

10 September 2019

Mrs Rachel Fender
Headteacher
Cheadle Catholic Junior School
Conway Road
Cheadle Hulme
Cheadle
Cheshire
SK8 6DB

Dear Mrs Fender

Short inspection of Cheadle Catholic Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 17 July 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. The school has had a period of temporary leadership arrangements during which both you and your deputy headteacher have held acting positions. Since your appointment as the headteacher in May 2019 you have made a significant impact through a whole range of improvements.

Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In the past three years, by the time they reach the end of Year 6 pupils have achieved progress above the national average in all areas. To complement this, you and your team continue to provide excellent opportunities for the social, moral and emotional development of the pupils in your care. As a leadership team member stated, 'We are here to serve the pupils in every way we can.'

Pupils are happy and well cared for at the school. They know that staff will always listen to concerns and act upon them promptly. Vulnerable pupils are given appropriate and timely support. Pupils particularly enjoy the leadership opportunities that are on offer, for instance as restorative and sports ambassadors, members of the eco committee and house captains. They are proud of their school and enjoy the learning opportunities that their teachers plan for them.

The work to support the pupils' emotional well-being is a significant strength of the school and appreciated by the whole school community. Pupils spoke warmly of the opportunities they have to be involved in their nurture groups. Many pupils repeated

the slogan 'happy mind and happy me'. Through this work, and the support they get from the school counsellor, they understand the need to take care of themselves and each other.

Parents are highly supportive of the school's work. Parents I spoke with told me how much their children enjoy coming to school. As one parent said, 'We are blessed for our children to attend such a lovely school.' Parents also expressed appreciation for the many opportunities in the curriculum to enrich their children's learning. The school is very much at the heart of the community and this was evident in the high attendance at the pupils' production of 'Beauty and the Beast'.

Links with the infant school are very positive and this supports both the pupils and parents well. Good relationships and the regular meetings between staff of the two schools mean that transition arrangements are seamless. You have also ensured that there are positive links with the diocese and local authority. Through these, you benefit from a whole range of professional development which has helped improve the quality of leadership and classroom practice. You are involved in and a significant contributor to a range of school clusters.

At the previous inspection, senior leaders were asked to build on existing strengths in teaching to raise pupils' achievement further. Inspection evidence shows that teaching and learning continue to be good, with some strong practice. Teachers set work that builds on what pupils already know and understand. They are very skilled in providing activities and organising the learning to enthuse pupils. For example, Year 6 pupils were completely engaged in acting out their own interpretations of scenes from 'Beauty and the Beast'. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' conduct, and relationships in the classroom are excellent. Teachers are knowledgeable, use the technical terms associated with each subject accurately and expect pupils to do the same. They question pupils well, both to make pupils think deeply about their learning and to check on their understanding of new ideas. Teachers identify and correct any misconceptions effectively.

In key stage 2, teachers encourage pupils to provide extended oral answers. As a result, pupils are able to explain their thinking clearly and eloquently and carry this through into their talk with their peers. For example, Year 6 pupils developed some high-level vocabulary to write a diary entry about the blitz. The pupils understand that they have to work hard in each and every lesson. They try their best, cooperate well in learning and take pride in the presentation of their work.

Teaching assistants make an impressive contribution to pupils' learning, both when they lead small groups and when they support learning in the classrooms. They question pupils skilfully, and present ideas in alternative ways. They help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to understand how they can achieve their individual next steps in learning.

The governors of the school play their part. They appreciate the work that the leadership team do and are very thorough in ensuring that standards are maintained and that all leaders are challenged to improve further.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school's safeguarding systems and processes are fit for purpose. You and your staff are vigilant in ensuring that pupils are safe and cared for well. Leaders, including governors, have made sure that staff are properly trained and routinely updated on safeguarding matters. Inspection evidence demonstrates that when adults refer any concerns about a pupil's well-being, leaders act swiftly and effectively. Leaders carry out necessary checks on adults working at the school. Governors are diligent in ensuring that the record of these checks is accurately monitored.

Pupils explained that they feel safe and well looked after by adults. Pupils told me that if they are anxious or worried, they can talk with any member of staff. Pupils play their full part in educating their school friends about important issues such as internet safety and bullying. Pupils know the different behaviours that constitute bullying and what does not. They told me that there are few bullying incidents in their school, but that they trust staff to sort out any bullying incidents effectively. Many parents agree that the school deals with bullying well.

Inspection findings

- This inspection focused on several aspects of the school's work. Firstly, I looked at how well the curriculum for disadvantaged pupils helps them to make good progress, particularly in mathematics. Since there are very few disadvantaged pupils in each year group, the published achievement data for this group needs to be treated with caution. Nevertheless, over the past two years a small number of these pupils did not make the progress of which they are capable in mathematics by the end of key stage 2. However, leaders have reviewed and rightly adjusted how they allocate the pupil premium funding. They now successfully manage the mathematics curriculum for disadvantaged pupils through regular checks on their progress and clear planning to fill any gaps in their learning. Leaders have worked with staff to ensure that they prioritise the assessment of disadvantaged pupils' knowledge and understanding. Work is now well matched to the needs of this group, with additional support provided by the teaching assistants as needed.
- You have rightly prioritised the development of pupils' problem-solving skills. Consequently, teachers ensure that disadvantaged pupils are given more opportunities to reason and solve problems in their mathematics lessons. Increasingly, this means that this group of learners are able to deepen their knowledge through investigation and discussion with their peers. For example, a small group of Year 6 disadvantaged pupils showed great confidence and made excellent progress in converting currencies. All disadvantaged pupils make strong progress in mathematics.
- During the inspection I investigated the quality of the curriculum provided for all pupils. You and your leadership team, with the enthusiastic support of governors, have designed a curriculum rich in opportunities for pupils to study a broad range of subjects. Work in pupils' books clearly demonstrates the wide variety of topics covered in lessons. The curriculum is well planned and monitored by leaders,

who ensure that learning is engaging while allowing plenty of opportunities for pupils to practise and develop essential skills. Reading is a key driver for the curriculum. Teachers make use of carefully chosen texts related to each topic's main theme to enable pupils to practise and improve their reading and comprehension skills.

- Pupils explained how much they enjoy and learn from the topics they study. They were also keen to explain the importance of their many visits and visitors. Year 5 pupils benefited immensely from a visit by a working geologist, who supported their studies of volcanoes. This same group of pupils similarly benefited from their visit to Jodrell Bank to learn about space.
- The curriculum develops pupils' creativity as well as knowledge of their local community and the wider world. The skilful design enables pupils to develop subject-specific knowledge and aptitudes. They have regular opportunities to revisit and consolidate their learning across different subjects. In science, pupils are able to apply their knowledge by carrying out practical experiments regularly. In this work the development of vocabulary is a priority. Pupils are able to use the scientific vocabulary they have learned in their writing in a way that supports their understanding and enhances the quality of their work.
- Pupils have significant opportunities to learn about other faiths and cultures, including through a link with a local Jewish school. They have opportunities to visit places of worship, including a local mosque. This contributes effectively to pupils' preparation for life in modern Britain.
- The final line of enquiry was to check the progress that the most able pupils are now making in writing. While the proportion achieving the expected standard in writing by the time they leave the school is high, you are rightly committed to ensuring that more achieve at a greater depth. All teachers are aware of the need to offer these pupils the opportunity to achieve their potential. This is evident in the preparation and delivery of lessons. During the inspection we saw these pupils make some excellent progress in their reading, mathematics and writing. However, while they get opportunities to write in all subjects, they do not always achieve the standard they are capable of.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils improve the quality of their writing by applying the high standards expected in English to their writing in every subject.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Morley
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I observed learning in lessons throughout key stage 2. I carried out a work scrutiny jointly with members of the senior leadership team. I held meetings with school leaders, governors and representatives of the local authority and the diocese. I met with pupils to discuss aspects of safety and learning. I met with the subject leader for English and members of the well-being committee. I scrutinised the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks on staff, welfare plans, and actions taken to keep pupils safe. I looked at documentation which the school produces as part of its self-evaluation and development planning. I reviewed policies and documents published on the school's website and made available during the inspection. I considered the responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, as well as free-text responses from parents.