

JEK EDUCATION CONSULTANCY LTD

Forward Together

Summary of the review of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Herringthorpe Rotherham conducted on Thursday 12th February 2015.

Reviewer: James Kilner, Senior Education Consultant JEK Education Ltd.

The school was inspected in June 2012; the outcome was Grade 2 with Grade 1 for Behaviour.

The areas for development from the last inspection:

Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching to deepen pupils' learning further by:

- *developing pupils' understanding of the levels they are working at in literacy and numeracy so they are clearer about how to improve*
- *improving pupils' opportunities for self-assessment and to manage and improve their own work*
- *ensuring high standards of presentation in all the work pupils undertake.*

In July 2013 the school received their Academy Conversion Letter.

Main findings of the review

- School leaders are effective in ensuring that teaching is good and are unrelenting in their drive to become outstanding.
- Lessons are well planned and provide relevant activities for pupils of all abilities within a framework of a vibrant curriculum.
- Pupils make good progress and attain in line with or above other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- More-able pupils achieve particularly well in all subjects because of effective teaching.
- The Headteacher and staff know pupils very well. They check the progress of individuals regularly and are ambitious for what each child can achieve.
- Governors provide useful challenge and support to school leaders and are keen to become even more effective.
- Children in the early years are well cared for and make good and outstanding progress because they are well supported in their development and are taught effectively.
- Pupils like coming to school and enjoy learning because their teachers 'make lessons fun'. They always behave well in lessons and at playtime.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and emotional development is very strong; in all situations pupils demonstrate respect for adults and support for each other.

Leadership and management are good

- The Headteacher's positive approach and determination have ensured that teaching is good and pupils achieve well. Together with the Deputy Headteacher they form a highly effective leadership team with a keen eye as to how to get the school to outstanding.
- Staff are motivated to work hard under her leadership, which has resulted in improvements in writing and in teaching overall.
- The Headteacher and other leaders check teaching regularly, and accurately identify what teachers could do to boost pupils' learning further.
- Teachers respond positively to advice and are keen to adjust their practice to become even more effective. As a result, teaching across the school is at least good and sometimes outstanding.
- The Headteacher and Deputy have an accurate picture of the school and know what needs to be done for the school to improve further.
- Teachers and leaders meet regularly to discuss pupils' progress, and they know how well individual pupils are progressing. Appropriate support is put in place to accelerate learning where needed. The systems for checking the progress of specific groups of pupils are rigorous. This means that swift action is taken when needed.
- The small number of pupils eligible for the pupil premium are supported well through tuition to close gaps if necessary.
- The curriculum provides good cross-curricular opportunities and much of the work is linked to topics, through which the pupils learn good skills in art, music, history and geography. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and emotional development extremely well. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their actions and consequences within the loving and caring Catholic Faith which the school promotes highly effectively. Consequently, pupils value each other and recognise each member of the school community as being special and different. Two of the teaching assistants are taking on the chaplaincy role.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well because it tracks the progress of pupils, predicts what they can achieve, and ensure they do so.
- The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain through a range of activities and opportunities and the school are working towards the 'Rights respecting' schools' award. The school abounds with celebration of children's works and achievements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Older pupils are worthy ambassadors for the school, greeting and chatting confidently with visitors. They readily engage in conversation about their work and are extremely proud of their school and its history.
- The school has effective procedures for settling children in when they start school and they quickly learn the routines and what is expected. Pupils say that behaviour is good.
- In all year groups, pupils have good attitudes to learning and enjoy school.
- They are very positive about how their teachers make learning fun and they thoroughly enjoy many of the activities provided in lessons.
- Pupils concentrate well and in most lessons behaviour is outstanding.
- There is still some variation in the way pupils present their work but this has improved lately with a push to improve handwriting.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is effective. Pupils say that they feel safe and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They know the importance of being vigilant when using the internet and were able to talk about cyber-bullying and how to try to avoid it.
- Pupils know about other types of bullying and say that there is very little in school. They are confident that any problems would be quickly sorted out by the staff, and records indicate that this is the case.

Current Profile of achievement is good

On entry children arrive with skills typical for their age.

Early Years

- At the end of the Foundation Year in 2014 the proportion of pupils achieving a Good Level of Development was 90%.

Key Stage 1

- Attainment in all subjects at the end of Y2 is in line with national averages at level 2.
- Level 3 attainment in Writing and Maths is above average.
- The performance of children eligible for pupil premium funding is below national averages however in the current Year 2 class the performance is stronger.

Key Stage 2

In 2014, attainment in Y6 was above national averages in all subjects at L4 and L5 except for Level 5 attainment in reading. Writing was significantly above national averages at Level 5.

Teaching and learning are good

- The school is typified by a very bright and stimulating learning environment.
- All teachers and support assistants have good subject knowledge which is rapidly assimilated by pupils who are then able to use it with great confidence. e.g. a pupil can explain to the class abstract nouns.
- Excellent adult support for groups ensuring that they make good and better progress which is unobtrusive and does not impede the smooth flow of the lesson.
- Excellent relationships amongst pupils and adults and all display a real thirst for knowledge.
- In the most successful lessons teachers' use of questioning is highly effective. Teachers encourage pupils to give full answers and allow quality time to respond.
- Very able pupils are really being challenged and the teachers are skilled at stretching them to the limit in their understanding.
- Teachers are consistently ensuring that pupils understand the purpose of the activity they are undertaking and exactly how it will fulfil the learning objective.
- In group work pupils organise themselves well and teacher gives a realistic time to answer and collect points as a group. Clearly the pupils are well used to working in this way and are adept at collating the group thoughts and reporting these back to the rest of the class. This reflects the schools commitment to developing the pupils' enterprise skills taking responsibility and working successfully as a team.
- The interesting and exciting subject matter taught in the new curriculum is engaging pupils, causing good quality outcomes and is certainly 'hooking' the children in to learning. For example the effective teaching of Spanish is a fun lesson where pupils achieve well and they talk about being more confident to speak Spanish when they go on holiday.
- In RE pupils are encouraged to use their wider literacy and numeracy skills for example when planning a visit to Rotherham to find ways that we can 'show that we love one another' well prepared resources ensured that pupils fully understood the purpose of the learning and were precise as to how they could show it. The lesson provided good cross Curriculum links in writing and effective differentiation by resources and adult support
- The consistent high expectations of the teachers is giving suitably challenging extension activities which ensures that pupils are making good and outstanding progress.
- Teachers new to the school are fitting in well and making a big difference to the positive behaviour in lessons, particularly in Year 3.

Following a scrutiny of work the following recommendations were made:

- Consistent marking, feedback and follow up in mathematics across school.
- Whole school approach to marking spelling and grammar.
- Whole school approach to children correcting their own work.

Foundation

- Provision in the early years is led and managed well. There are good systems for checking what children can do when they start school. Parents are kept very well informed about what their children are doing at school and how they could help to support their learning at home.
- Children's achievement has improved since the last inspection and the proportion reaching a good level of development was well above average in 2014, continuing an upward trend. The school prepares children well for Key Stage 1.
- The quality of teaching is good and enables children to make good progress in developing their basic skills. The effective teaching of phonics gives children a clear grasp of letter sounds and opportunities to read and spell new words. Some children are beginning to sequence a series of ideas effectively in their writing.
- All areas of learning set out for the children to explore with adults poised to either intervene and develop learning or step back and observe making notes and assessments for future reference.
- The children show high levels of independence and work collaboratively.
- A focus group observed writing a wanted poster were able to form clearly identifiable words to describe the person they were after.
- Children behave well and the trusting relationships they have with the staff help them to feel safe. They are enthusiastic learners who pay good attention in lessons, and they have a very good understanding of the daily routines. They are keen to answer questions and respond well to adults' clear expectations.
- They play well together and show consideration for one another.

Ways forward:

- Ensure that pupils consistently respond to the high quality marking of their teachers.
- Consider the balanced when using dry-wipe boards to rehearse learning so that vital evidence on progress and process is not lost.