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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



5 February 2018

Mr Greg Waters
Headteacher
The Bishops' Church of England and Roman Catholic Primary School
Beardsley Drive
North Springfield
Chelmsford
Essex
CM1 6ZQ

Dear Mr Waters

Short inspection of The Bishops' Church of England and Roman Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 January 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 October 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection.

Your mission statement of 'live fully, laugh often, learn deeply, love as God loves you and let your light shine' sits at the heart of your school community. You passionately and unreservedly believe that the children and pupils should thrive through a love and passion for learning. Consequently, you have invested significant time and effort in providing a rich and vibrant curriculum, including an extensive extra-curricular programme, and a variety of high-quality trips and visits. The school is awash with examples of pupils' high-quality work and successes. Children and pupils look forward to coming to school and they enjoy learning.

You and your staff 'go the extra mile' for children and pupils in your care, both in the classroom and to support them beyond the school. You and the team fully embrace the diversity of your community and uphold the rights of different views, beliefs and lifestyles. As a result, pupils work and play together well. Almost all say that behaviour and bullying are not problems in school and that when there are problems, such as name-calling, staff deal with issues well.

You are ably supported by your astute deputy headteacher, governors and staff. Together, you ensure that any changes that you make in the school are well thought out. Consequently, every action is successfully leading to long-term positive

and sustained differences to the school's provision. This ensures that children and pupils in all year groups receive a high-quality standard of education and make consistently strong progress. In particular, outcomes in key stage 2 have continued to improve in the last two years, with some exceptional progress and high attainment in 2017 in reading, writing and mathematics. Most notably, pupils in Year 6 have made much better progress in mathematics in both 2016 and 2017 than other pupils have nationally.

Despite the obvious strengths in the school's provision, you and your deputy headteacher refuse to be complacent. You have identified that there is still further work needed to improve attendance, most notably for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. You have also identified that, although the wider curriculum is a strength in the school's provision, there is still further work required to develop the monitoring and/or assessment opportunities within this area so you can ensure that pupils are challenged to apply skills and knowledge more deeply in all subjects.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, as the designated safeguarding leader, ensure that staff are well trained in identifying and reporting any concerns about the well-being of pupils. Written records are kept well, and act as a good chronology of the actions taken by you and others in keeping children and pupils safe over the course of time. You and your staff work effectively with external agencies to support pupils, including specialist teams for social, emotional and mental health needs. You are particularly tenacious in challenging external agencies where you have ongoing or urgent concerns about the welfare of your children and pupils.

The checks that you make before you recruit staff are appropriate and in line with statutory guidance. We did discuss some minor ways in which you could sharpen this work to make your practice even stronger. Your governors bring real expertise and challenge to you regarding safeguarding, and this has led to significant improvements in your administration of safeguarding in the last few years.

You constantly review the curriculum to ensure that you are keeping up to date with emerging national and regional issues, so that pupils are routinely taught how to keep themselves safe. For example, you have made some recent changes to support older pupils to understand healthy relationships and body image.

Inspection findings

- My first lines of enquiry to ascertain that the school remained good were to review the provision for disadvantaged pupils and for those who have SEN and/or disabilities in the school. These pupils generally represent very small numbers in each year group, although this can vary quite considerably. Owing to this, published data does not give a clear picture of the progress that these pupils make across the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress during their time at the school. A

significant number enter the school in Reception with skills and abilities lower than those typical for their age. While some do not achieve the expected standard by the end of the year, they make considerable progress in that time. In particular, the high-quality learning journals track meticulously the progress that children make, and support effective planning for each child's next steps in learning.

- Together, we particularly reviewed the progress that these pupils make in key stage 1 and the support that they are given to catch up. A number of these pupils have significant needs and these are being well met by a range of staff, including pastoral staff who are specifically focusing on disadvantaged pupils' social and emotional needs.
- Published assessment information shows that, in 2017, disadvantaged pupils' progress in Year 6 was particularly strong in mathematics and reading. The progress that pupils made in writing would appear to be a relative weakness in pupils' achievement. However, when reviewing the very good progress of pupils who arrived at the school midway through the year, it is clear that writing is very much a strength of key stage 2 for disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are very well supported during their time at the school. You have worked very effectively to use the most recent published guidance to identify pupils' needs correctly. Staff know pupils well and develop effective strategies to help them learn. Any additional support is well thought out, and closely reviewed by your special educational needs leader. For example, focused intervention is making a real difference to pupils' confidence and ability to read fluently, as well as helping them to catch up with other pupils in their reading and comprehension skills.
- When reviewing both of these lines of enquiry, we discussed the school's work on raising these pupils' attendance. You have identified that this is a key priority for the school. Consequently, you have invested additional funding into more intensive pastoral care for key stage 1 and 2 pupils, with a specific focus on attendance. This is starting to make a difference to some vulnerable pupils' attendance. However, the school's work on improving pupils' attendance is still not consistently sharp, especially in some of its work with parents and carers, and use of external agencies.
- My final line of enquiry was to look at how the school has acted on the areas identified in the previous inspection, most notably the development of staff and the sharing of best practice in teaching across the school.
- You have created a vibrant environment for staff development, where staff feel safe and confident to try new things and develop their practice. This is bringing continued and sustained improvements in the school and ensuring that staffing recruitment and retention remain remarkably strong. Staff are competent and passionate about their work. Staff's responses to the Ofsted survey confirm that almost all are very positive about their experiences in the school.
- In particular, you have encouraged staff to find creative and meaningful ways to develop the wider curriculum. This has led to sustained improvements across all subject areas. You are rightly proud of the high-quality and wide range of

experiences that pupils get, especially, but not exclusively, in sport, music, dance, drama and art. Your parent-teacher association is also particularly proactive in fundraising for the school. You have used this money skilfully to develop in-house resources, especially in the quality of the playground and sporting equipment.

- Nonetheless, you have rightly identified that, in your efforts to reduce staffing workload and ensure that staff focus their efforts on classroom practice and raising standards, you have not yet developed monitoring and/or assessment in the wider curriculum as thoroughly as in English and mathematics. This is a priority in your school development plan.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to develop and sharpen strategies to raise the attendance of pupils, most notably disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities
- they develop the monitoring and assessment of the wider curriculum, so that leaders and governors know precisely the quality and challenge being provided to pupils to apply skills and develop knowledge in the foundation subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Kim Pigram
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with you, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, and a number of subject leaders. I also met with members of the governing body. You and I visited a number of classes, including Reception and your childcare provision, Little Fingers. We looked at pupils' work while we were in some of those lessons. There were too few responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire to report on. As a result, I spoke with a significant number of pupils throughout the day. I took account of the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Parent View, as well as the 43 responses to the staff questionnaire. I reviewed a range of school documentation, including information related to safeguarding and pupils' progress.