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Miss Pauline Glancy
Headteacher
Botwell House Catholic Primary School
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Dear Miss Glancy

Short inspection of Botwell House Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 June 2018 with Meena Walia, Ofsted Inspector, 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 September 2014.

This school continues to be good.

You have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You and your senior leadership team are accurate and honest in your evaluation of the school and you have clear and strategically sound plans to secure further improvements. The middle leaders are a strength of the school, through careful training and support; they have ownership of the initiatives in place to deepen the progress of pupils. They evaluate the impact of these initiatives effectively to support overall improvement.

A culture of positive challenge is provided by the governing body, which supports and holds the senior leadership team to account. Governors have a clear understanding of areas of focus for the school and assist you and your senior team in your drive for improvement.

Pupils are proud of their learning community and genuinely enjoy the experience of learning. They are articulate, polite and kind, and value each other, the people around them and the opportunities they are given. They are enthused by additional activities offered by the school, such as 'The Daily Mile' or participation in 'Book Week', and understand how these enhance their learning.

The previous inspection report asked the school to focus on the most able pupils. The school has been largely successful in this, and outcomes for the most able at key stage 2 have improved. Even so, teachers' expectations of writing are not

consistently high across all subjects. Additionally, the pupil premium funding is not always used to support eligible pupils in their specific area of need.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders and governors understand their statutory responsibility to keep children safe and see this as a high priority. All staff employment checks have been completed, and referrals to external agencies are appropriate and timely.

Online safety is a high priority and school leaders work closely with pupils on this issue. The school uses tools such as anti-bullying week, in addition to regular curriculum time, to ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe. Staff are aware of safeguarding procedures, through effective and regular training. If they have a concern about a pupil, they know the correct action to take.

Inspection findings

- We were interested to explore what the school is doing in mathematics, especially for disadvantaged pupils and girls. The 2017 Year 6 test results showed that disadvantaged pupils and some girls did not make as much progress as their peers. We visited lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at their books. We met with middle leaders and met with senior leaders to discuss how effectively the pupil premium funding is being used.
- As a result of your comprehensive monitoring, you have focused on developing the teaching of reasoning skills and mastery in mathematics. Teachers are well trained in this initiative and leaders ensure that there is a consistent approach to lessons. Pupils' exercise books show that this is already having an impact in mathematics and related subjects, and outcomes for girls and disadvantaged pupils are improving. Science lessons follow an investigative structure which allows pupils to apply the skills learned and develop their answers to include reasoning. Even so, the barriers to achievement for some disadvantaged pupils are not clearly identified, and so the pupil premium funding is not always used to support eligible pupils in their specific area of need.
- We also explored what the school is doing to raise standards in writing, especially for disadvantaged pupils. The 2017 teacher assessment data shows that this group of pupils did not make as much progress as their peers.
- Leaders have a strategic plan in place to improve writing. Initiatives include the use of an online writing programme and an increased focus on grammar. Pupils are given support to understand different writing techniques prior to lessons so they can apply these techniques in the work they produce. They are given opportunities to write at length in English and religious studies lessons. All pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, produce high-quality writing, with opportunities to use a range of vocabulary. Even so, opportunities for extended independent writing are limited to these subjects, and so pupils do not apply these writing skills to a range of situations across the curriculum.

- We also explored what the school is doing to support reading, especially for girls. The 2017 test results for the end of the key stage 2 showed that girls did not perform as well as boys.
- We found that there is a culture of reading in the school. Younger pupils read with growing fluency, using their phonics skills to tackle new and challenging words. Older pupils read with confidence and interest and enjoy the experience of reading both fiction and non-fiction books. Teachers have developed the choice of texts to meet the interests of all pupils; this has helped both girls and boys to increase their curiosity in and enthusiasm for reading. Additional initiatives such as authors coming into the school to meet with pupils have engaged pupils further. Consequently, progress in reading, including that of girls, is improving.
- Finally, we considered what the school is doing to support most-able pupils to make the progress they are capable of. We were interested in this because the proportion of those achieving greater depth in key stage 1 is below the national average, and the previous inspection report asked the school to focus on the most able.
- The school has developed 'greater depth' intervention groups to strengthen the progress of individuals. As a result of effective staff training, most-able pupils are encouraged to extend their thinking in lessons through 'challenge' questions. The school has set up the 'Botwell University' to raise the aspirations of all pupils and help them to understand their future options in education. Consequently, outcomes for the most able pupils are improving. The strategies employed are embedded in the culture of the school and are clearly sustainable over time.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the pupil premium is used effectively to diminish the differences in attainment with other pupils for all of those who are eligible
- teachers' expectations for pupils' extended writing are as high in subjects across the curriculum as they are in English and religious studies.

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

Yours sincerely

Amy Jackson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We met with you, other senior leaders, teachers and staff. We also met with the chair of the governing body and spoke to the local authority interim head of school improvement by telephone. We scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, information on the use of the pupil premium and the register of the checks made on staff. We spoke to pupils, listened to them read and evaluated the views of the 50 pupils who completed the questionnaire. We visited lessons across the school and looked at pupils' work. We spoke to parents and carers and evaluated the views of the 26 parents who completed Parent View and of the 53 staff who completed the staff questionnaire.