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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Kate Saunders
Headteacher
St George's Catholic Primary School
Woodcock Road
Warminster
Wiltshire
BA12 9EZ

Dear Mrs Saunders

Short inspection of St George's Catholic Primary School, Warminster

Following my visit to the school on 23 October 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 2015.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

There have been significant recent changes to leadership and teaching staff. In September 2018, after several years teaching at the school, you and your acting deputy headteacher were promoted to your current roles. The English subject leader is also new to the role. Two recently qualified teachers joined the school in September. It will take time for leaders to fully develop their skills to improve teaching and for the new staffing structure to become fully embedded. Staff enjoy working at the school because leaders are considerate and support their professional development. As a result, staff feel motivated and well respected.

Over time, pupils' outcomes at the end of each key stage, including the early years, have been broadly in line with, and often above, those of pupils nationally. However, last year, the proportion of key stage 2 pupils who attained appropriate standards for their age in all subjects declined. This was particularly the case in mathematics. In addition, few pupils achieved greater depth in their learning in reading and mathematics. Good teaching ensures that approximately three quarters of current pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. However, teaching for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities does not routinely help pupils to make strong progress. As a result, almost half of these pupils are working at standards below those typical for their age.

You have quickly identified the school's main priorities and taken appropriate action to address these. For example, you are aware that previous assessment of pupils' learning has been ineffective because it has not enabled leaders to accurately evaluate pupils' progress. This has hindered leaders from intervening when teaching needs to improve. You are developing your monitoring of teaching to enable you to check pupils' progress more precisely. You have correctly identified that disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities need to make stronger progress to catch up. As a result, you have deployed teaching assistants more effectively to support pupils' learning and behaviour. Extra help is improving pupils' confidence and helping them to focus on their learning. It is also allowing pupils to manage their emotions and behaviour. However, it is too soon to determine how effectively this will impact on pupils' academic progress.

Governors are fully committed to school improvement. They ask searching questions and routinely visit the school. This enables them to challenge and support leaders and check the effectiveness of teaching. However, governors' understanding of pupils' progress is limited due to the shortcomings of the school's previous assessment system. The school website provides a useful source of information for parents and carers. However, governors have not ensured that this has been updated.

The overwhelming majority of parents are positive about the school and the caring and supportive atmosphere you create. Their comments typically include, 'The school values its children and makes them feel loved and welcome.' One parent added, 'My children are stretched and challenged without being pressured.' Adults forge mutually respectful relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils feel valued and know who to turn to if they are upset or worried. Pupils are well behaved, polite and sociable. They enjoy coming school and find learning fun. Consequently, they listen carefully in lessons and work hard.

Safeguarding is effective.

You place pupils' well-being at the heart of everything you do and pastoral support is strong. You provide staff with timely updates to training and, as a result, staff and governors recognise that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. Staff know the signs to look for that could indicate a pupil is at risk. They can consistently explain how they would refer on their concerns. You maintain well-organised and up-to-date safeguarding records. You routinely check that your actions are having an impact. You carry out the necessary checks to ensure that all adults working in the school are safe to work with children. You meticulously record this information on the school's single central record. Staff are well trained to care for pupils in different situations, such as when they need medical help or in the event of an emergency.

Pupils feel safe at school and can explain clearly how to use the internet safely. For example, they know that they must not reveal personal information. The majority of pupils attend school regularly but, despite your efforts, several pupils are frequently

absent. This means that they are not able to take full advantage of the education that the school offers.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was to find out the reason for the recent decline in outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in 2018, particularly in mathematics. I also wanted to check if this was the case in other year groups. Some pupils at the end of key stage 2 had recently started at the school when they took the end of key stage tests. Other pupils had complex learning needs. This limited how well they achieved.
- Our reviews of your latest assessment information and pupils' learning reveal that good teaching ensures that most pupils achieve well in mathematics. Teachers match learning activities to pupils' ability and give clear explanations so that pupils understand what to do. Pupils enjoy tackling appropriately challenging problems. This helps them to consolidate their skills and develop fluency in mathematics. For example, Year 3 pupils confidently explained their understanding of inverse operations when they check their answers. Year 6 pupils applied their knowledge of multiples to find prime numbers and factors.
- Teachers use effective questions to assess pupils' understanding and develop pupils' reasoning. For example, one teacher asked pupils to 'explain how you know it is a prime number'. You and other new leaders are in the early stages of evaluating pupils' progress and monitoring teaching. It is too soon to determine how effectively this will ensure that teaching supports pupils to achieve the highest standards they are capable of.
- Next, I wanted to find out how leaders have improved teaching for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. This is because, over time, few of these pupils achieve well. You provide additional help which enables pupils to manage their behaviour and improve their learning. Teaching assistants model learning carefully and ask questions to assess pupils' understanding. This is improving pupils' confidence and helping them understand what to do. Pupils are learning how to manage their emotions, which helps them to focus on their learning. However, new leaders do not currently have an accurate understanding of pupils' progress. This has hindered you from developing precisely focused teaching interventions to help pupils to catch up. As a result, approximately half of these pupils are working at standards below those typical for their age.
- My third line of enquiry was to establish how effectively leaders are improving pupils' attendance. This is because absence for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities increased last year. Pupils enjoy school and the new reward system for good attendance motivates most pupils to attend regularly. However, several pupils are frequently absent. This is sometimes because parents choose to take unauthorised holidays. You have recently improved your checks on pupils' attendance and intervene swiftly to tackle high absence. You work closely with the family support worker and the educational welfare officer to emphasise the importance of regular attendance to parents.

However, it is too soon to establish the impact of this.

- Finally, I wanted to find out about the school's communication with parents, because some aspects of the website are missing. Parents agree that communication is effective and a parent commented, 'The new headteacher has already got parents on board.' Governors are committed to developing partnerships with parents. However, they have not fully met their statutory duty and ensured that all aspects of the school website are up to date. This limits how much parents can find out about the effectiveness of the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the new assessment system is fully embedded and enables leaders to evaluate pupils' progress effectively
- precisely targeted support for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities helps them to catch up
- new leaders are provided with training to enable them to securely evaluate teaching so that they intervene appropriately when teaching needs to improve
- attendance improves for pupils who are regularly absent
- the website is updated.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Beeks
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the acting deputy headteacher, who is also the early years leader. I met with the special educational needs coordinator and the English subject leader. I also held a meeting with a group of governors and had a telephone conversation with the local authority adviser. I checked the school's single central record and your safeguarding records and we discussed your safeguarding procedures. We reviewed the school's latest assessment information and discussed the school's self-evaluation and development priorities. Together, we observed pupils' learning in mathematics in all key stage 2 classes. We carried out a joint review of pupils' learning in writing and mathematics in Year 1 and Year 3 with the English subject leader and the acting deputy headteacher. I spoke with several pupils in lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime. I talked to parents at the beginning of the school day and considered the 19 responses to Ofsted's online

survey, Parent View, along with 20 additional free-text comments. I took account of the 13 responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and the 20 responses to the online pupil survey.