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Lucille Charles
Headteacher
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Dear Lucille Charles

Short inspection of St Bonaventure's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 February 2017, 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 June 2013.

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 senior leaders have a clear vision for the quality of education that St Bonaventure's will provide for its pupils. During my discussions with senior leaders, formal and informal, and during our visits to classrooms, what came over was a strong commitment to do the very best for your pupils.

Leaders, staff and governors place clear emphasis on nurturing pupils' wider personal development as well as their academic well-being. The school's vision statement, 'Striving to be the best we can, guided by the light of Christ', is prominent, not just visually but in underpinning everyone's work. The shared commitment to educating the 'whole child' shines through wherever you step. It is a distinctive feature of the school and was one of the strengths that parents singled out when I spoke to them before school started.

Your parents hold the school in high regard: they appreciate the steps that you and your staff go to in making the school a happy, safe and supportive community. None had anything even mildly negative to say about the school. These consistently positive views were echoed by those who completed the online questionnaire, Parent View, with wholly positive comments far outweighing those that were not.

There is an excited buzz in the playground as pupils gather before school.

Relationships are good and they mingle well with each other across age groups. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning. They are friendly and polite. Those who spoke to me when I visited classrooms showed interest in their learning and were proud of what they had achieved so far in the lesson.

You and the senior leaders have successfully tackled the areas that were identified at the last inspection. When evaluating teaching and visiting lessons, you now focus on the school's current priorities. This year, for example, these have centred on ways of improving aspects of writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress in Year 3 is no longer an issue. Leaders' focus is very much on the progress that pupils make in striving to bring about above-average progress for all groups across the school. You are not quite there yet. The steps you are taking are appropriate but they need more time to show their full impact.

There were many strong aspects to pupils' performance in 2016 and no marked weaknesses. You have reflected on the new assessments, introduced last year, to check how successfully teaching caters for different attainment groups as they move through the school. You have introduced an approach where each teacher has an action plan, with targeted pupils clearly identified, and you are expecting teachers to adapt their teaching accordingly. We saw this happening in practice.

My overriding impression is of a school where leaders are by no means complacent and are constantly striving to make the school even better.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and other leaders place strong emphasis on keeping pupils safe. Members of staff who met with me were clear about what to do should they become concerned about a child. I could see from concern forms that staff are alert to signs, such as an unexplained change in behaviour, and are quick to bring any concerns, no matter how minor they may seem, to your attention. Pupils who need extra protection are well supported. Detailed records are kept and you work closely with other relevant professionals to support these pupils.

Parents appreciate the caring and supportive atmosphere in the school and many who added written comments to their questionnaires praised the way that the school promotes pupils' emotional well-being and safety.

All checks are carried out appropriately when recruiting staff. These are recorded meticulously. Staff receive training at the required intervals and are kept regularly up to date with key documents. They receive training to help them understand the risks that can face children should they encounter extreme views and practices.

Inspection findings

- We discussed the main lines of enquiry at the start of the day. The first was to examine how well senior and other leaders were focusing on pupils' learning and progress when considering the effectiveness of teaching. Secondly, I explored

how any children who left Reception with weaker skills and knowledge made progress in key stage 1. I also considered how successfully leaders, including governors, had picked up on any relatively weaker aspects from the 2016 data and what action had been taken. Finally, I examined the effectiveness of safeguarding and to what extent there was a strong safeguarding culture in the school.

- Pupils in Year 6 reached above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This was also the case at Year 2. You have analysed pupils' performance in the 2016 tests and assessments in good detail to pinpoint what could be even better.
- You are examining pupils' progress carefully. Your analysis has, however, focused more on key stage 2 than on key stage 1. You have not given as much consideration to the progress that pupils make from when they leave Reception to the end of Year 2, especially for those who have some catching up to do. Although a small group in number, some of these pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, who are now in Year 3, are starting to make better progress, but not all.
- You have been quick to identify any pupils whom you want to see making better progress, some of whom are the most able pupils. In 2016, these pupils made very good progress in reading, but not to the same extent in writing and mathematics.
- You cited the work that leaders and staff have done to improve pupils' writing and mathematics, following your evaluation of pupils' performance last year. You have made changes to how staff are deployed to provide additional challenge for pupils who could be reaching a higher standard. Teachers are drawing on different approaches to inject more support for pupils who need it, even if only for a short period in the lesson. We saw examples of several initiatives working successfully in the classrooms we visited.
- During our visits to classrooms, we saw pupils developing their stamina as writers, with many producing sustained writing. Others were concentrating hard on mathematics problems, using their reasoning skills to come up with possible solutions. In all lessons, and sessions where adults were working with small groups or individuals, pupils were working hard, persevering and sustaining their interest and concentration.
- The English and mathematics leaders are knowledgeable about their subjects and what is going well. They carry out a range of monitoring activities that give them a clear picture of what could be strengthened even further. They are clear about their next steps, having evaluated the pupils' performance in the new assessments that were introduced last year. They are focusing on specific and appropriate priorities in their respective subjects. More recent initiatives just need more time to have an effect, to bring about consistently good progress for pupils with different prior attainment.
- Your governors have a clear and comprehensive knowledge of the school's work. They are passionate about the school and determined that it nurtures pupils' personal development as well as their academic potential. They have worked

together with teaching staff to identify the qualities and attributes they wish to see in a child educated at St Bonaventure's and published a leaflet for parents, outlining this vision. Senior leaders referred, unprompted, to governors asking specific questions about pupils' progress, which showed that governors are familiar with the school's performance information and are using it to raise pertinent questions.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the revised approaches, brought in to improve pupils' progress, work successfully so that more groups make above-average progress, particularly in writing and mathematics
- pupils make consistently good progress from the end of Reception to the end of Year 2, especially those who have some catching up to do in key stage 1.

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

Yours sincerely

Margaret Dickinson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with the senior leadership team to discuss your focus since the last inspection in improving the school. I observed the start of the school day and talked to parents in the playground to gauge their views of the school. You, the deputy headteacher and I visited classrooms together to observe teaching and learning in most years, including Reception. During these visits, I spoke informally to pupils and looked at some of their workbooks. Meetings were held with governors, teachers responsible for leading English and mathematics and the school's business manager. We met to discuss safeguarding and reviewed some case studies. Responses to Parent View were considered, alongside the questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.