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Mr Rory McCormack
Headteacher
St Lawrence RC Primary School
Victoria Road
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Dear Mr McCormack

Short inspection of St Lawrence RC Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 February 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since the last inspection, you have experienced changes in leadership, and have recently appointed a deputy headteacher with responsibility for assessment. This appointment has increased the leadership to develop further the school's culture of high expectation. Leaders work closely together, and with other local schools, to focus on driving improvement and maintaining high standards of work and behaviour.

You have taken steps to support the growing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language, by employing more staff. You have rightly identified the changes in the school population and the increase in the number of children who have complex needs entering the school. You have put effective support in place for these pupils by wisely using the additional special educational needs funding. Parents who took part in the survey very much appreciate the support you and your staff provide for children who have complex needs.

The governing body is working closely with the diocese and local authority to appoint a new headteacher when you retire at the end of the school year. The diocese is also working closely to explore future working partnerships. Governors are dedicated to appointing a high-calibre headteacher who can maintain the quality of education in the school.

Parents who responded to the survey are overwhelmingly positive about the school's work, the culture and all that it provides for their children. They are proud to say that their children attend St Lawrence School.

You have tackled areas for improvement in the previous inspection report. You have sustained and built upon the school's strengths and have identified accurate priorities for improvement. The assessment system is being refined to highlight pupils' starting points and to track the progress of pupil groups. You acknowledge that this remains a focus.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have made sure that training is up to date and that staff and governors are well informed of changes in legislation. You have ensured that staff are fully conversant with key national priorities such as the 'Prevent' duty. Staff spoken to know the procedures for reporting concerns. This is also reflected in the recorded concern documentation that we looked at. You work closely with other agencies, including an external safeguarding consultant, to check that safeguarding procedures are robust. Parents are kept well informed. Pupils spoken to all report that they feel safe in school. They can all identify an adult in school to whom they would turn to if unhappy. They can explain how to keep themselves safe online. The vast majority of parents are assured that their children are safe. They appreciate you being visible at the start and end of each day.

Inspection findings

- The first line of enquiry explored the progress of groups in writing at key stage 2. We focused on disadvantaged pupils and pupils receiving support for special educational needs and/or disabilities, because they did not make as much progress as other pupils did in writing last year.
- Your leadership team has put in place a range of strategies to focus on the progress of all pupil groups from individual starting points. The new assessment system, established by the deputy headteacher, has enabled you to identify more clearly the pupils with multiple barriers to learning. You and other leaders use this detailed analysis as a focus for discussion and to hold staff to account for pupils' progress. Actions to accelerate progress are agreed and regularly reviewed.
- The leader responsible for English works well with colleagues to develop existing good practice. A detailed and well-considered whole-school plan to improve writing means that there is a sharper focus on progression and raised expectations. A focus on vocabulary is developing the language skills of all pupils, in particular the increasing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The leader of English works closely with the deputy headteacher to evaluate progress information, although this is still to be embedded following the introduction of the new system.

- Current school assessment information indicates that the accelerated progress of pupils in writing remains a focus area for the school for the upper key stage classes. However, the quality of writing in books at key stage 2 demonstrates good progress for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils write for a range of purposes and demonstrate an increasing understanding of punctuation and grammatical features. My scrutiny of work with you confirms that teachers maintain a sharp focus on the accurate application of writing skills across the curriculum.
- The second line of enquiry also looked at writing, but focused on the level of challenge provided for pupils in key stage 1. Attainment in the 2016 tests was above the national figure for the expected standard, but not enough pupils achieved the higher levels. We focused on pupils who had left the early years at the expected standard, as this group was below the national figure in 2016.
- The impact of the whole-school plan for English is particularly evident in key stage 1, where pupils are building on their writing, developed in the early years. Teachers cater effectively for the different starting points of pupils by shaping activities and resources to their needs. Of particular note is the quality of pupils' cursive handwriting and presentation, demonstrating pupils' pride in their work.
- Assessment information from the end of last term demonstrates the impact of leaders' actions to raise expectations in writing. A large proportion of key stage 1 pupils are making better than expected progress. This has raised the proportion of pupils already working at the expected standard and greater depth.
- You had already identified the final key line of enquiry. We looked at the actions that leaders have taken to raise attainment in mathematics at key stage 1. Leaders' actions have been swift to address this. You have introduced additional teacher support in Year 2 so that pupils are now taught in smaller groups. The leader responsible for mathematics promotes pupils' learning of the subject well using online resources. Pupils spoken to are very enthusiastic about these resources and say that they use them to help them to understand their mathematics.
- Work in books shows that pupils are taught mathematics regularly, use a range of resources and cover the different areas of mathematics in depth. They are provided with opportunities to apply their knowledge in problem-solving activities.
- The impact of leaders' actions to improve attainment in mathematics at key stage 1 is evident in the school's current assessment information, which was reliably moderated with other local schools. It indicates that pupils in Year 2 are currently achieving above the 2016 end-of-year national figures.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they build on the strategies already started to accelerate progress in writing for all pupil groups
- teachers use the new assessment system to focus on all pupils' starting points so that progress can be accelerated across the school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Archdiocese of Westminster, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hounslow. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Helen Ridding
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I worked with you closely during the inspection to look at:

- the effectiveness of safeguarding
- the actions that leaders are taking to accelerate writing for groups of pupils in key stage 2, in particular disadvantaged pupils and those receiving support for special educational needs
- the actions that leaders are taking to challenge pupils in writing at key stage 1, in particular girls, so that more attain greater depth from their starting points
- how effective leaders' actions are in improving the attainment of pupils at key stage 1 in mathematics.

I carried out a range of activities to explore these areas during the inspection. I discussed the work of the school with you and the deputy headteacher at the start of the inspection. I considered the responses from Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. I met with a group of pupils to discuss their experiences in lessons and the extent to which they feel safe in school. I held discussions with the local authority representative, the chair of the governing body and three other governors. I met with you in your role as safeguarding leader and the school administrator responsible for maintaining the single central record. I was accompanied by you and the deputy headteacher on my short visits to lessons, where we looked at pupils' work and observed teaching. I listened to Year 2 and Year 6 pupils read. I met with the leaders for English and mathematics and the special educational needs coordinator. The deputy headteacher met with me to look at information on outcomes for pupils. I also considered documentation provided by the school and information posted on the school's website.