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27 June 2019

Miss Sheryl Wrigley
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Wrigley

Short inspection of St Aloysius Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 18 June 2019, 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 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You provide strong leadership for the staff and have high aspirations for the pupils. You are well supported by the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher and you are working effectively to develop the skills of the middle leaders. There is a very clear sense of team work within the school.

The great majority of the parents and carers I spoke with were very positive about the school. All the parents who responded to the online questionnaire said they would recommend the school to others. Typical comments included; 'I have nothing but praise for every member of staff', 'It's a well-run school with lovely teachers', 'Our child is well cared for, well stimulated and thriving under the care of wonderful teachers.' All the staff who completed the online survey said they enjoy working at the school. There was a strong feeling that the school is well led and managed and that staff receive good support.

The governors are able, committed and well informed. They visit the school regularly to talk with staff and pupils, to observe lessons and to look at books. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school improvement partner works very effectively with the governors to give them an independent view of developments and to provide training to suit their particular needs.

The standard of behaviour is very high. Pupils relate well to each other, to staff and to visitors. They show respect for each other and the school environment, which is

kept beautifully clean by the site staff. In lessons, pupils work with a high level of concentration and enthusiasm. This was particularly evident when Year 2 pupils used their previously learned vocabulary to sort objects according to their shape and colour, entirely through the medium of Spanish. All the pupils who met with me said that they enjoy coming to school. They were particularly enthusiastic about the wide range of clubs, trips, residential experiences and other activities available to them. They said that they learn about the major religions of the world. However, they do not visit places of worship other than Christian churches. This is an area for improvement.

At the time of the last inspection, leaders were asked to: check on the impact of the pupil premium funding on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils; ensure that all statutory policies are up to date; increase the proportion of pupils working at the expected level in reading; and to ensure that every teacher has the highest expectations of pupils. You have succeeded in implementing each of these recommendations.

The school has very clear systems for checking on the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Governors challenge staff regularly over the performance of these pupils. You were able to demonstrate how the additional help given to particular groups or individuals has led to improvements in their performance. Your policies are reviewed regularly, are up to date and are published on the website. In the teaching of reading, you have put an increased emphasis on improving speed, fluency and comprehension. You were able to provide convincing proof of the positive impact this approach has had on raising the standard of pupils' reading. Through regular lesson observations, examinations of books, discussions with pupils and checks by external consultants, you ensure that all teachers have high expectations of pupils. You have not hesitated to take decisive action where this is not the case. As a result, all the parents who responded to Parent View said that their children are taught well and are making good progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff and governors have received the required training on safeguarding. The school has stringent systems for checking on the suitability of adults to work with children and all visitors are carefully vetted on arrival. The site is secure and access to the building is closely monitored. The road crossing outside the school is well supervised.

All the parents and staff who completed the online surveys said that children are safe at the school. All the children who met with me said that they feel safe in school and on the way to and from home. They know about the potential dangers of using the internet and social media, and what to do if they come across any unsuitable materials. The monthly newsletter to parents reinforces the messages about how to ensure online safety. Pupils are taught about road safety and they all learn to swim. Therefore, they know how to keep themselves safe in and near water. However, they are not taught about rail safety. This is an area for improvement.

Pupils say there is some bullying at the school but this is sorted quickly and effectively. All the staff and almost all the parents who responded to the online questionnaires were happy with the way in which the school deals with incidents of bullying. Pupils know which staff to contact if they have any concerns or worries and are confident that they will receive any help they need.

You and the staff work closely and effectively with external agencies to provide appropriate support for pupils or families who need additional help. Several parents talked about how they had benefited from this.

Inspection findings

- Since the last inspection, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of the early years has been below average. I wanted to know what the current situation is. You were able to demonstrate that most children enter the early years with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age, especially where language and communication skills are concerned. In previous years, pupils made progress, but this was not enough to bring them up to the national average. At the beginning of this academic year, you made significant changes to the early years provision. These have led to clear improvements. The most recent figures, which have been checked externally, show that the performance of current early years children is in line with the most recent national average. This was confirmed by our visit to classrooms. The children in the early years were clearly making good progress. They were able to apply their knowledge of number to solve simple addition and subtraction problems. They planned the sequence of events in a story and wrote a series of sentences with a good degree of accuracy. They also performed simple experiments to show that the speed with which floating objects moved across the water varied according to how hard they blew on them.
- For the last four years, the results in the phonics screening check at the end of key stage 1 have been positive. In 2018, the proportion of Year 1 pupils reaching the expected standard was above the national average. I was interested to know whether this good level of performance is being maintained. You demonstrated that the pupils currently in Year 1 are performing at least as well as their counterparts at this time last year.
- Pupils' attainment and progress in key stages 1 and 2 have fluctuated in recent years. Last year's results showed improvement. I wanted to know whether this is being maintained. Your figures show that it is, especially in reading and writing. This was borne out by the work in books, which showed that pupils of all abilities are now progressing well.
- Over the last four years, attendance has been too low and persistent absence too high. We discussed the actions you have taken to improve the situation and what impact they have had. Improving attendance is a very high priority in the school development plan and you have been very creative in developing a range of strategies to provide incentives not only for pupils but also for parents. The impact of these is slowly being felt. Comparisons between this year and last year show that the proportion of pupils achieving 100% attendance each week is

rising. In all year groups, apart from one, the proportion of pupils reaching the school's targets of 97% attendance has also increased.

- The final area we discussed was the organisation of the curriculum. You and the middle managers are currently working on a radical revision of the curriculum. This focuses very clearly on ensuring progress and development in each subject, while building further on the wide range of enrichment activities that are central to the experiences you offer to pupils. An impressive aspect of this process is the way you are drawing on the views of parents and pupils, as well as all the staff, in order to ensure that the curriculum meets local needs.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all pupils are regularly taught how to keep themselves safe near railway lines
- pupils visit the places of worship of a wide range of faiths in order to prepare them further for life in modern Britain.

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

Yours sincerely

Aelwyn Pugh
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I examined a range of documentation and discussed your self-evaluation and safeguarding arrangements with you, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher. I met four governors, including the chair of the governing body, and spoke with representatives of the local authority and the archdiocese. I discussed the curriculum with you and three subject leaders. I discussed attendance and behaviour with you, the deputy headteacher and the learning mentor. You and I visited lessons to observe teaching and look at books. I met eight pupils, chosen at random from key stage 2, and spoke to staff and pupils as I walked round the school. I examined the 22 responses to the staff survey, the 21 responses to the pupils' survey and the 24 responses to Parent View. I also spoke to 18 parents and family members as they brought their children to school.