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16 January 2015

Mr D Savage
St Patrick's RC Primary School
Livesey Street
Collyhurst
Manchester
M4 5HF

Dear Mr Savage

No formal designation monitoring inspection of St Patrick's RC Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 15 January 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and the time you took to discuss behaviour in your school.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with the no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the Chief Inspector was concerned about behaviour at the school.

Evidence

During the visit, I considered a number of sources of evidence including:

- observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of pupils' behaviour throughout the day, including discussion with pupils
- documentary evidence
- discussions with school leaders and staff.

Having evaluated all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers have taken effective action to improve behaviour and secure consistently positive attitudes to learning.

Context

St Patrick's is an average-sized primary school with a total of 244 pupils on roll. More girls than boys attend the school. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is over twice the national average and just under half of all pupils speak English as an additional language. About two-thirds of the pupil population are

known to be eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average. The numbers of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs, are well above average. Above average proportions of pupils start or leave the school other than at the usual times. Consequently, pupil mobility is high when compared to the average for other primary schools, nationally. Since the previous inspection, there have been a number of staff changes. Four teachers joined the staff in September 2014. However, one of those teachers, who held the position of deputy headteacher, has since left the school. The school has embraced the apprenticeship scheme and is involved in training six young people to become teaching assistants, under the auspices of Aspire Education Academy, Bury. Four teaching assistants have been appointed to various roles in the school. The governors have experienced little difficulty in appointing suitable professionals and have not been afraid to cast their net wide when recruiting. This influx of new people has refreshed an otherwise stable and experienced staff team.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' attitudes, in general, are positive. They conduct themselves well, wear their uniform with pride and treat their learning environment with respect. This is evidenced by a site that is litter and graffiti free and well-maintained, high quality wall displays.

In all the lessons visited I saw pupils getting on with their work and trying their best. Pupils respond quickly to teachers' instructions and follow well-rehearsed classroom routines. As a result, transitions from one task to the next are both smooth and rapid and little learning time is lost as pupils move between activities. In those books that I had an opportunity to scrutinise there is clear evidence that pupils take pride in their work, which is neatly presented, complete and up-to-date.

Relationships between pupils and the adults who work with them are characterised by warmth and mutual respect. Wall displays in classrooms and on corridors provide ever present reminders to pupils about the 'golden rules', which encapsulate the school's expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct.

Pupils are very well supervised by staff during periods of recreation. This level of supervision contributes effectively to keeping pupils safe and secure. Governors' investment in playground equipment is ensuring that pupils have opportunities to participate in a variety of games and activities at break and lunchtime. These activities contribute well to pupils' social development and their sense of fair play. The provision of two 'buddy benches' in the playground provides a place to sit for pupils who are feeling vulnerable. If pupils see anyone sitting on these benches then they approach them to offer support, including inviting them to join in a game. As one pupil told me, 'these benches make sure that no one is left out.'

Pupils follow well-established routines at the end of playtimes. Assisted by members of staff, they tidy away quickly and line up in silence ready to go back into class. Consequently, pupils are calmed, made ready for learning and lessons start punctually.

Senior leaders keep a close eye on pupils' behaviour. Incidents of poor behaviour are carefully logged and analysed. This has enabled you and your colleagues to identify

patterns of poor behaviour and those individuals whose behaviour frequently gives cause for concern. One outcome of this analysis has been the inception of the 'Rainbow Room'. This is a lunchtime facility, staffed by dedicated personnel who work with pupils who display challenging behaviours. Although the Rainbow Room has only been in place for a relatively short time you have compelling evidence of the positive impact that it is having on behaviour. One pupil who has received support as a member of the Rainbow Room said, 'I've been helped to control my anger and it's much better now.'

Those pupils that I spoke with during the visit could demonstrate their understanding of the different forms that bullying can take but said that bullying at St Patrick's was not a problem. Nevertheless, a number of pupils cited examples where a few members of their peer group had displayed challenging behaviours and sometimes struggled with relationships. However, there was general agreement among pupils that when this does occur the school staff take incidents seriously and tackle them effectively.

When asked, pupils could describe the benefits and dangers of using the internet; with lessons and assemblies developing their understanding of how to stay safe on-line.

Pupils' rates of attendance are showing a slight improvement compared to what they were last year; nevertheless they still remain below average. Strategies to manage attendance, with the expressed aim of reducing absence, have been introduced. These include, telephone calls to parents should their child fail to register and home visits to those parents whose children are persistently absent. However, these mechanisms have yet to have sufficient impact and strategies for dealing with persistent absentees are not sharp enough.

New teachers undergo an induction programme prior to starting at St Patrick's in order to introduce to them to the way the school operates, for example, the school's approach to behaviour. However, this induction programme does not extend to support staff and, as a result, they have to learn 'on the job'. Consequently, early in their tenure this can lead to misunderstandings about what is acceptable behaviour from pupils and a few pupils testing boundaries.

Senior leaders and governors take their responsibility for keeping children safe seriously. Currently, all staff are expected to complete on-line safeguarding training. This is in order to update staff on current legislation and clarify each individual's role in making sure that pupils are kept free from harm. However, as yet there is no clear mechanism in place to evaluate the quality of this training.

Priorities for further improvement

- Sharpen the school's approach to dealing with the families of those pupils who are persistently absent, making sure that pupils' absence is rigorously followed up and the importance of regular attendance emphasised.
- Ensure that all staff new to the school or who are changing responsibilities are given a comprehensive induction, enabling them to settle into their new roles and find their feet quickly.

- Ensure that senior leaders rigorously follow up staff training on safeguarding to make sure that all staff have a common understanding of their roles and responsibilities in this aspect of keeping children safe.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Manchester, the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Education for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Salford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Charles Lowry

Her Majesty's Inspector