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Benedict Cassidy
Headteacher
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
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Dear Mr Cassidy

Short inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 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 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. Leaders have dealt effectively with the two areas for improvement from the previous inspection. You have made changes that have had a positive impact on pupils' learning and achievement. You recognise that outcomes in writing, which were rising in the period 2013 to 2015, were not as strong as they should be, especially for boys, in 2016. In response, you are developing new approaches to the assessment and teaching of writing, which help pupils to use and understand different types of writing. As a result, pupils' writing is improving, including results for boys.

Governance is effective and has improved. The governors are rigorous at holding leaders to account and ensure that they focus on the impact that teachers have on pupils' outcomes. The new chair of the governing body is clear that changes need to make a positive difference to pupils.

Your enthusiasm and high expectations are driving up standards. You have galvanised both pupils and parents to share your ambition and passion for the future of the school. You have been well supported by senior leaders, knowledgeable governors and dedicated staff. Working closely together, leaders are willing to reflect and learn to improve the effectiveness of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning.

Pupils strive to fulfil their potential because of the positive attitudes to learning you have encouraged. Pupils are thoughtful and have a strong work ethic. Parents also value the quality of education the school provides. The vast majority were

overwhelmingly positive in their responses to me. Parents particularly value the way teachers provide high-quality care and guidance, including the breakfast and after-school clubs. One parent commented, 'St Josephs is a caring school, providing a safe and trusting environment in which my son feels happy and is encouraged to learn and excel.'

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, and records are detailed and of high quality. The school's single central record of pre-employment checks is robust and accurate. Personnel files and a range of other documents scrutinised, demonstrate that safer recruitment procedures are adhered to when employing staff.

The evidence showed that the school has created a strong culture, where pupils' welfare is a priority. Pupils told me that bullying is rare because it is dealt with quickly. They know about the forms that bullying can take and told me that you give them regular reminders in assembly that bullying is unacceptable. The school is robust in its follow-up with external agencies, especially where referrals are made to social services.

Staff have received the necessary training to ensure that they are aware of safeguarding procedures. As a result, they know what to do if they have a concern.

Inspection findings

- Leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas of improvement. This is because they evaluate the school's performance carefully. Leaders have put in place suitable opportunities for staff to develop their professional expertise. This enables staff to meet the high expectations set by leaders.
- The most able pupils' progress in writing was significantly below the national average in 2016 at key stage 1. The proportion of pupils, particularly boys, who reached a greater depth in writing, was also below the national average. This was disappointing given the strong progress in writing the previous year.
- You have taken prompt action to improve pupils' progress in writing. The school's system for tracking the progress that pupils make is more accurate than in the past. It is now allowing teachers to understand what pupils need to learn next in order to improve the standard of their writing.
- Pupils' attainment and progress is assessed at regular intervals in reading, writing and mathematics by leaders. However, teachers do not focus sufficiently on the progress that pupils make between these assessment points. This is because the progress information is not tracked as rigorously as it is for their attainment.
- You are ambitious to increase the progress pupils make in writing, reading and mathematics, especially for those who should be working at expected levels and at a greater depth by the end of key stage 1. Pupils' work has been scrutinised

more closely by teachers, and this has enabled teachers to focus their teaching on developing the learning of the children. Clear strategies are implemented from progress meetings to support pupils' work. This enables pupils to understand what they need to improve on in their work. This is helping to increase the accuracy of assessment. Pupils from all groups are typically now making strong progress. The quality of writing in Year 2 is good and improving, with pupils using more sophisticated vocabulary and more complex sentences as they develop their skills.

- The standard of reading is in line with those expected nationally. Phonics and early reading are taught effectively in the early years and key stage 1. The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check rose strongly in 2016.
- The school building, including the classrooms, is attractive and well maintained. The playground provides pupils with plenty of choice at playtimes, including spaces for games activities and quiet areas. As a result, pupils have ample choice and flexibility during this busy time of day to be gainfully occupied.
- Pupils told me that they enjoy school. They were happy to talk about the many aspects that they particularly like, such as sports, playing with their friends and the good support that they receive from staff.
- Staff have many opportunities to develop their professional skills. This supports improvements in teaching and ensures that teachers play an integral part in the development of the school's provision. Consequently, teachers, including those new to the profession, have adapted readily to national changes to the curriculum and to your raised expectations. They have supported you to improve the school further.
- Overall, attendance is above the national average. The attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is rising as a result of the school's emphasis on regular attendance. Current attendance analysis indicates that the school's strategies to reduce the proportion of pupils who are frequently absent from school are working.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers use the available assessment information to plan learning activities that enable pupils to make consistently strong progress from their starting points.

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 Ealing. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Danvir Visvanathan
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I carried out the following activities during the inspection:

- a scrutiny of the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection, including the school's safeguarding policy and other policies related to behaviour
- meetings with you and other senior leaders, and three members of the governing body
- a review of leaders' evaluation of the school's performance, documents and improvement plans
- observations of learning in lessons across the school, work analysis in pupils' writing and mathematics books
- observations of pupils in a range of situations including at break and lunchtime
- conversations with pupils in lessons, on the playground and in the dining hall
- listening to pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 read.