

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



14 March 2018

Mrs Samantha Birchall  
Headteacher  
Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School  
Old Lane  
Rainford  
St Helens  
Merseyside  
WA11 8JF

Dear Mrs Birchall

### **Short inspection of Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 21 February 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 February 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The new leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, senior leaders and governors identify areas for improvement and are determined to make the school the best it can be. You have successfully created a positive culture in which pupils learn and enjoy their education. The culture of the school is truly reflected in its motto 'together we dream, together we learn'. Ambition and high aspiration are evident all around the school. Your wonderfully creative displays and celebrations of pupils' work are inspiring. I was particularly impressed by the large 'legacy' art work pieces which traditionally your Year 6 classes do in their final term. The great majority of parents were enthusiastic in their praise for the school. They were particularly impressed by the way in which the school helps pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the commitment of all the staff and senior leaders. Other parents commented on the 'wonderful, caring environment' and the sense of being a 'family'. A small minority of parents expressed concerns, which we discussed together.

You have dealt very effectively with the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. All teachers set work that stretches and challenges pupils of all abilities. Senior leaders and governors have a very secure understanding of the progress of pupils in all classes and the quality of teaching, which is improving. Senior leaders are a cohesive and effective team. They bring differing qualities and complementary strengths which enhance the quality of leadership.

The school environment is bright and welcoming. There are many positive messages on walls and in displays, which help pupils to aim high and grow in confidence. Your very recent improvements to the early years areas have created a superb learning environment in which children begin their education. The outdoor classroom you have created for older pupils has enhanced learning opportunities and increased pupils' enjoyment.

When we visited classrooms, pupils concentrated well. They talked keenly about their learning and enjoyment of school. Pupils are polite, well behaved and ready to learn. They told me that they enjoy challenges in all subjects and enjoy the fact that they can sometimes choose the level of challenge that they want to tackle. This is one reason why all groups of pupils across the school make good progress. They told me how much they appreciate the opportunity to take on responsibilities in school such as becoming sports leaders or citizenship representatives. They move around the school in a calm and orderly manner.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding has the highest priority for you, your staff and the governing body. A standard item on the agendas for meetings with staff and governors is to make sure that everyone is well informed and regularly reminded of how to ensure pupils' welfare. Staff told me how much they appreciate the seven-minute briefings you give to keep them up to date with all guidance. You and your staff know the children and their families well, so you can support or intervene when necessary. Work with outside agencies is very good. All staff undertake a range of training and you keep a detailed record to make sure that everyone has the knowledge and expertise needed. Pupils told me that they feel very safe in school. They trust all the adults to help them and know that everyone is there to make sure that they feel secure and happy. They like the fact that there is a 'worry box' in which they can put little notes if they feel unhappy or insecure, though they told me that this is not often the case. Bob, the owl cushion, is given to children to hug and keep in lessons if they feel under pressure or worried. Pupils were able to explain to me in detail how to keep safe when using the internet or social media of any kind. The fact that the site is very secure gives them an extra feeling of security and protection.

### **Inspection findings**

- Your concerted emphasis on improving writing last year has been very successful and the results achieved by Year 6 in 2017 were impressive. You explained to me that all pupils have the opportunity to write at length on four days in every week and your strategy has raised standards in all classes. The focus that you and your staff put on reading has resulted in standards which are above average. Pupils told me how much they enjoy the class libraries and the chance to read for extended periods of time. Pupils in Year 6 were able to discuss their favourite books with real enthusiasm.

- The governing body is very well informed and knows the school well. Your governors, many of whom are new in post since the previous inspection, are well trained and are working in partnership with a national leader for governance in order to develop their skills further. Individual governors explained how they are linked with different classes, teachers and subjects to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and areas which can be improved. Governors have the necessary skills and expertise to support and challenge school leaders. They have a good knowledge of how effectively the pupil premium funding is spent and the impact of the primary sports funding.
- Published data for 2017 suggested that the gap is increasing between disadvantaged pupils and others. However, you were able to show me that this was related to a specific cohort and that across the school all the disadvantaged pupils are making strong progress. The difference between their achievement and that of others is minimal or non-existent in most classes. Your strategy for supporting these pupils is very effective. You have identified the need for disadvantaged pupils to make even faster progress than others so that they are able to catch up by the end of Year 6, and put good strategies into place to make sure this happens.
- You are aware that in 2016/17 progress and achievement in mathematics were good, but not as good as those made by pupils in reading and writing. Consequently, you have made the teaching of mathematics a whole-school focus in the current year. Your leader for mathematics has introduced the concept of 'maths joy' and it is working. Pupils we saw during the visit were using stimulating resources, solving complex problems and, above all, enjoying their learning in mathematics. You and your staff are aware of the importance of building pupils' confidence and helping them to see for themselves where they have made mistakes. You put a strong focus on problem-solving and pupils are beginning to develop mastery in mathematics. Just occasionally, the pitch is not quite right and work is too easy. However, this rarely happens, as we were able to see when we looked at the work in pupils' books. You have enhanced enjoyment of mathematics further by the introduction of special 'number days'.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers continue to improve pupils' progress in mathematics and build pupils' confidence so that outcomes in this subject are as impressive as they are in reading and writing.

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 St Helens. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Judith Straw  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and the deputy headteacher and we agreed the key lines of enquiry. I met with all the staff at the morning briefing. I also met a group of governors and pupils who are members of the school council. I met a small group of parents at the end of the day and reviewed the 33 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. I met representatives of the local authority and the archdiocese and spoke on the telephone to your school improvement partner. Together, you and I looked at work in pupils' books in English and mathematics. We also visited most classes to observe learning. I spoke to many pupils during lessons and at playtime and observed their behaviour. I listened to pupils in Year 6 reading. I gained the views of staff from scrutinising the 21 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire. I reviewed a range of documents, including an evaluation of the school's performance and information about pupils' progress and attendance. I looked closely at the school's safeguarding and welfare arrangements, including policies and other documentation, and discussed these with the safeguarding lead.