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Mrs Mary Emmott  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Emmott

### **Short inspection of Immaculate Conception Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 5 October 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in October 2013. The school converted to become an academy in December 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school is well led and managed, and you want the very best for your pupils. Governors and the other staff hold you in high regard.

Immaculate Conception Catholic Primary School is a warm, friendly school where staff work closely together. You and the staff team have ensured that pupils are well cared for and enjoy their learning. As a result, pupils behave well and concentrate in their lessons.

Your determined and focused leadership has ensured that standards remain high. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. They are happy in school and parents are supportive. Parents speak highly of the quality of learning their children receive. As one parent commented, 'Staff at this school and the level of dedication and teaching for all children are truly amazing. I cannot speak highly enough of every part of this school. I feel very lucky that my children are at this school.'

You and the other staff work well together with the common purpose of achieving the best possible outcomes for pupils. The leadership team is strong and works effectively to make sure priorities for improvement are tackled successfully. You provide clear support and guidance to staff and other leaders. You make sure that the plans you make and implement are raising standards for pupils.

Leaders have worked effectively with the school improvement partner from the Learning Unlimited teaching school alliance. They have developed clear strategic plans for what is needed to shape the future of the school and bring about change. Your accurate self-evaluation generates the school's policies, actions and staff training. For example, you recognised that the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics was not as good as it could be. You made sure that teaching and learning in mathematics improved considerably. As a result, a higher proportion of pupils in Year 6 attained the expected standard in mathematics. More were working at greater depth.

The governing body provides school leaders with effective support and challenge. Governors are knowledgeable and regularly check that the actions taken by leaders have secured improvements. They know the strengths of the school and the areas that require improvement. Governors have a particular focus on the school's support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for disadvantaged pupils. They ensure that funding for these pupils is used effectively.

You have dealt effectively with the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding during lessons and promptly address misconceptions. Pupils are confident to express their opinions and listen well to the views of others. As one pupil explained, 'We can learn lots of things from each other. Even if it's wrong, we can learn from our mistakes.'

You carefully track the achievement of specific groups of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This helps you to target extra help to deal with the social and emotional needs of these pupils, as well as meet their academic requirements. As a result, these pupils are well supported and the majority achieve at least as well as other pupils.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. Staff and governors keep up to date with training. They know what to do to keep pupils safe. You work with external agencies when necessary and refer concerns in a timely way. You and other staff are vigilant and take decisive and prompt action, when needed, to secure pupils' well-being.

Pupils are secure and happy in school. They say that poor behaviour is rare but, when it does happen, staff deal with it quickly and fairly. Pupils feel well cared for by staff. They are taught about potential risks and how to stay safe in different situations. These include the risks linked to terrorism and the safe use of the internet.

## Inspection findings

- School leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the school's current strengths and areas that need improving. You check pupils' progress rigorously and take action when it is needed, so that standards remain high.
- Leaders have high aspirations for all pupils. These have ensured that the school has continued to move forward. As a result, pupils make good progress, have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy learning together. They particularly enjoy the vast range of extra-curricular activities that enrich their learning and keep them healthy. Pupils in Year 6 told me, 'Before school we can take part in the running club with the headteacher, learn to play the recorder, take part in badminton or join in the keep-fit boot camp. After school we can play rugby, sing with the choir, learn Spanish or play netball. There's loads to do!'
- Records of children's learning and their books in the Reception Year show that the vast majority of children make good progress from their different starting points. When children make less progress than they should, staff provide effective extra help so that they catch up. Teachers plan exciting and imaginative tasks that challenge and motivate children. As a result, standards are above average by the end of the Reception Year.
- Pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics have historically been strong. School leaders are ambitious for pupils and have further improved the quality of teaching and learning. They have modified curriculum planning and ensured that pupils have access to good-quality resources. As a result, standards continued to improve in 2017.
- Leaders have raised attainment in mathematics across the school. They provided high-quality training for teachers and teaching assistants to ensure consistency across classes and year groups. As a result, standards in mathematics improved to well above the national averages at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils say they enjoy mathematics because they get 'lots of exciting challenges and problems to solve'.
- Leaders make good use of the additional funding the school receives. They provide extra teaching to individuals and small groups. This, and the work of the pastoral leader, are having a positive impact on improving the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school's information shows that these pupils make similar overall progress to other pupils in the school. Sometimes, they make faster progress. The small number of pupils, however, means that attainment is not consistent in all classes. Very few disadvantaged pupils are writing in greater depth by the end of key stage 2.
- The quality of writing throughout the school is good. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at moving pupils on by asking the right questions. For example, a teacher skilfully highlighted how pupils in Year 5 could improve the structure of their sentences when writing in the first person. This helped the pupils use direct speech in their writing more effectively. You have accurately identified that pupils throughout the school are not being challenged sufficiently

to improve their writing and write in greater depth.

- Pupils' work in their English and mathematics books is of a good standard. This is not consistent, however, in other subjects. Middle leaders have not yet developed the skills they need to ensure that teaching is of a consistently high quality in subjects other than English and mathematics.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- middle leaders develop the skills they need to ensure greater accountability and consistency in teaching and learning across all subjects
- teachers focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning so that more pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, reach higher standards and write in greater depth.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Innes-Taylor  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and three middle leaders. I spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day and I met with a group of pupils. I met with several members of the governing body and an improvement partner from the Learning Unlimited teaching school alliance.

We visited classrooms together and I looked at a range of pupils' work. We discussed the progress of different groups of pupils and the school's plans for improvement. I considered the responses of parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I also considered the responses of staff and pupils to Ofsted's online surveys for them. I scrutinised evidence from a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance, procedures and records for safeguarding and behaviour, information on how the pupil premium funding is spent, an analysis of attendance, and a number of policy documents, including those for safeguarding and behaviour. I examined the school's website to check that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, on the playground and in the lunch hall.