

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



30 January 2018

Mr Daniel Copley
Executive Headteacher
St Francis Catholic Primary School
Myers Lane
Bradford
West Yorkshire
BD2 4ES

Dear Mr Copley

Short inspection of St Francis Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 16 January 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 January 2013.

The school continues to be good.

You and the head of school have a very clear vision of how to continue to move the school forward. You both also clearly recognise the strengths and areas for improvement within the school. This is evident in your well-organised and sharply focused school development plan. Staff spoken to during the inspection share your vision and have embraced recent changes enthusiastically. This ensures, for example, that pupils are given more opportunities to talk about what they are learning before setting it down in writing. This positive approach demonstrates teachers' desire for continual improvement.

Since September 2017, your whole-school focus on writing has gathered momentum. It is clear to see in pupils' books that many are beginning to make strong progress in developing writing skills. For example, in Years 5 and 6, pupils are developing their vocabulary, and new and exciting words are carefully displayed by pupils on the classroom wall. The concentration displayed by pupils who scrutinised these 'wow word walls' was admirable, as was their delight at finding a new word to use in their writing.

Pupils told me how much they enjoyed reading, and particularly borrowing books from the school library. The inclusion of your giant, purple, one-eyed reading monster in the library has delighted and fascinated pupils in equal measure. Younger pupils explained with great gravity that the monster was both friendly and did not hurt books or children. On the contrary, he loves reading. His presence in the library has increased pupils' interest and excitement even further and the number of books borrowed has increased. The very thoughtful choice of books is

beginning to show an impact in the number of boys using the library. However, you also recognise that there is more work to be done to improve boys' reading skills overall.

Pupils' behaviour during the inspection was very good. This was evidenced by the quiet corridors and polite attitudes shown to visitors and staff alike. Pupils also demonstrated good behaviour in classrooms, and this contributed to their good progress overall.

Staff value the close working links which you are building with St Cuthbert and The First Martyrs' school, Bradford, the other school of which you are headteacher. Middle leaders commented on the opportunities that these links give for them to share ideas and improve their practice.

Nearly all pupils spoken to enjoyed coming to school and felt safe and happy. Parents and carers overall agreed with this and reiterated the view that staff and leaders are kind, caring and develop well pupils' understanding of the values enshrined in the Catholic faith.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates from senior leaders. This enables them to be clear about what to do should an incident take place. Staff are very clear that safeguarding pupils is the responsibility of everyone in school. Staff feel that their knowledge of pupils and their families enables them to take effective but sensitive actions to support pupils' needs.

School records show that staff and leaders work closely with other agencies to ensure the safety and welfare of pupils and their families. Four members of staff, including you, have undertaken designated safeguarding lead training. This ensures that there is always someone available to support staff and pupils should the need arise.

Inspection findings

- As part of my lines of enquiry for the inspection, I asked about the progress of disadvantaged pupils. In particular, I asked how effectively you, other leaders and governors monitored pupil premium spending and its impact on the progress of this small group of pupils. School documentation demonstrated clearly that you and the head of school monitor the spending of pupil premium monies closely.
- While you and the head of school are very clear about the impact of pupil premium spending, governors do not have such a clear knowledge. This lack of understanding reduces governors' ability to challenge you as senior leaders. Governors are aware of this, and have resolved to improve their understanding in this area as soon as possible.
- Work in pupils' books and school progress data demonstrated a marked recent improvement in the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Much of this recent

improvement is due to the closely targeted support given to disadvantaged pupils across the school.

- A further focus raised in my lines of enquiry was how much opportunity pupils have to practise their literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum. Discussions with you and the head of school, and observations made in our joint learning walk and in pupils' books, showed that pupils have a range of opportunities to practise their numeracy and literacy skills. For example, the consistent use of technical language relating to mathematical concepts is constantly reinforced in mathematics lessons.
- The progress made by boys, particularly in reading and writing, became a further line of enquiry. This remains an area you recognise as needing further action and is clearly placed in your school development plan. You have already put in place a wide range of actions to improve the engagement of boys, including boy-friendly texts in the library, 'dads and lads' reading sessions and the introduction of forest school activities.
- These actions have resulted in some improvement to boys' attainment in reading and writing. However, you recognise that even more needs to be done. For example, the early years outside area lacks activities to develop and nurture boys' interest in literacy.
- The progress made by the most able pupils also became an inspection line of enquiry, due to a dip in the progress of this group in key stage 2 last year. Checks on pupils' progress, supported by work in books, demonstrate clearly that more pupils are on course to achieve higher standards at the end of this year, particularly in key stage 2. Middle leaders feel that opportunities to liaise with staff from St Cuthbert and The First Martyrs' school have helped develop staff confidence to plan and develop learning for this group of pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- more opportunities are in place for boys to improve their reading and writing skills, particularly in the early years
- teachers give pupils more opportunity to write longer pieces of work in order to improve their writing skills
- governors develop a clearer understanding of how pupil premium funding is spent and the impact this spending has on disadvantaged pupils' progress.

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

Marian Thomas
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, the lead inspector, accompanied by senior leaders, observed learning in classrooms across the school. A range of documents were scrutinised, including those relating to the school curriculum and safeguarding children. The lead inspector took into account responses from 21 members of staff, five pupils and 62 parents who responded to Ofsted's online surveys.