

10 September 2019

Mr Keith Powell
Headteacher
St Saviour's Catholic Primary and Nursery School
Seacombe Drive
Great Sutton
Ellesmere Port
Cheshire
CH66 2BD

Dear Mr Powell

Short inspection of St Saviour's Catholic Primary and Nursery 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 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 deputy, in partnership with an effective governing body, have recognised appropriate priorities for your school in order for it to continue to be good. The management have continued to develop the school and raise outcomes for the pupils in their care. The governing body is well informed and has a good understanding of what has been achieved and what remains to be done.

As a result of your effective leadership, staff enjoy working in the school. Morale is high, and there is a strong sense of team working. This was exemplified through the staff's collaborative input into the ongoing development of the new school curriculum. Staff are appreciative of how the school is being run and how you, as headteacher, care for both their welfare and their professional growth.

As I entered the school, I was immediately struck by the warm, welcoming and friendly atmosphere. Pupils feel safe and they are at the centre of what you and your staff do. You place great importance on their emotional and spiritual well-being, and this is reflected in many aspects of life in your school. Displays in classrooms and around the school promote the importance of emotional development; assemblies focus on values such as respect, tolerance and love. The wide range of extra-curricular opportunities support both pupils' physical well-being and their awareness of the world beyond Great Sutton. Sport has a high priority in your school, and pupils have numerous opportunities to participate in a wide range of activities, both during and after the school day. Visits to Delamere Forest,

Llangollen, Liverpool Museum, Jodrell Bank and the Lowry Centre are just some of the many places and experiences that your pupils enjoy each year.

Parents and carers are positive about the school and the support their children receive. Comments such as: 'St Saviours has instilled extremely good qualities into my children. They are happy to come to school and are keen to learn' and that the school is: 'always looking and finding new ways to improve the children's education' are typical of the many positive statements made about the school.

Pupils receive very good support for their social, emotional and academic development. This continues to be a real strength of the school. Pupils flourish in the caring, friendly and nurturing environment you have built up over the years. They thrive on the opportunities you provide for them to take on responsibility and develop life skills. The school council plays an active role in school life. The school shop and bank are central to the behaviour and rewards policy of the school. Your approach has provided pupils with opportunities to develop and understand the need for fiscal responsibility. Pupils earn 'saves' (the currency of the school) for tasks such as the completion of homework, helping others or having good attendance. These are banked and can be withdrawn to purchase items such as toys, stationery or books from the school shop. Slime appears to be the most popular purchase currently. Both the bank and shop are run by pupils, who undergo an application and interview process. This recruitment is very competitive, with the successful applicants being trained to keep ledgers and pupil accounts as well as develop their interpersonal skills. Positive behaviour is evident throughout the school. Pupils are happy and try hard in class.

The decision by school leaders and governors to expand the school to include provision for two-year-olds has proved to be a very positive step which is having a very encouraging impact on children's development and outcomes. The Nursery and two-year-old provision are also proving popular with parents. Around three quarters of the children entering the Reception class now come through this pathway. The early years is well staffed with qualified teachers and the provision is of a high quality. Each year, the number of children who reach a good level of development at the end of this stage of their education is significantly above the national average. As a result, many children are school ready when they start Year 1. Their communication and social skills are better developed than previously. This good start provides a firm basis for further improvement as pupils move through the school. Pupils' progress is now much stronger, and attainment is rising in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2.

You and your leaders have resolved the areas for improvement from the last inspection. There is no significant variation in the achievement of boys and girls. During my walks around the school, I noted that boys' engagement in lessons is now positive. On the whole, pupils' presentation of work is neat and clear in their English and mathematics books but could be improved in their topic books.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your staff place a high priority on keeping the pupils in your care safe. Leaders and governors have ensured that current safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Safeguarding records are of a high quality, regularly reviewed and up to date. All staff take responsibility for safeguarding and have received regular and appropriate training, including on how to keep pupils safe from the risk of exposure to extreme views. New staff receive training as part of their induction. As a result, everyone knows what they must do if they have any concerns. Staff are vigilant and know their pupils well.

Pupils understand the need to keep themselves safe, including online. They have a strong sense of moral purpose and are adamant that 'bullying is not nice'. Incidents of bullying are rare and followed up promptly.

Inspection findings

- Attendance has been an issue previously, especially persistent absence, which has been above the national average for the past two years. Due to a policy of rigorous challenge to parents and an incentive scheme for pupils linked to gaining credits (saves) to spend in the school shop, attendance has improved over the year and is now close to the national average. There has also been a reduction in persistent absence.
- Effective teaching of phonics provides pupils with a good start in developing their reading skills. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check is consistently above the national average.
- There is a strong focus on reading throughout the school. Pupils identified that they are encouraged to read regularly at home, and most do so. Staff check pupils' reading records and change their reading books regularly. Teachers ensure that the books they provide for pupils match their reading ability as well as provide new reading challenges. This work has led to steady improvements in pupils' reading skills in key stage 1 over time. This year, according to unvalidated national assessments, there has been further improvement in reading at key stage 1, with more pupils reaching the expected standard and one third of pupils achieving greater depth. At key stage 2 there has also been a steady improvement, with 83% of pupils attaining the standard for their age in their 2019 reading assessments. This is now above the national average.
- The very effective provision in the early years is beginning to have a positive impact on outcomes further up the school, especially in key stage 1. Outcomes in mathematics and writing have steadily improved and are now, according to unvalidated 2019 data, above the national average. There are also noticeable improvements, with more pupils achieving at greater depth. At key stage 2, writing remains consistently close to the national average. The recent focus on improving mathematics has led to an improvement in the numbers of pupils attaining the expected standard, with the proportion rising above the national average for the first time in the last few years. More pupils are also attaining greater depth. Overall, current pupils now make good progress as they move through the school.
- The school has been successful in ensuring that disadvantaged pupils make very good progress, and the difference between their outcomes and those of other pupils nationally no longer exists. In many cases, disadvantaged pupils are now outperforming non-disadvantaged pupils. Similarly, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress, especially in reading and mathematics.

- You are working with your subject leaders to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. There is a strong focus on English, mathematics and religious education. However, other subjects are not neglected. Provision for physical education is a strength of the school. Pupils have access to regular sport both during and after school, with 80% of underactive pupils engaged in extra-curricular activities. Pupils actively participate in a range of inter-school competitions in the local area, and all pupils continue with their swimming each year in key stage 2. Music provision is of a high quality, with pupils provided with specialist teaching. All pupils in Years 4 to 6 are taught to play a musical instrument. Art also has a high profile around the school. Pupils were able to talk to me about artists they had studied. They were able to explain the difference between landscape and abstract art, and how to use brush strokes to produce different effects.
- Although the curriculum has several strengths, provision in science, geography, history and design and technology is less effective, and pupils do not make comparable progress in these subjects as in the rest of the curriculum. Work in topic books is fragmented and lacks depth. Misconceptions are not always challenged. Pupils I talked with lacked clarity in their knowledge and understanding in these subjects, and their skills are not built up progressively. Pupils do gain some enjoyable experiences in these subjects, particularly through visits and enrichment opportunities, but these do not always link into a planned structure which deepens their learning. Leadership of these subjects is not fully effective. Future plans are not sufficiently focused on improving depth and coverage. The school is aware of this and is beginning to provide subject-specific training to enable improvements to be made.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they further develop a curriculum which is broad and balanced across the full range of subjects, including science, history, geography and design and technology, by:
 - developing subject leadership in these areas
 - ensuring that planning is focused on clear learning outcomes which will not only engage pupils but will also provide greater depth to their knowledge and understanding
 - providing subject-specific training to develop teachers' confidence to teach these subjects more effectively and to a greater depth.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Shrewsbury, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cheshire West and Chester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Leszek Iwaskow
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, members of the governing body, and staff and pupils from several classes. Accompanied by you and your deputy, I visited classrooms across the school to see the learning that was taking place. I looked at examples of pupils' work in their books. In particular, I looked at work in topic books. I also listened to middle-ability readers from Years 2 and 4. A range of documentation was considered, including the single central record, the school self-evaluation, the individual subject development plans and the school's own assessment information relating to both past and current progress. I took account of 20 responses from parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire Parent View, alongside the school's own survey. Consideration was also given to the Ofsted online questionnaires completed by 13 staff.