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Mr Neil Porter
Headteacher
St Peter and St Paul RC Junior and Infant School
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Dear Mr Porter

Short inspection of St Peter and St Paul RC Junior and Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 11 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 the school was judged to be good in November 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' effective actions mean that previous weaknesses have been addressed. The school's investment in new computer technology has enabled staff to teach computing more effectively. Consequently, pupils' computing skills have improved and a higher proportion of pupils are reaching the expected standards for their age. This is now stronger than when the school was last inspected. Leaders have worked to improve the school so that pupils continue to make good progress.

You and your deputy are an effective team. You provide good leadership to your staff. Through your regular checks on teaching, you know the strengths of your school and also areas that still need improvement. Your plans to improve the school contain appropriate actions. These plans could be sharper as currently you are not able to judge accurately how well plans are succeeding in delivering your objectives. By doing this, your leadership team and the governing body will be able to evaluate the impact of actions with greater precision.

Governors want the best for your school. You provide them with a good range of information and so they are well informed about the school. Governors check on the quality of work. They do this through regular meetings and attendance at school events. In my discussion with governors, they are clear about the school and its performance information. For example, governors' checks on the school's

performance management of staff are effective.

The vast majority of parents are happy and proud that their children attend your school. It is clear that many appreciate the ethos and the 'welcoming family feel' of your school. Pupils attend regularly and show excitement about their learning.

During our visits to see learning in classrooms, the pupils demonstrated good attitudes and behaviour. Pupils are happy and work together, for example to help overcome problems in mathematics. In one mathematics lesson, pupils persevered despite finding some of the work challenging. The joint working allowed pupils to help each other to find solutions.

You have worked to develop your curriculum so that there is a range of interesting topics for pupils. You have plans to support staff to improve their understanding of expected skills in the foundation subjects (subjects other than English, mathematics and science). This will improve staff's subject knowledge and enable pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects.

You have a clear focus on making sure that teachers plan work that is matched to pupils' needs. This has been successfully addressed since the previous inspection. Consequently, all pupils make good progress. Your tracking grids help to identify pupils' attainment. This means that teachers and teaching assistants know which pupils need to catch up. Teachers use this information well to plan appropriate activities. However, teachers do not offer a consistently high level of challenge for the most able pupils in mathematics. Teachers require a clearer understanding of the higher standard in mathematics so that progress for the most able pupils can be accelerated even further.

Pupils are known as individuals. This means that there is well-planned intervention to support pupils in making accelerated progress. Teaching assistants use this knowledge to work on small steps with individuals and groups to help them catch up or to reach age-appropriate expectations.

Safeguarding is effective.

You know your pupils and their families well. Even minor concerns are recorded by you and your staff. As a result, when you need to support individuals you know exactly what they need. Your family support worker provides effective support. For example, where families referred for specialist support did not meet the threshold, and so did not get support, you were still able to meet their needs.

Leaders' checks on pupils' social, emotional and mental health are effective. Pupils feel safe to talk to an adult. Your scheme for developing pupils' personal, social and health education is also supporting pupils. School's records show that the incidence of poor or discriminatory behaviour is low, which proves that staff and leaders manage behaviour effectively.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for

purpose. Records sampled of vulnerable pupils contain an appropriate chronology. These samples show how leaders have taken action to keep their pupils safe. Governors are included in your training for staff. As a result, they are able to check that their statutory duty in this important area is met.

Inspection findings

- Staff follow your school's policy and practice for the teaching of mathematics. Pupils' engagement in lessons is good and they take pride in their work. For example, the 'steps to success' identifies the learning process for pupils. This helps pupils to develop their mathematical understanding of new concepts. It also enables staff to assess the attainment of pupils accurately. However, teaching in mathematics is not providing the most able pupils with work that matches their level of skill and understanding. They are not challenged consistently well. In 2016 and 2017 at the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standard was below the level seen nationally. Teachers require a better understanding of how to stretch the most able pupils in mathematics.
- Teaching assistants work well with groups to support pupils in making rapid progress. This support enables some of the lowest-ability pupils to complete work at the same level as the main class group. This is helping these pupils to catch up.
- During our discussion about the practice observed, we agreed strengths and areas to improve. You have a thorough understanding of what constitutes effective teaching and how teachers need to improve. This contributes well to your ongoing and accurate self-evaluation of the school. Your records for monitoring are regular and give staff precise next steps on how they can refine their practice. Staff are beginning their involvement in peer observation. This allows you to share good teaching so your agreed practice can become more consistent through the school.
- The plans that you and other leaders have drawn up show that the actions identified are appropriate. But the plans scrutinised do not contain enough detail of how you will measure your progress toward achieving them. Consequently, you and governors do not have a clear enough view of the effectiveness of planned improvements.
- The range of monitoring that you undertake to check on the work in your school is effective. One example is your use of pupil tracking to check where pupils reach in comparison to the expected standards for their age. There are fewer checks on the progress made of the most able pupils from their starting points. For these pupils, leaders' checks on whether they are attaining the highest standards are not secure. So, the match of work to the most able pupils' needs, in mathematics, is not sharp enough.
- Middle leaders are not yet fully involved in the monitoring cycle. This means that they do not have a full grasp of attainment and progress in the subjects they are responsible for, particularly in the foundation subjects.
- Pupils' knowledge and skills in computing have improved considerably since the

previous inspection. This has been aided by an investment in new equipment, including the use of mobile devices. Teachers are also more confident and competent in their teaching of the subject. Examples where pupils have created digital books shows that more pupils are meeting age-expected standards in computing.

- Leaders are proactive about absence and work hard to ensure that pupils attend regularly. Family support and pastoral care has resulted in a recent improvement in the attendance of a minority of frequently absent pupils. Overall attendance rates are positive and broadly in line with national figures.
- Your wider curriculum is still developing. There is a range of exciting topics for pupils to study. Subject leaders' plans show that identification of key expected skills in the foundation subjects is the next step in developing your curriculum. Identifying these key skills will support staff in their assessment of pupils' attainment and achievement across the full range of subjects.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is greater challenge for the most able pupils in mathematics so that more pupils attain the higher standards
- they continue to develop the school's curriculum so that leaders are clear about the attainment and progress of pupils in the foundation subjects
- plans for improvement include precise criteria for success in order to evaluate the impact of actions.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Kentish
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and two other senior leaders. I also met with two governors. I spoke to parents before the start of the school day and considered the 58 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I looked at free-text comments from parents. I visited, together with you and your deputy headteacher, every class from Year 1 through to Year 6 to observe learning, including a detailed look at pupils' books. I observed pupils' behaviour around school and I asked staff about the training they receive to help keep pupils safe.

I scrutinised information about pupils' progress during this academic year. I considered other documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance. I scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures and checks on staff employed in the school. I checked the school website. I also analysed the range of views expressed by staff through Ofsted's questionnaire about the school and its leadership.