

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



25 June 2019

Mrs Kaye Pitcher
Interim Executive Headteacher
The Bishops CofE Learning Academy
Treninnick Hill
Newquay
Cornwall
TR7 2SR

Dear Mrs Pitcher

Short inspection of The Bishops CofE Learning Academy

Following my visit to the school on 25 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in May 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your appointment as interim executive headteacher in January 2019 and your swift and effective development of team leadership accelerated the pace of improvement. You and the new assistant headteacher have nurtured leadership and teaching. This has further strengthened the capacity of the school to improve. You are strongly supported by governance, at local advisory and multi-academy levels and are managing changes in leadership and teaching successfully.

Collectively, governors at advisory board and multi-academy level, have a strong range of skills and expertise. They visit the school regularly to see the school functioning at first hand. You provide them with detailed assessments of the work of the school. Consequently, leaders at all levels are astute in their evaluation of the school and target the right areas for improvement. For example, leaders have provided additional specialist training for staff. This has helped to secure effective teaching, accurate assessment and pupils' good attitudes to learning. As a result, most pupils, including the disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make good progress, especially in reading.

The vast majority of the parents that responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, stated that they would recommend the school. Several parents highlighted the strong and supportive early years provision, which is confirmed by this inspection. All the parents that I spoke to expressed appreciation of the work of the school. One parent painted an accurate picture of the school by writing, 'I

believe the school has a nurturing and family environment.'

Staff morale is high. Staff know the pupils and families very well. This, together with the school's strong family ethos and commitment to Christian values, enables pupils to thrive happily in a truly inclusive school. Throughout the school, wall displays demonstrate and celebrate pupils' successful learning across an exciting and well-planned curriculum. One parent, reflecting the appreciative views of most who responded to the online questionnaire, wrote, 'My children enjoy school. The staff always look for creative and engaging ways to make the curriculum content exciting.'

Safeguarding is effective.

A strong culture of safeguarding is promoted by all staff across the school. The school's safeguarding procedures and records are of a high quality and are comprehensively and meticulously maintained. The school's safeguarding team, supported by specialists across the trust, provide staff and governors with regular safeguarding training. Leaders work effectively to embed a culture of vigilance among all staff. Teachers are strong role models for pupils. They maintain high expectations of pupils and provide them with high quality care. Staff spoken to were very clear about the exact action they need to take if they believed a pupil to be at risk. Leaders implement robust systems when making referrals to the appropriate authority, should they be necessary.

Good links with parents help to keep pupils safe. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, expressed the view that pupils feel safe at school. One typical comment was, 'The staff are friendly and approachable and I know that the children are extremely well looked after whilst at school.' When questioned, pupils confidently asserted that they are safe at school, '... because staff and our friends care about us.' Pupils understand the different forms that bullying might take and the harm it can cause, but do not think it is a problem in the school. They know how to stay safe when using computers and learn how to care for each other at school, for example, as sports leaders at lunchtimes.

Inspection findings

- The first line of enquiry examined the effectiveness of actions by leaders and teachers to raise attainment and progress in writing and mathematics across key stage 1. Your school development plan rightly identified that in previous years pupils' progress though key stage 1 had not been good enough. Consequently, leaders have worked to bring rapid improvement this academic year.
- Across the school I saw features, which support your own evaluations of more consistently effective teaching. Teachers are providing stimulating activities now in key stage 1 classes as well as key stage 2, which motivate pupils to learn. Teachers are boosting pupils' willingness and ability to write through a study of interesting topics. For example, the quality of pupils' writing, especially the range of vocabulary and descriptive content, noticeably improves when they construct

their own stories in the style of popular texts. Pupils' writing in other subjects, for example as in Year 2, when describing life at the time of the Great Fire of London, also reflects strong progress. Teachers are currently placing more emphasis on the development of pupils' handwriting and spelling skills. However, this focus has not been maintained long enough to overcome weaker development of these skills in the past.

- In key stage 1, pupils' work shows improved progress in mathematics. However, pupils' mathematical skills are not extended well enough across the range of subjects. Nevertheless, your revision of the mathematics curriculum to enable pupils to calculate and work practically has stimulated their confidence and interest in learning. Teachers are increasingly challenging pupils to think more deeply about their work. Pupils, including the disadvantaged and most-able, are responding positively. For example, during mathematics in Year 1, pupils relished the opportunity to tackle more difficult work once their initial tasks are completed. However, given inconsistent learning in the past, improved teaching has not yet fully secured the reasoning skills of some pupils.
- Next, I evaluated the effectiveness of leaders' actions to improve pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics across key stage 2, particularly by the most able pupils. You have rightly continued the work of your predecessor to rectify past weaknesses in pupils' writing. Consequently, assessments and scrutiny of pupils' writing this academic year show continuing improvement across this key stage. There is a strengthened emphasis in all classes across key stage 2 on developing pupils' ability to learn for themselves. Teachers provide frequent opportunities for pupils to choose how to plan their writing and what form it might take. For example, having observed a video scenario, pupils in Year 6 were enthused at being able to decide on the genre of their choice whether it be to write poems, stories or reports. This gave impetus to their writing. It stimulated them to think about what vocabulary to use and how to add description and deepen meaning and expression in their work.
- Teachers' high expectations of neatly presented work, have led to pupils significantly improving their handwriting, spelling and punctuation. Consequently across key stage 2, increasing proportions of pupils are demonstrating skills at and beyond those expected for their age. However, given the slower progress made by some pupils in previous years, particularly by potentially more-able pupils, some pupils capable of writing at a high standard are not doing so.
- School assessments and sampled work show that current pupils are making stronger progress in mathematics. You have redesigned the mathematics curriculum to provide more opportunities for pupils to work practically and deepen their thinking. Teachers in all classes now provide regular problem-solving activities alongside a consistent approach to the development of pupils' fluency in using basic numeracy. The teachers' more accurate assessment of pupils' learning is helping to provide work that challenges pupils at the right level. As well as promoting good progress, this is helping previously lower-attaining pupils 'catch up' and enabling an increasing number of the more able pupils to work at greater depth. However, your school improvement plan rightly identifies the need to increase the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards.
- Finally, I considered the work of leaders in raising attendance and reducing persistent absence. You monitor pupils' attendance carefully. You are diligent in

ascertaining the reason for absence. You take swift action to address concerns regarding a pupil's attendance and work closely with parents and external agencies to provide appropriate support. Much has been done to promote good attendance and improve communication with parents, for example, through the school's online 'Dojo'. Your tightened procedures for tackling persistent absenteeism have proved successful and it has almost halved. It is currently at a level that is below that found nationally. Pupils' current rate of attendance now broadly matches the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the proportion of pupils reaching higher standards in writing and mathematics increases across the school
- teaching across key stage 1 continues to develop pupils' writing and mathematical skills by:
 - improving pupils' handwriting and spelling skills
 - extending pupils' ability to solve problems and apply their mathematical skills across the range of subjects.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Learning Academy Trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Truro, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cornwall. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alexander Baxter
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with school leaders and other representatives of governance, namely members of the local advisory board and the chief executive officer of the Learning Academy Trust. I visited classrooms with the interim executive headteacher and the assistant headteacher and collected and scrutinised samples of pupils' work in books. We examined details of pupils' progress and the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan. I talked with individual pupils during the lunch break and during visits to classrooms and observed them reading and checking their work. I checked a range of documents relating to safeguarding with you and your administrative staff. I also studied reviews of the work of the school completed by the academy's challenge partner and the local authority. I talked informally with parents and a grandparent as they brought children to school and considered 51 responses to the online questionnaire and 34 additional written comments from parents.