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Mr Farley Marsh
Headteacher
St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Isleworth
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Dear Mr Marsh

Short inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Isleworth

Following my visit to the school on 7 March 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 April 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You are a reflective and inspirational leader who has a clear insight into the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, you and your leadership team have ensured that teaching has remained good over time.

Leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that pupils make good progress. The school has worked hard to secure a better understanding of the factors that contribute to pupils' rapid progress and how best to meet their needs. For example, you have introduced an external programme to involve pupils more in their learning.

The proportion of children in the early years achieving a good level of development has remained above the national average for the last three years. As a result, children leave the early years foundation stage well prepared for their learning in key stage 1. In Year 1, pupils' attainment in the national phonics check was above average in 2016, as was the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2. The proportions of pupils who attained the expected standard in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 were also above the national average.

You have addressed the need to recruit and develop the role of middle leaders, with three new appointments since July 2016. Middle leaders are now involved in promoting and monitoring the quality of teaching and the progress pupils are making in their areas of responsibility.

Pupils are a credit to the school. They are confident learners; those who spoke to me were very articulate in talking about their recent work. Pupils understand the school's expectations of good behaviour and remain focused on their learning. This was very evident during my visits to lessons. Pupils are polite, friendly and well mannered. They told me enthusiastically how much they love coming to school and enjoy their learning.

An overwhelming majority of parents say their children are safe and are well looked after at the school. They say that the school deals effectively with bullying. There are good opportunities within the curriculum for pupils to learn about how to prevent bullying. For example, during anti-bullying week pupils made badges and wrote letters to raise awareness and encourage members of the school community to address bullying, if it occurs.

You acknowledge that there is further work to do to raise the attainment and attendance of specific groups of pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is effective. The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Leaders have put into place effective systems to safeguard pupils. For example, all staff have stickers in their diaries with contact details of whom they should contact, should they need to make an immediate referral to or raise any concerns about a pupil's safety and well-being. Staff receive regular updates on safeguarding matters. For example, you share with your staff the lessons learned from serious case reviews and have adopted the culture of 'seeing the child' and 'it could happen here' to safeguard pupils. You have taken every precaution to keep pupils safe during the current building works. Parents are kept well informed of the building progress via the weekly newsletter.

Inspection findings

- My first key line of enquiry explored the actions that leaders are taking to speed up progress in reading and writing of middle-attaining pupils in key stage 1. I was particularly interested in looking at the progress that girls are making in their writing and boys in their reading and writing. In 2016, the proportion of boys and girls attaining the 'greater depth' standard was well below the proportion for girls and boys nationally.
- The school's assessment information shows that currently most pupils are working at or above the standard expected for their age in reading and writing. The early years and key stage 1 leaders work closely together to identify pupils' learning needs. Leaders put into place the necessary support and interventions so that pupils make good progress. Pupils read fluently and accurately and show a good understanding of texts; they use their phonic knowledge well to sound out unfamiliar words. Pupils told me they enjoy reading. The work in pupils' books shows that they are developing writing skills that are appropriate for their

ages. However, they are not sufficiently challenged to write at length and in different styles to their full potential. In particular, they do not consistently apply their writing skills to other subjects, such as science.

- I also investigated the actions leaders are taking to improve pupils' progress in mathematics at key stage 2, which was slower than that of pupils nationally in 2016.
- Leaders swiftly identified the need for action and provided effective training to class teachers on the new mathematics programme introduced in Years 1 and 5. As a result, teachers in these year groups have gained confidence and proficiency. The new programme will now be rolled out to other year groups. All current pupils are making good progress in developing basic mathematical and reasoning skills. Pupils confidently write explanations of how they have solved problems. They are encouraged to aim high by taking the responsibility to select their own appropriate level of challenge. Additionally, pupils are given 'mathematics passports' to improve their mental mathematics skills. Pupils spoken to during the inspection confidently explained how the passports helped their learning, for example by knowing their division facts. Pupils also talked about the targets set for improving their work.
- The final key line of enquiry was whether leaders are taking appropriate actions to improve pupils' attendance. In 2016, attendance was slightly above the national average for all pupils. However, it was well below the national average for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. These groups of pupils also had higher persistent absence than found nationally.
- Leaders are using a range of strategies to improve pupils' attendance and address persistent absence, which are proving effective. For example, pupils receive motivational badges that are presented to them at assembly for 100% attendance. Overall, attendance for all pupils is slightly above the national average. The attendance of the identified groups of pupils has shown improvement as a consequence of these actions. Attendance has improved for disadvantaged pupils and for those receiving special educational needs support.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- Middle-attaining pupils at key stage 1 are consistently challenged to develop their writing skills across a range of subjects
- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those receiving special educational needs support remains a priority so that it is at least in line with the national average.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Archdiocese of Westminster and the director of children's services for

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

Yours sincerely

Rajeshree Mehta
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspector carried out the following activities during the inspection:

- with senior leaders, scrutinised pupils' work in English, mathematics and topic books
- visited lessons in key stages 1 and 2 to observe pupils' learning
- listened to pupils reading in Years 2 and 5
- held meetings with leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority
- met with one parent
- considered 102 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, eight free-text responses and 22 responses to the online staff questionnaire
- talked to pupils about their learning during playtime and visits to classrooms
- scrutinised documentation including: the school's self-evaluation; plans for improvement; the school's safeguarding documentation; assessment information on pupils' progress; minutes of the governing body meetings and information related to behaviour and attendance
- conducted a tour around the school to ascertain the culture of safeguarding and learning across the school.