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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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18 December 2017

Mr John McHugh
Headteacher
Longridge St Wilfrid's Roman Catholic Primary School
St Wilfrid's Terrace
Longridge
Preston
Lancashire
PR3 3WQ

Dear Mr McHugh

Short inspection of Longridge St Wilfrid's Roman Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 December 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 a clear vision that staff share. You have strengthened the leadership team, which will give greater capacity for further improvement. There have been good improvements to the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. Staff value the professional development opportunities they have and the way in which you allow them to try out new ideas. These opportunities have contributed to the good improvements seen in teaching.

Leaders have dealt with the areas for improvement from the previous inspection effectively. Governors have made judicious appointments to improve teaching and learning and strengthen leadership. Leaders' focus on challenge for all pupils is paying dividends. A greater proportion of pupils than previously in school are working at the higher standards. This is particularly true in mathematics, where leaders have introduced new ways of working, based on international research. Leaders' checks on the performance of teachers are effective in identifying and supporting areas of improvement. The impact of good teaching can be seen in the outcomes for pupils at all key stages.

Governors are committed and supportive of the school. They keep up to date with their own development, so that they can better support the leaders. Recent work on understanding data has enabled governors to ask probing questions about pupils' outcomes. However, governors are not as aware of the progress made by

disadvantaged pupils.

Leaders' professional curiosity and determination to do the best for every child mean that leaders never rest on their laurels. Leaders keep up to date with the latest developments nationally and internationally. Staff research what works for pupils and use this to develop good practice at St Wilfrid's.

You and your senior leaders work well as a team. You have developed real strength in senior leadership. Leaders have ensured that pupils receive a broad curriculum. Teachers enhance the curriculum through exciting projects such as the recent 'big art' week and visits to key historical sites in Europe. Pupils play a major part in the Longridge cluster schools' armistice project. However, although subject leadership is strong in some subjects, for example physical education, music and science, it is at an early stage in history, geography and design technology. These subject leaders ensure that the curriculum is covered, but have not analysed pupils' skills development in their subjects sufficiently well. As a result, pupils' progress in some key skills is slower in these subjects. These subject leaders do not have a good understanding of the strengths in their subjects. As a result, they do not plan well for further developments. You acknowledge that this is an area of priority for future development. The recently appointed curriculum development leaders have begun work to develop this.

Pupils are polite, confident and eager to share their work. They are proud of their school and of their achievements. They have very good attitudes to learning and want to do well. Pupils enjoy school and attendance is good. Pupils show high levels of respect for adults and each other. The well-planned curriculum ensures that pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Adults promote British values well and pupils have a good understanding of democracy and the rule of law. Pupils also have a good understanding of different faiths. However, you acknowledge that pupils have a limited understanding of wider British and world cultures.

Parents are supportive. They appreciate the communication they get via the online app. Parents spoken to said that their children are happy in school and are making good progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

The governors ensure that all policies and procedures are in place, including checks on teachers and governors. Training for staff is comprehensive and up to date. All adults know the pupils well and are vigilant to any signs that there may be a concern. Adults report any concerns to you and you follow up concerns swiftly. Leaders engage well with parents to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Governors take their responsibilities around safeguarding seriously. Consequently, all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a high quality.

Inspection findings

- A key line of enquiry for this inspection was about the progress made by middle- and higher-ability pupils to reach the higher standards in reading and mathematics. In-school data shows that an increasing proportion of pupils are on track to reach the higher standards in mathematics at key stage 1 and key stage 2. This is due to teachers' good subject knowledge and clear explanations. Teachers use effective questioning to check on pupils' understanding. As a result, adults identify misconceptions quickly. Pupils said that they enjoy learning mathematics.
- Adults challenge the most able pupils to deepen their mathematical understanding. For example, Year 6 pupils were able to multiply two fractions using a conventional method. The teacher deepened their understanding by asking the pupils to demonstrate how to do this using strips of paper divided into fractions. The most able pupils said they found this really challenging, but persevered with the task.
- A greater proportion of pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 are working at the higher standards in reading. Leaders' work to build pupils' resilience so that pupils can complete more difficult comprehension questions is beginning to have a positive impact. However, leaders recognise that the recent new way of working has not had time to embed fully and the impact is not evident in all classes.
- Pupils read well and enjoy reading. This is as a result of leaders' work to promote a love of reading throughout school. There are daily reading sessions and the school has its own reading patron. Pupils appreciate the wide variety of good-quality texts on offer. For example, they study work by Charles Dickens and Shakespeare.
- Another line of enquiry was about the progress made by disadvantaged pupils in mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils make some progress from their different starting points in mathematics. However, few are making the rapid progress necessary to reach the higher standards. This is because the most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently in all classes. While most teachers' mathematical subject knowledge is good, you acknowledge that some teachers require additional training and support.
- Leaders track the progress of disadvantaged pupils carefully. Leaders put additional support in place for those pupils who are not reaching the expected standard. However, you do not offer the same support to accelerate learning for middle- and higher-ability disadvantaged pupils in mathematics.
- I also looked at whether the strong outcomes in phonics at key stage 1 are being translated into improvements in spelling at key stage 2. Phonics teaching is strong. Children in the early years get a good start to their knowledge of phonics. They use this knowledge in their own reading and writing. For example, the children were recording what they would like for Christmas onto a voice recorder. They used this to write their own sentences using the letters and sounds they have been taught.
- This strong teaching continues through key stage 1, and a higher proportion of

pupils than nationally achieve the expected standard in the phonics check.

- In the past, spelling at key stage 2 has been weaker. Leaders have analysed carefully the barriers to improvement and have provided additional training for teachers and other adults in school. There is now a consistent approach to spelling. This is having a positive impact. Work in books demonstrates that pupils make good progress with spelling, with the majority of pupils' spelling being age-appropriate. The good phonics teaching further down the school means that when pupils are unsure of a spelling, they fall back on their knowledge of phonics to help them.
- The improvements in grammar, punctuation and spelling in key stage 2 are having a positive impact on the quality of pupils' writing. The most able pupils in key stage 2 are beginning to write with flair, for example: 'Moonlight attacked the darkness, and the gloomy woods came to life.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- subject leaders in history, geography and design technology develop their skills and make best use of assessment information to improve pupils' development of key skills in their subjects
- leaders focus on accelerating progress for disadvantaged pupils in mathematics so that more reach the higher standards
- the curriculum is enhanced further so that pupils develop a greater understanding of the wider world and British cultures.

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

Yours sincerely

Tanya Hughes
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this short inspection, I met with you, members of your leadership team, teachers and governors. I also spoke with a representative from the local authority. You and I visited classes to observe learning and looked at work in pupils' books. I met with pupils throughout the day and spoke with four parents in the playground before school. I considered the 33 responses made by parents on the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. I also considered the 12 responses to the staff questionnaire. I heard several pupils read and observed pupils in the playground and in the dining hall.

I conducted a detailed review of safeguarding, including checking on the school's policies, procedures and record-keeping. I talked with you, other staff and governors about how the school ensures that children are kept safe. I also considered a range of other documentation, including school improvement planning and information about pupils' progress and attainment.