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Mr William Lewis
Headteacher
St Philip Neri With St Bede Catholic Voluntary Academy
Rosemary Street
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Dear Mr Lewis

Short inspection of St Philip Neri with St Bede Catholic Voluntary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 19 September 2017, 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 last inspection. You and the other school leaders are committed to continued improvement. You have shown no complacency and have worked together to build on the good practice found in the previous inspection. You have an accurate view of the school's current strengths and areas for improvement. You are tackling these well through your plans for improvement.

Parents made it very clear to me that they hold the school in very high regard. They are proud to say their children come to St Philip's. Parents who spoke to me at the school gate praised your welcoming approach to all and commented on your personal knowledge of the pupils. Several parents were very keen to tell me about the individual support you and the staff team have provided for their families. Parents who have recently arrived from abroad told me that they and their children have been 'made very welcome by everyone'. Responses on Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, are positive. A large proportion of families stated they would recommend the school to others.

You have maintained the many strengths noted at the last inspection. You, other leaders and the governing body have produced clear plans to improve the school further. Leaders have also successfully tackled the areas for improvement from the last inspection. The actions taken by the attendance officer have led to considerable

improvements in attendance. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced. Attendance rates are now very close to the national averages.

Pupils are very happy in the school. They told me that they like coming to school and enjoy their lessons because the teachers make lessons fun. They said they feel safe at school and know how to keep themselves safe in the community and on the internet.

Pupils' behaviour is of a very high standard. Pupils are keen to discuss their learning. They have excellent manners when meeting adults, and behave in a polite and orderly way when moving around school.

You have completed a review of how the school uses its funds for disadvantaged pupils. This has resulted in many improvements to the support these children receive. You and other leaders, including governors, are committed to accelerating the progress made by disadvantaged pupils. Your knowledge of pupils helps you to provide different types of additional help so they can learn effectively. As a result, they are now beginning to make progress at a faster rate. Many are achieving well, particularly in the phonics screening checks in Years 1 and 2.

I was delighted to meet Doodles, the school dog. Pupils clearly adore spending time with and reading stories to Doodles. This innovative way of supporting pupils with social and emotional issues has been successful. The school has focused more on extra support for learning, however, than on pupils' personal development. The school needs to provide a broader range of support to help pupils overcome social barriers to learning. This includes some of the most able pupils.

Your pupils take part in a many special events in the local community and beyond. They took part in the recent British Cycle Race from Newark to Mansfield and helped to design the trophy awarded to the winner, for example. The school has taken part in many fundraising events for charities, including for the Syrian refugees in your community. Staff take part in initiatives to help raise pupils' awareness of the diverse lives of people in your community.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning is a strength of the school. You use every opportunity available to help children learn about their own culture and those of others.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that the school's safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Your recording procedures are detailed and of a high standard. The records of work you have undertaken show you take prompt and effective action when you have a concern about a child's safety or welfare. You and the staff are tireless in your liaison with other agencies to ensure that families receive the help they need. All recruitment checks on staff are carried out and recorded accurately.

All staff receive regular training in safeguarding. This is systematically updated through staff meetings and newsletters. Staff told me they feel confident to deal with any safeguarding concerns, thanks to the clear procedures in place and the training you have provided. Staff know what signs of abuse they should look out for and are aware of their duty to notify you or the designated staff of any concern.

Parents told me they appreciate the school's work in ensuring that their children are kept safe. They said that if they come to you with any safeguarding concerns, you and the staff team will deal with these promptly. Children know they can speak to a trusted adult if they wish to share a concern or seek help and guidance.

Inspection findings

- Since the last inspection, the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development at the end of their Reception Year has increased. It is now above the national average.
- Effective teaching means the proportion of children meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has increased and is now above the national average.
- Pupils in Year 2 who did not achieve the expected standard in Year 1 in 2017 have been well supported. Their results are now above the national average.
- More pupils achieved the expected standard at the end of key stage 1 in 2017 than in the previous year. The school is implementing plans to improve this to ensure that more children achieve greater depth in next year's assessments.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 also increased in 2017.
- The governing body has a good grasp of pupils' attainment and progress. It keeps track of the success of the additional help provided to support learning in raising standards.
- The school provides pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum. It participates in a wide range of community events and this is having a very positive effect on the cultural understanding of pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school provides a broader range of support for disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, so that they can overcome social barriers to learning and make accelerated progress.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of The Aquinas Catholic Academy Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Nottingham, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Nottinghamshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jane Green
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the deputy headteacher and I shared the key lines of enquiry for the inspection. I also met with other leaders and governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke with a representative from the trust. I spoke with parents before school and met with a group of pupils in Years 5 & 6 to talk about their school experience. You and I visited classes to see children learning. In addition, I scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements. I looked at current information about pupils' attendance and the procedures in place to continue to improve this. I looked at the school's records of pupils' behaviour. I also reviewed the school's own evaluation of its work, the provisional results of the 2017 assessments at the end of key stage 2 and the school's plans for improvement. Together, we looked at work in classrooms and on displays around school. I took account of 49 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.