

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



3 April 2018

Mr Madia
Principal
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School
Brays Lane
Stoke
Coventry
West Midlands
CV2 4DW

Dear Mr Madia

No formal designation inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Following my visit with Michael Appleby, Ofsted Inspector, to your academy on 6 March 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the quality of leadership and management and its impact on outcomes for pupils.

Evidence

We held discussions with a range of senior and middle leaders. In these discussions we explored the performance of the school, including published data and the school's current assessment information. We looked at the impact of leadership and management on outcomes for pupils. We carried out learning walks with senior leaders that involved visiting a wide range lessons in the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2. We also carried out a book scrutiny to evaluate the quality of pupils' progress. Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. The lead inspector met with a number of local academy committee members, as well as meeting separately with the chair of the multi-academy company. One inspector met with a group of pupils from key stage 2. We also spoke to parents at the start of the school day. A range of documentation was also analysed, including information about attendance and behaviour, reports from external reviews and minutes of local academy committee meetings.

Having considered the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The overall effectiveness of the school remains outstanding.

Context

The number of pupils on roll is 420. In 2014 the school expanded from 45 to 60 pupils in each year group. The level of deprivation is above average and 21% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals in the last six years. Almost half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average. There are higher rates of pupil mobility than the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is similar to the national average. The school does not encounter problems recruiting or retaining staff. Recently, a high number of staff have been away from school on maternity leave.

The last full inspection of the school was in September 2013, when it was judged to be outstanding. Since then, there have been some significant changes in leadership, governance and in the curriculum. In 2014 the school became a teaching school, and in 2015 the school converted to become an academy within the Romero Catholic Multi Academy Company (MAC).

On conversion to becoming an academy in 2015, the governing body was reconstituted to become the local academy committee. This committee operates the local governance of the school with delegated functions related to aspects such as: the Catholic life of the school, teaching and learning, outcomes for pupils and providing a link to parents. This local academy committee reports directly to the MAC's board of directors.

Content

In November 2017, you were appointed in the role of principal from your previous position of head of school. Your inspirational leadership has helped to guide the school through a period of transition and has contributed significantly to sustaining an outstanding quality of education. Several leaders, including the executive principal, have worked through the teaching school to share your school's best practice successfully with other schools.

A significant proportion of children enter Reception below the typical levels expected for their age in language, communication and literacy. Some pupils enter with little grasp of English. These pupils are extremely well supported and acquire the language they need to access learning. Pupils get off to an exceptional start in the early years. This is superbly built upon by strong teaching in key stages 1 and 2. Historically, attainment at the end of key stage 2 has been well above levels seen nationally. However, in 2016 at the end of key stage 2, attainment and progress

declined in some areas. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading and the higher standard in mathematics dropped to just below the national average. In 2017, this decline was successfully addressed because attainment has risen and is back above the national averages.

You acknowledged that the results seen in 2016 were not good enough, particularly in reading at the end of key stage 2. This particular cohort of pupils has a high number of pupils who entered the school during key stage 2 and with a range of complex needs. Some of these pupils found the demands of the new national curriculum test particularly challenging. However, you have not used this as an excuse. You have worked very effectively with other leaders, and teachers, to improve the teaching of reading. Consequently, provision for reading better meets the needs of all pupils, particularly for those pupils who speak English as an additional language.

Pupils display high levels of enthusiasm for the books that they read. They love acquiring new language and debating with their peers about what is happening in the text. Teachers use excellent subject knowledge to demonstrate particular reading skills to pupils, such as inference and prediction. Some of the teaching of reading is exceptional and worthy of sharing among other staff in school. The impact of the work to improve reading is seen in pupils' books, they make strong progress in their comprehension skills. In 2017 at the end of key stage 2, attainment and progress was above the national average. Your assessment information shows that attainment is also high in other year groups.

We looked at the teaching of writing and the quality of writing in pupils' books to see if it matched the published data. Pupils' progress and the quality of their writing are outstanding. Over the last five years, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 in writing has been above, or well above, the levels seen nationally. Over the same period of time pupils' progress has been significantly better than the national average and often in the top 10% of all schools nationally. Teachers use highly secure subject knowledge to demonstrate to pupils how to structure sentences, develop exciting vocabulary and apply accurate punctuation. Pupils enjoy the writing process and are motivated to develop their own ideas across a range of genres. Pupils' excellent writing skills are evident across the curriculum and particularly within religious education lessons. You have also ensured that teacher assessment is accurate through a range of moderation procedures within school and across other schools in the multi-academy company. Several of your leaders are used as lead moderators within the local authority.

In 2017 at the end of key stage 1, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected and higher standards was broadly in line with levels seen nationally. Historically, attainment has been above the national averages at the end of this key stage. You provided convincing assessment information to show that this cohort of pupils has made strong progress from their low-attaining starting point on entry to Reception. Two thirds of the cohort is boys and nearly half are pupils who speak English as an additional language. Some of these pupils have particularly complex needs.

Interventions to boost their speech, language and phonics have been successful, and have provided this group of pupils with foundations to thrive in key stage 2.

Central to the continued success of the school is the excellent capacity and determination of leaders. You respond quickly and effectively to any weaknesses that arise. Self-evaluation is precise and links coherently to appropriate priorities in the school improvement plan. Part of the ongoing success can be attributed to the high-quality processes in place to improve teaching. You and other leaders work closely with teachers to analyse their classroom practice and review the progress that pupils are making. Staff appreciate contributing to this process and agreeing precise next steps required for their teaching. High-quality training also has a good impact on the quality of teaching. Consequently, subject knowledge is highly secure and teaching is very strong across the school.

You and the executive principal have carefully considered the development of leaders, so that the school has strong capacity for further improvement. The area for improvement identified in the previous inspection report was to spread more widely leaders highly developed skills, so as to contribute further to local school improvement. The emergence of the teaching school and multi-academy company has enabled leaders to share their good practice beyond the school. While established leaders have been doing this external work, new leaders have come to the fore. You put in place excellent training for new leaders, so that they can hit the ground running in their roles. Senior and middle leaders are highly effective and make an excellent contribution to the continued improvement of teaching.

The local academy committee provide an excellent level of challenge and support. Most of the committee members were on the governing body prior to academy conversion. They have a deep understanding of the school. Other members that have joined later are skilled and absolutely committed. Meetings and visits to school are productive and show that leaders are asked probing questions about the impact of their work. The local academy committee commented that being part of the multi-academy company has added value to the school, particularly in relation to making financial savings and for collaboration between staff. Committee members have also found it useful to have a 'link director' who acts as a conduit between the committee and the multi-academy company.

A high number of parents were spoken to by inspectors at the start of the school day. They were unwavering in their praise of the staff and the leadership of the school. These views matched the positive responses that were received on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Comments from parents included: 'It is a superb school because staff go that extra mile' and 'We love this school, it's fantastic. It is like a family and teaching is strong.'

Another noticeable strength is the quality of the provision in the early years. Children get off to a superb start because staff provide exceptional care, guidance and support. Teaching is highly individualised. Children who require additional

support to acquire language receive precise input and make rapid progress. Activities inside and in the outdoor area stimulate children's curiosity and provide a high level of challenge. Children's writing develops particularly well over time.

Pupils are a credit to the school. Several parents commented on how well the pupils are taught morals and values. This was evident in pupils' behaviours and attitudes during lessons and at social times. They are polite, well-mannered and mature. Their work ethic in lessons is terrific. Pupils demonstrate an impressive self-will to contribute to discussions and produce their best work. These attitudes make a strong contribution to their excellent personal and academic progress.

External support

External links have been considerably strengthened by the school's achievement of teaching school status in 2015. Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School is the lead school in the Blue Sky Teaching School Alliance. This work has enabled staff and leaders to get involved in wide-ranging school-to-school support.

The Romero Catholic Multi Academy Company provides strategic support to the school. You commented that the level of communication and challenge has improved over time. A range of processes is in place to hold the school to account for the quality of education at the school. For example, you talked of an effective level of challenge during principal meetings and through core committee meetings, where aspects such as finance and standards are discussed. There is a sufficient understanding of the lines of accountability between the multi-academy company, the local academy committee and school leaders. However, this understanding could be sharper.

The school also receives wider school improvement support from the archdiocese and the local authority. Leaders feel that this adds further capacity and challenge to the development of the school.

Priorities for further improvement

- Leaders should ensure that the examples of exceptional practice in the teaching of reading are shared across the school, so that the teaching of reading continues to improve and attainment continues to rise.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local academy committee, chair of the board of directors, the director of education for the Archdiocese of Birmingham, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Coventry. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Matt Meekin
Her Majesty's Inspector