

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr D Foxon
Headteacher
St George and St Teresa Catholic Primary School
Mill Lane
Bentley Heath
Solihull
West Midlands
B93 8PA

Dear Mr Foxon

Short inspection of St George and St Teresa Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 July 2018, 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 September 2014.

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.

St George and St Teresa Catholic Primary School is a caring and vibrant learning community, where pupils are happy and keen to learn. You have ensured that the school provides pupils with the best possible start in life. The ethos of the school is underpinned by core values such as respect and resilience. These values are recognised by pupils, who talk confidently about how they are rewarded when they demonstrate them.

Leaders have high expectations and set challenging targets for staff and pupils. This applies to every aspect of school life, from the Catholic ethos, which is at the heart of the school, to the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders are clear that they expect all pupils to achieve to the very best of their ability. In turn, teachers expect the best of pupils and pupils expect the best of themselves. As a result, the school has received many awards in recognition of excellent practice.

From early years upwards, pupils achieve very well. As they progress through the school, they are well-supported to become more independent as learners. In lessons they choose the most appropriate level of challenge – 'mild', 'spicy' or 'hot'.

Pupils are very keen to learn. They are engaged in lessons and disruption to learning is rare. Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities that support their learning and help them to develop confidence. For example, they take part in sports competitions and musical events.

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire and who spoke to me at the start of the school day expressed very positive views about the school. They value the care that staff show towards their children. They say there is a real sense of community at the school. One parent commented: 'This is a very nurturing school, where time is taken to understand the child in order to help them grow and develop.' Parents say they feel fully involved in the life of the school.

Governors have a broad range of experience and expertise. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors visit the school regularly. For example, they attended the recent SATS test days to see for themselves what pupils were being asked to do.

Governors are very supportive of leaders, while providing effective challenge. Despite pupils' positive achievements, they are committed to improving outcomes even further, so that progress continues to improve. Associate governors with particular skills and expertise are engaged to ensure that other members of the governing body develop their practice to be the best they can be.

You have addressed the areas for improvement from the last inspection effectively. A new assessment system has been developed that simplifies the information staff use to record pupils' progress. Teachers can now easily identify when pupils need more support and take action promptly. Alongside this, teachers now receive more specific, targeted feedback on their teaching, which helps them to improve their practice. Teachers design lessons that are now more accurately targeted at pupils' starting points. As a result, pupils, including different groups of pupils, make strong progress across the school and attainment is consistently well above national averages.

Support for leadership development since the last inspection has been very effective. Leaders are now fully involved in monitoring teaching and pupils' progress in their subject or area of responsibility. All teachers lead on an aspect of school improvement, which is helping to build leadership capacity for the future.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and the leadership team have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The required checks on staff and volunteers have been carried out. Pupils feel safe in the school and talk confidently about how to stay safe, including online. They are taught to respect others, to care for each other and look after younger pupils. Older pupils act as playground buddies. Parents say their children are safe and happy at school.

Staff are well trained in safeguarding. They are alert to the signs of potential abuse and neglect. When concerns are raised, leaders work effectively with other agencies

and with parents to make sure that pupils and families receive the support they need.

Inspection findings

- Pupils enter the school with skills well above those typical for their age. They achieve exceptionally well at key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. The attainment of almost all pupils by the end of key stage 2 in 2017 was well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the progress pupils made by the end of key stage 2 was only broadly in line with the national average in reading and writing and just below the national average in mathematics.
- Leaders' analysis of 2017 performance information identified that pupils, particularly boys, needed more support to improve their fluency in mathematics. Training and support were delivered to all teachers to improve their skills in this area. As a result, improvements are evident in pupils' mathematical fluency and in their confidence and ability to understand more challenging concepts quickly. These improvements were evident in the mathematics lessons we visited during the inspection.
- The school's own assessment information shows that, by the end of key stage 2 in 2018, a far higher proportion of boys have attained a higher standard than that expected for their age in mathematics than was the case in 2017. As a result, pupils' progress in mathematics, according to the school's assessment information, has improved to be above last year's national average.
- In 2017, the proportion of girls achieving a good level of development in the early years was below the national average and well below the average for all children in the school. This was particularly the case in reading, writing and number. Leaders responded promptly to close the gaps for girls as they progressed into Year 1. In 2018, 79% of girls in the current Year 1 attained the standard expected in the phonics screening check, which represents good progress from the end of Reception.
- In 2018, 75% of girls achieved a good level of development in the Reception class. This is above the national average. At key stage 1 in 2018, girls made good progress from the end of their Reception year. A far higher proportion of girls than the national average attained the higher standard in reading and writing by the end of key stage 1.
- At the end of key stage 2 in 2017, girls performed exceptionally well. More than half attained a higher standard than that expected for their age in reading and writing. The school's own assessment information indicates that this is likely to be the case again this year.
- The new assessment system, designed in partnership with the local authority, allows leaders to have more meaningful and productive discussions with teachers about the progress their pupils are making. These discussions help leaders to identify school improvement priorities. Training and support for teachers and other staff are then strategically planned to address these priorities. As a result, leadership at all levels has been further strengthened since the last inspection.

However, leaders are aware that using the new assessment system to help identify school improvement priorities focused on pupils' progress is an area that can be developed further.

- The standard of teaching across the school is consistently high as a result of a culture of continuous improvement and professional development. Leaders have provided effective support for teachers to develop their expertise. Some teachers are trained to moderate teachers' assessments in other schools on behalf of the local authority. Teachers design engaging lessons that help pupils to develop independence from an early age. For example, in Year 2 pupils wrote informal letters about life in Year 2 to Year 1 pupils. They used sophisticated vocabulary and complex sentence structures, including rhetorical questions. They helped each other to assess and improve the quality of their work by giving constructive feedback. In other classes, pupils are encouraged to set their own challenges, over and above the learning objectives for each lesson. Pupils described how this motivates them to learn. One pupil's comment was typical of many others when she said: 'I set my own challenges. I've challenged myself to get better at division.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the opportunities presented by the new assessment system to further improve the progress pupils make are fully developed.

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

Jane Spilsbury

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

We visited lessons together in Nursery, Reception, and key stage 1. I met with you and the deputy headteacher to discuss the school's development plan and self-evaluation. I also held meetings with middle leaders and governors. I spoke to the local authority school improvement adviser on the telephone.

I spoke to parents as they dropped off their children in the morning and took account of the 101 responses and the 58 free-text responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View.

I observed pupils playing at lunchtime and listened to pupils read. I spoke to pupils

at lunchtime and in lessons about how they learn to stay safe. I took account of the 93 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

I scrutinised attendance, behaviour and exclusion records, checked the school's single central record and reviewed safeguarding documents. In addition, I looked at the school's monitoring records. I took account of the 20 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.