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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Miss Maeve Creed
Headteacher
St Mary's Catholic Primary School
Durants Road
Ponders End
Enfield
EN3 7DE

Dear Miss Creed

Short inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 June 2018, 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 March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You and your staff ensure that pupils continue to make good progress from their various starting points. You have successfully maintained the above-average attainment by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. You have taken effective action to tackle the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. For example, work in mathematics is not repeated needlessly and there is now a greater pace and challenge in lessons. You and your leadership team continue to motivate staff. Their high morale remains a strength of the school.

You and your leadership team have established an ethos for the school that encourages pupils to be polite and respectful and to develop positive attitudes towards learning. Their willingness to come to school is evident in their well-above-average rates of attendance. From the early years provision to Year 6, your teachers form good relationships with the pupils, providing them with a wealth of interesting activities across the curriculum. Pupils concentrate well in class and are keen to work with each other. Pupils learn important values, such as kindness and respect. For example, attractive displays of work across the school show the importance placed on learning about and respecting world faiths and various cultures.

Parents and carers spoken with during the inspection were pleased with the school and made positive comments such as 'It's a very inclusive school and they give us

good feedback on how well our children are doing' and 'The children know how to behave and are encouraged to do their best.'

Your pupils work studiously and make good progress across the curriculum. However, some opportunities are missed for pupils to use their prior knowledge and reasoning skills to explain their predictions and findings in their investigative science work, and to support their reading.

You and your leaders, including the governors, are not complacent. Together, you monitor teaching and learning rigorously and can demonstrate how both are improving. Your evaluation of the school's work is thorough and accurate. Members of staff at all levels are keen to help develop the school further. You have identified the right priorities for further improvement. For example, you are keen to strengthen the progress of disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, with records being detailed and of high quality. Training for members of staff and governors in looking after and protecting the pupils is frequent and kept up to date. Members of staff are clear about their responsibilities and are checked for suitability for working with pupils.

Pupils say that they feel safe at school and know how to avoid danger in the wider community. They say that unkind behaviour is rare and that they know what to do if they have any concerns. They explained clearly examples of potentially unsafe behaviour such as 'stranger danger' and using certain computer applications.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, I met with you to confirm the key lines of enquiry for my day in school. First, we agreed to look at how well funding for disadvantaged pupils was being spent and its impact on the progress of these pupils. At the time of the previous inspection, these pupils were about two terms behind their peers. Assessment information for the end of Year 6 in 2017 showed that, while the attainment and progress of these pupils compared favourably with the national picture, their progress was slightly less strong than for other pupils at your school. You have rightly identified improving the progress of this group of pupils further on your action plan for development.
- I was pleased to see from your school information that most disadvantaged pupils currently at the school are making at least good progress from their starting points. Your information shows that disadvantaged pupils who also have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are most able learn especially well. We agreed that spending on disadvantaged pupils who are currently working at the level expected for their age could be more focused to enable a higher proportion to make accelerated progress.
- Next, we agreed to look at how well pupils are developing more advanced reading skills. The most able pupils made less progress in reading than in writing

and mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2017. As a school, you have been focusing on deepening the pupils' understanding in reading this year. The most able pupils who were heard reading during the inspection read fluently, with a good understanding of the texts. In the literacy lessons we visited, we could see that pupils were answering questions to help them look for hidden meanings. We agreed that, occasionally, the most able could be encouraged to answer the more difficult questions sooner to extend their learning.

- Finally, we decided to look at how well teachers challenge pupils across the curriculum and adapt work so that it meets their differing needs. Pupils were not always challenged sufficiently at the time of the previous inspection. We looked at work samples from across the school and agreed that pupils had good opportunities to describe what they had learned across the subjects. They make good observations during scientific investigations but too few opportunities exist for pupils to demonstrate their knowledge and reasoning to explain their predictions and findings.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- opportunities for pupils to use their knowledge and reasoning to explain what they have learned in reading and science are strengthened
- the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are making accelerated progress is increased.

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

Yours sincerely

Alison Cartlidge
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspector observed teaching and learning during several learning walks with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. Discussions were held with leaders, other members of staff, the chair of governors and an adviser from the local authority. The inspector held informal discussions with several parents. There were too few responses to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, to be considered but written comments were reviewed. Pupils were heard reading, and samples of pupils' work were scrutinised. A range of information supplied by the school was checked, including the school's own information about how well pupils are doing. The

inspector also evaluated the school development plan, self-evaluation and records relating to safeguarding.