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Ben Taylor
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Dear Mr Taylor

Short inspection of Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 May 2017, 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 June 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

You provide strong, effective and compassionate leadership. Since your appointment as headteacher in 2014, you have successfully led a number of significant changes that have further improved the work of the school. You have revised the leadership structure to ensure that key aspects of the school's work are led and overseen by the three assistant headteachers. This has had a positive impact on the curriculum, provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and pupil well-being within the school. You have ensured that the building and refurbishment work carried out since the previous inspection has helped to create a vibrant, attractive environment for pupils. The school and its grounds are highly conducive to learning.

You are a reflective leader who has established robust and accurate systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. Governors are a strong force in the school and share your drive and commitment to make sure that the pupils at Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic Primary School develop as well-rounded individuals who succeed academically and demonstrate positive social values. The impact of the work that you and other leaders undertake is reflected in the good outcomes that pupils achieve as they move through the school. You rightly recognise that while pupils make generally good progress in writing, outcomes could

be improved further through more accurate and appropriate use of grammar in written pieces of work.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they show empathy and consideration for other people. You place a high emphasis on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this helps to prepare them very well for life in modern Britain. The prayer garden in the school grounds, and the annual residential visit to Alston Castle for Year 5 pupils that focuses on reflection and teambuilding, are examples of how you effectively enable pupils to put into practice the school's values. Parents value the fact that you are approachable and are a visible presence at the start and end of the school day. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the online survey would recommend the school to another parent. One parent represented their views by commenting: 'The teaching staff, support staff and headteacher really care about the children and their families. This creates a very welcoming, friendly and supportive environment, where children and their parents feel valued.'

You have led the development of a curriculum that is relevant and engaging for pupils, and provides opportunities for them to extend their learning through a wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. Teachers and other staff give freely of their time to support pupils' cultural, sporting and academic development. While there are good opportunities for pupils to apply their reading, writing and mathematical skills and knowledge in other subjects and to undertake exciting investigative work in subjects, including science and history, you agree that there is still a need to extend pupils' learning in design and technology, and art.

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement that were identified in the school's previous inspection report. You have increased opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own work through the establishment of regular discussions between pupils and their teachers. There is evidence that all teachers have high expectations of the most able pupils and, as a result, these pupils achieve highly. You have a clear and accurate view of where teaching is outstanding and value the impact it has on pupils' outcomes. You also recognise where teaching can improve further. You have identified that the best practice that is already firmly established in the school can be utilised more effectively to ensure that more pupils achieve outstanding outcomes.

Safeguarding is effective.

All staff know and follow the clear and effective systems that leaders have put in place to safeguard pupils. Training for staff is regular and ensures that they have a good understanding of how to recognise signs that any pupils may be at risk of harm. The designated safeguarding lead has led training for staff on identifying if pupils may be at risk from radicalisation or extremism.

The agreed processes for recording and reporting any safeguarding incidents that do occur are robust, and records are detailed and thorough. Leaders are tenacious in following up any safeguarding incidents and make appropriate use of outside

agencies.

Teachers provide pupils with very good support in understanding how they can keep themselves safe, including road safety sessions and 'bikeability' courses for Year 5 pupils. Pupils have a clear understanding of the potential dangers that use of the internet can pose and know not to give out personal information. Pupils say they feel completely safe in school and trust adults to support them if they have any concerns.

Inspection findings

- Leaders have accurately evaluated the reasons that pupils have not consistently made such strong progress in writing as they have done in reading and mathematics. They have increased opportunities for pupils to write independently and at length. They have further strengthened the links between reading and writing, and have focused pupils' attention on high-quality literary texts. The systematic approach to the teaching of reading is highly effective and helps pupils develop strong skills in using sounds to read words. Pupils develop a deep love of reading as they move through the school. This has helped pupils to understand what makes a good piece of writing and to hone their skills in this area.
- The teaching of skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar is strong and, as a result, pupils achieve good outcomes in this area of learning. While teachers have increased the opportunities for pupils to apply these skills in their own writing, this is not yet fully embedded. Not all pupils understand how aspects of grammar can be used to enhance a piece of writing and, consequently, do not always do so accurately or appropriately.
- Teachers make learning interesting and plan lessons that engage and enthuse pupils. Teachers' expectations of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are high. Where teaching is particularly strong, teachers set tasks that demand deep thinking from pupils. This is especially evident in mathematics, where pupils undertake challenging problem-solving activities that stretch their thinking and allow for rapid progress. For example, pupils in a Year 5 mathematics lesson were engrossed by an activity that required them to interpret information from a graph. They accurately identified that the graph showed them the times that a cyclist was resting or undertaking more physically demanding exercise, such as climbing a hill.
- There is some lack of consistency in teaching. All teachers provide pupils with a clear structure for their learning and demonstrate good subject knowledge. However, not all teachers are as skilled at promoting deep and insightful thinking. Leaders recognise that there are further opportunities for all teachers to observe and learn from the outstanding practice that exists in your school and in other schools.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of the specific and individual needs of the relatively small number of disadvantaged pupils in school. They have been innovative in their use of the pupil premium funding to ensure that pupils are supported both academically and socially. For example, the school has employed

a family support worker who has provided assistance that is tailored to the differing circumstances of pupils and their parents. This has had a positive impact on the attendance, and consequently the outcomes, of a number of disadvantaged pupils.

- Leaders have also revised assessment systems to allow for more accurate identification of any barriers to learning. This information is then used well to plan learning that is clearly aimed at diminishing any differences between the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are now making strong progress.
- Leaders have developed a vibrant and exciting curriculum that is relevant to the pupils. Thematic topics are based on pupils' interests and allow for very good cross-curricular links. Pupils are enabled to apply skills that they have learned in English and mathematics in other subjects, such as history and geography. Topics such as 'Let's Blow Something Up' and 'Let's Create a Political Party' require pupils to formulate hypotheses and relate well to pupils' development as citizens in modern Britain. For example, Year 6 pupils were observed in a history lesson making strong links between the study of King John and the Magna Carta and the forthcoming general election. This helped them to develop an understanding of democratic processes and the rule of law.
- Pupil's learning is very greatly enhanced through an extremely strong range of enrichment activities. Teachers plan visits carefully to stimulate pupils' interest and deepen their knowledge of the heritage and traditions of their own country. For example, visits to the Black Country Museum and Think Tank in Birmingham offer pupils opportunities for hands-on experiences that help to bring learning to life.
- There is a strong focus on allowing pupils to achieve successfully across the curriculum. The school provides pupils with good opportunities to participate in competitive sports. The school's orchestra and choir enable pupils to perform at a high level, including winning first place in recent local music competitions. School leaders recognise that there is a need to extend opportunities for pupils to develop their learning further and undertake exciting and relevant activities in design and technology, and art.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- further opportunities are created for teachers to observe and learn from outstanding practice, both within the school and in other schools
- teachers ensure that pupils apply their skills and knowledge of grammatical usage accurately and appropriately within their extended writing
- teachers develop more opportunities to allow pupils to extend their learning in design and technology, and art.

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

Yours sincerely

Adam Hewett
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the three assistant headteachers and a middle leader. I met with two governors, including the chair of the governing body. I had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I considered the 92 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and looked at free-text comments and a letter from parents. Together, we visited nine classes to observe learning. I listened to some pupils read. I spoke with pupils in lessons and at lunchtime. I observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime on the playground.

I scrutinised information about pupils' progress during the last academic year. I considered other documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and the school improvement plan. I scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures, including policies and checks on staff employed in the school, and checked the school's website. I also analysed the range of views expressed by staff through Ofsted's questionnaire about the school and its leadership.