

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr Jared Brading
Executive Headteacher
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Battersea
Este Road
London
SW11 2TD

Dear Mr Brading

Short inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Battersea

Following my visit to the school on 24 April 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are a reflective and thoughtful leader with a clear focus on school improvement. You lead by example and in line with your school mission statement to create 'a climate in which Christian values are taught, experienced, lived and celebrated'. You have established a team of senior and middle leaders who know the school's strengths and areas of development well. Your effective governing body work with you to help identify priorities and evaluate progress. They know the impact of improvement work because they visit the school regularly and talk to all members of staff and the local community. They ask challenging questions of you and other leaders, and value your 'open and transparent' leadership style.

Pupils told me how much they enjoy coming to school. They are polite, friendly and well-mannered. Pupils, including those who attend the specialist provision for autism spectrum disorders, contribute to the smooth running of the school. Parents and carers also report their children are happy, safe and are well looked after. Parents appreciate the inclusive atmosphere you have created, with one parent describing Sacred Heart as 'a home away from home'.

Together with senior leaders, you have worked on the areas identified at the time of the last inspection. Class teachers have received training, support and guidance on planning, teaching and assessment, which, together with improved systems and transition arrangements, have helped ensure improved outcomes for pupils in recent years.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is effective. The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Very effective recruitment systems are in place and all staff are aware of their duty to keep children safe. Leaders have ensured that regular training takes place for staff, so their knowledge and understanding of safeguarding is up to date. Governors are robust in checking that practice ensures pupils' safety.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and in the local community. They report that bullying is not an issue in school but know what to do if they, or one of their friends, are being bullied. They feel listened to by the adults around them and are confident they could share worries or concerns with staff and things would be dealt with effectively.

Inspection findings

- At the start of this inspection, we agreed upon key lines of enquiry. The first was to consider the effectiveness of the early years and whether it was preparing pupils well enough for the next stage of their education. This was because, despite achieving broadly in line with national levels at the end of 2017, there was a significant difference in the outcomes between boys and girls in some areas. I found this area of the school to be well led and managed. The curriculum on offer to children is appropriate and supports language development particularly well. Class teachers are now more involved in the tracking and analysis of data, and this is helping them to quickly identify next steps for learning. The early years leader is based in Year 1 and this has strengthened transitions from Reception classes into key stage 1. Some adults in the early years are particularly effective at bringing learning into children's play and asking questions that really get them thinking and exploring. Classrooms are well resourced and provide opportunities to develop mark-making and writing skills; however, this is limited in the outside area. As a result, opportunities to develop these skills when working and playing outside are limited. This disadvantages boys, in particular, as they often choose to be in the outside classroom engaged in activities such as construction, trains, wheeled toys, sand and water, and these areas do not provide sufficient opportunities to explore reading, writing or mark-making.
- I then went on to check how well leaders identify the barriers faced by disadvantaged pupils. This was because, despite the fact that the majority of pupils met and exceeded national expectations at the end of both key stages 1 and 2 last year, fewer disadvantaged pupils achieved as well. Generally, this group did not achieve as well as other pupils at the expected standard in science, reading, writing and mathematics by the end of both key stages. Additionally, a lower proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieved the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 1 than other pupils nationally. I found that leaders know pupils needs well and have put much in place to improve outcomes. Leaders have established good relationships with parents and provide information and workshops to help them support home learning. Pupils

receive additional teaching to help ensure that they achieve the ambitious targets set for them. In addition to academic progress, emotional and social needs are addressed, so pupils can develop the skills and resilience needed to become effective learners. School tracking shows gaps are closing over time. Disadvantaged learners are working at least at levels that would be expected nationally in most year groups with Year 2 and Year 6 showing clear improvement this year. The most able disadvantaged pupils also receive challenging targets and additional support to help accelerate progress. School data shows that this is making an impact and progress over time is evident.

- Strategies such as a structured phonics programme has helped ensure that all pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, learn to read swiftly. They quickly master basic skills and have exceeded national outcomes in the phonics screening assessment at the end of Year 1 in recent years. Higher-order reading skills are developed through guided comprehension sessions. Younger pupils use phonics to read and spell accurately. Older pupils read with increasing fluency and confidence. There are a range of quality texts available to challenge and motivate the most able readers. This is providing opportunities to work at greater depth.
- Writing skills are taught very effectively in literacy sessions. Handwriting is neat and pupils take pride in the presentation of their work. Pupils write for a range of reasons across the curriculum. Teachers provide pupils with advice on how to improve their writing and give them opportunities to edit and improve their work. The majority of pupils are working at levels that are equal to those expected nationally. Pupils' writing across the curriculum is not always of the same high quality as it is in writing books. Sometimes, the amount of writing pupils produce in other curriculum areas is limited and, as a result, they do not get to utilise the skills that are so well taught to them in English lessons. Pupils' outcomes are limited because they do not have enough opportunities to write at length across the curriculum.
- There has been a focus on helping pupils develop fast recall of times tables and, as a result, mental mathematics skills are improving across the school. Teachers model vocabulary effectively and pupils use it confidently when discussing their ideas. The new approach to the teaching of mathematics is helping to ensure that pupils have more opportunities to reason and explain their thinking in mathematics. At times, some of the most able mathematicians spend too long doing things they can already do. They can also spend time listening to input that does not challenge or teach them new things, before moving on to more challenging learning. However, leaders have identified this and are looking at ways to accelerate progress further for the most able learners.
- Finally, I considered how effective leaders' actions are in providing a challenging, broad and balanced curriculum. I found that pupils have opportunities to study the full national curriculum. Music is a particular strength within the school and pupils have opportunities to learn a range of instruments. In addition, the singing heard in assembly was exceptional. The quality of artwork around the school is of a good standard and the sports curriculum provides opportunities to learn a variety of competitive and recreational sports. Pupils are very positive about the topics they study and enjoy the trips they undertake. Visitors come into school

and enhance the curriculum further. The curriculum is broad and appropriate time is given to each subject. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to study subjects in greater depth. As a result, higher-attaining pupils are not challenged enough in some subjects, such as history, geography and science. The most able learners are sometimes not required to think harder or deal with the more complex ideas and concepts that would deepen their knowledge. Pupils are taught effectively how to write in literacy, interpret and present data in mathematics and use computers to support and present learning. However, they have few opportunities to make decisions as to how they might present their knowledge and learning across the curriculum. Teachers usually decide how pupils show their learning and this frequently limits the length and quality of what is produced. This also restricts opportunities for pupils to use the key skills that are well taught across the wider curriculum.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- in the early years, children working outside have more opportunities to read, write and mark-make in the learning activities and areas they choose
- teachers improve the level of challenge in the wider curriculum so all pupils, particularly the most able, are challenged more and have greater opportunities to deepen their knowledge
- pupils in key stage 2 have more autonomy to choose how best to present their learning so they have more opportunities to plan how to show their understanding, make decisions and write at length across the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Lou Anderson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with the executive headteacher, senior and subject leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority. I scrutinised pupils' work in English, mathematics, and a range of subject/topic books. I visited lessons in the early years, and key stages 1 and 2 to observe learning. I talked to pupils about their learning, both at formal and informal times throughout the day. I met with parents at the start of the school day and analysed responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including

the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plans, pupils' attendance information, documentation related to safeguarding, and the school's assessment and behaviour information.