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Mrs Clare Orrell
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Dear Mrs Orrell

Short inspection of St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 June 2016, 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have established high expectations for pupils, which are reinforced by all staff and governors. Pupils benefit from consistently good teaching and encouragement from staff. They grow in confidence, enjoy school and develop a love of learning. Pupils' well-developed social skills and their positive attitudes are an asset to them and a credit to the school. All at the school do their best to uphold the school's mission statement, 'Living the Gospel in the spirit of love and respect'.

Your skills are complemented well by the skills of the deputy headteacher and other leaders in school. Governors attend training regularly, which keeps them well informed and enables them to provide effective support and challenge. Teachers plan activities carefully so pupils build on their knowledge and skills systematically in all subjects. The shared ambition and collective expertise ensure that the school keeps on improving and there is good capacity to sustain further improvement.

Subject leadership was identified as an area for improvement at the previous inspection and has developed significantly since then. Staff have attended training to develop their leadership skills and make sure that they keep up to date with changes to the national curriculum and assessment. They have a good understanding of the strengths and priorities for improvement in their subjects and provide good support to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement.

Pupils' achievement in writing was also identified as an improvement area. Pupils now have varied and stimulating opportunities to write in different styles across the curriculum. Specific and clear teaching helps them to develop fluent handwriting, a rich vocabulary, effective spelling strategies, and a good understanding of grammar and punctuation. In 2015, all pupils made expected progress in writing and an above-average proportion made better than expected progress. Attainment was in line with the national average. Attainment in the phonics (sounds and the letters they represent) screening check in Year 1 and in the grammar, punctuation and spelling test in Year 6 was well above average. Pupils' work shows that the vast majority achieve or exceed the standards expected for their age in writing in each year group.

In other subjects, work in pupils' books shows that they continue to make good progress in every year group. They work securely at standards that are expected for their age in subjects across the curriculum. The new marking policy is helpful in supporting pupils' further improvement. Children enter school with varied knowledge and skills and some have communication, language and fine motor skills that are slightly below those expected for their age. Children make good progress in the early years in all areas of learning because provision meets their needs well. An above-average proportion typically achieve a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year. Pupils of all abilities continue to make expected or better than expected progress across key stages 1 and 2. In 2015, attainment was above average in reading and mathematics, and above-average proportions made expected and better than expected progress.

The vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, the Ofsted online survey, are very positive in their views. They feel that their children are taught well, make good progress and the school is well led and managed. Typical comments refer to 'strong leadership from a headteacher who knows all the children by name' and 'teaching that builds on strengths, instils confidence and provides appropriate support'. The inspection confirms these positive views. A small minority of parents feel they could be better informed about their child's progress. A very small number are concerned that inappropriate behaviour by a few children can be disruptive. However, many pupils were spoken to during the inspection and they said their learning is rarely disrupted and inappropriate behaviour is dealt with swiftly and fairly.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff and governors have completed relevant training, including in the 'Prevent' duty, and know what to do if they have a concern. You have completed the relevant checks on all staff, students, volunteers and governors who work with children and these were seen during the inspection. Some administrative errors were corrected during the inspection. Records of behaviour and incidents are detailed. Parents are involved when necessary and actions have a positive impact. There are very few bullying incidents, and any are dealt with appropriately.

Pupils are and feel safe at school. They say that they can talk to adults in school about any concerns and feel confident they will act appropriately. Pupils know how to keep safe online and feel safe from bullying in school. They say bullying happens very occasionally but is dealt with quickly. All parents who responded to the Parent View agreed that children feel safe and are well looked after, stating for example: 'The school provides a caring, positive environment in which my children can learn and play safely.' Pupils' attendance is above average. The attendance of pupils who have special educational needs or disability has improved due to closer monitoring and support for families.

Inspection findings

- You provide encouraging and focused leadership that enables leaders at all levels to use their initiative and lead improvement. Self-evaluation is analytical and improvement planning focuses on the right priorities. The deputy headteacher, who has joined the school since the last inspection, has brought valuable ideas.
- Governors have a good range of relevant skills and expertise, which are used to best effect in various committees. They know the school very well and are aspirational for pupils.
- Governors make sure that additional funding for sports and the pupil premium, which the school receives to support disadvantaged pupils, has a positive impact. Disadvantaged pupils of all abilities benefit from small-group teaching and are funded to participate in enrichment activities. Sports funding is used to broaden pupils' experience and participation in many different sports and to extend teachers' skills.
- The performance of staff is managed effectively. Staff participate enthusiastically in training that extends their knowledge and skills and supports school improvement planning. Morale is high and all staff who responded to the questionnaire say that leaders do all they can to ensure a motivated, respected and effective teaching staff.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations and make sure that pupils deepen their learning at each stage. They have good subject knowledge and question and prompt pupils skilfully. They provide helpful feedback, so pupils know how they can improve their work.
- Teachers assess pupils' work accurately and use the information effectively to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Teachers' termly discussions with leaders ensure that pupils are provided with additional support swiftly if they are not making expected progress.
- You have identified that teaching and learning could be enhanced further by more effective use of technology.
- Detailed curriculum planning and effective teaching enable pupils to build on their knowledge and skills systematically in all subjects. For example, in science, pupils learn to make predictions, conduct experiments and evaluate their findings. In French and Spanish lessons, pupils develop their modern foreign language skills. Pupils' experiences are enriched by various additional activities in school and in after-school clubs. They have many opportunities to develop their sporting, artistic and musical talents.

- Pupils and teachers thoroughly enjoy themed weeks which involve all classes and culminate in performances and displays. Pupils enjoyed the 'Eight pieces' project which linked art and music, and the recent 'Shakespeare week' stimulated the imagination of pupils of all ages. The broad and balanced curriculum prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed exceptionally well. Pupils take great pride in their work and see the wonder in the world around them. They learn about different faiths and develop a good understanding of the values underpinning modern British society. They show respect for people of different faiths and from other cultures and recognise that, rarely, people may have extreme views that are contrary to the values of a diverse and tolerant society.
- The school has a relatively high proportion of pupils with statements or education, health and care plans, who are included fully in all aspects of work. They enjoy competing in sports competitions and are supported very effectively in lessons. They make very good progress academically and with their personal skills.
- The most able pupils say they are usually given activities that 'make us think and work hard'. Pupils of all abilities are provided with many opportunities to conduct their own research, carry out investigations and solve problems. Skilful questioning by teachers and additional challenges ensure that the most able pupils achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- Disadvantaged pupils make up a small proportion of each cohort and their attainment varies from year to year. Their progress is just as good as others in school and other pupils nationally.
- Pupils are eager to do their part in maintaining the harmonious atmosphere in school. They are polite and helpful and readily take on leadership roles. The active school council and 'house' structure provide many opportunities for pupils of all ages to work and play together. The vast majority of pupils who responded to the questionnaire said they enjoy learning, and all said they feel encouraged to be independent and take on responsibilities.
- Children make good progress in the early years. Teachers assess children's knowledge and skills accurately when they start school and build on them effectively through the provision of fun activities. Children are happy and feel safe because relationships are positive and encouraging.
- Early years provision is particularly effective in the Reception class, where activities are engrossing and take children's learning forward rapidly. The improvement of the outdoor area of the Nursery class is a current priority. Leaders are aware of the need to develop more stimulating activities and develop adults' roles in supporting children's learning outdoors.
- Partnership working with other schools is constructive and effective. The local consortium of 23 schools provides opportunities to moderate assessments, share best practice and provide support where appropriate.
- You have developed very effective links with secondary schools. Your initiative to enable pupils to continue work in their Year 6 books as they move into secondary school has proved effective. It has supported secondary teachers in making sure that teaching builds on what pupils already know and can do.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- children are provided with stimulating activities and adults are deployed effectively to support learning in the outdoor area of the Nursery class
- in line with your development plan, staff continue to develop their skills in the computing curriculum and use technology to enhance teaching and learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Jean Olsson-Law
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I had meetings with you and the deputy headteacher, subject leaders and three governors. I spoke to a local authority adviser by telephone. I visited five classes with you, where I observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils. I met with six pupils from key stage 2 and spoke to others during breaktimes. I spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school and took account of 25 responses to Parent View. I took account of 17 responses to the online questionnaire from staff and 55 responses from pupils. I looked at information about pupils' progress and attainment and at your self-evaluation and action planning. I evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep children safe and records of training, safeguarding checks and behaviour management.