You ensure that the school's safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All staff and visitors are appropriately checked to ensure their suitability to work with children. You keep safeguarding as a high priority. You have established a dedicated 'team around the child' who work together and with other agencies to ensure that pupils get the support that they need when they need it. They make home visits to all new pupils so that school can establish a positive relationship with parents right from the start. It also means that you know the children and their families well.

Staff training is regular and up to date so that staff know how to spot any concerns. Where any concerns are raised, you and your team act swiftly and appropriately. This is all documented and I could see that all incidents were responded to in a timely way.

Attendance is consistently better than the national average. Your 'team around the child' works well together to support families. They carry out daily and weekly checks to ensure that pupils attend regularly.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we agreed to look at how effectively early reading and writing skills are taught. This is because, in recent years, a below-average proportion of pupils reached the required standard in the phonics screening

check at the end of Year 1. You were able to demonstrate to me the effect of the leadership of reading, especially on current pupils' reading and phonics development in key stage 1. In 2019, the standards attained improved considerably and a very high proportion of pupils reached the required standard in the phonics screening check. I could also see this at first hand when I listened to pupils read. They read to me fluently and with expression.

- Children in the early years classes have opportunities to read and write in the different areas of the classroom. Children can choose books linked to their topic. They also benefit from being able to choose books that they can read on their own, using the letters and sounds that they already know. Opportunities are carefully planned for pupils to write, For example a list of orders in the ice cream shop. However, leaders recognise that children would benefit from seeing good models of writing from adults and other children. A below-average proportion of pupils reach a good level of development at the end of the early years.
- Pupils achieve very well at the end of key stage 2, particularly in reading and mathematics, where progress measures are well above national averages. Also, a larger proportion of pupils achieve above age-related standards in reading and mathematics than the national averages. Although the proportion of pupils who achieve at greater depth in writing has increased in 2019, the proportion is still below the very high proportions that do so in reading and mathematics.
- We visited lessons together and I could see that teachers plan carefully for pupils' vocabulary and language development. Teachers use a range of whole-school approaches, such as recording devices and vocabulary books. In Year 6, for example, pupils were challenged by studying archaic language in a poem by WB Yeats. There is some variability in teachers' expertise in developing pupils' use of language and vocabulary in their writing.
- I looked at pupils' work in books alongside the acting head of school. I could see how pupils had opportunities to write at length and for different purposes. There were also lots of examples of writing in different subject areas. For example, pupils in Year 4 wrote non-chronological reports on volcanoes. This is carefully planned across the different year groups so that pupils build on the skills learned in previous years. As a result, pupils' writing attainment in key stage 1 and key stage 2 has improved considerably this year.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they further develop the provision in the early years so that a greater proportion of pupils achieve a good level of development
- they continue with the plans to develop staff expertise so that more pupils achieve at greater depth in writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Eleanore Pickard
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection, I met with you and your acting head of school. Together, we visited lessons and looked at pupils' work in their books. I also had a meeting with your early years leader and we visited the Nursery and Reception classes together.

I listened to some pupils read and spent some time talking to pupils on the playground at lunchtime. I met with you and the designated staff for safeguarding and your 'team around the child'. I also met with governors and a representative from the local authority.

I reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and the school improvement plan. I looked at the school's website. I considered the responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including the 34 free-text responses. I also took into account the 19 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.