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Mrs Pamela Tonge  
Principal  
Saint Norbert's Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy  
Fieldside  
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Dear Mrs Tonge

### **Short inspection of Saint Norbert's Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 8 February 2019, 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 February 2015.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your very effective leadership, over many years, has inspired loyalty from other staff. You are very well supported by your deputy headteacher, middle leaders, teachers and support staff. The continuing professional development you have provided for this stable staff team has led directly to improved standards of attainment and progress. Parents and carers who made their views known are delighted with the standard of education their children receive. One parent said: 'The staff, right from support staff through to the headteacher, are welcoming, supporting and do a fantastic job.'

At the time of the last inspection, teaching was not good enough to make sure that all pupils were achieving as well as they could. Over the last three years, the progress pupils make across key stage 2 has improved considerably. The school improvement plan rightly shows that you intend to ensure that the rate of progress key stage 2 pupils make continues to improve.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved since the last inspection. Leaders' records and governors' minutes record the fact that weak teaching has been eliminated. Governors continue to hold leaders to account to ensure that this improvement is sustained.

Governors told me that when they joined the new multi-academy trust in September 2018, the trust made suggestions to improve governors' work.

Governors made those changes and as a result they are more effective now in the way that they challenge school leaders. I saw evidence of this in the records of governors' meetings.

At the last inspection you were also challenged to improve the work of subject and middle leaders. You have taken great strides forward to achieve this. Middle leaders have been instrumental in leading the school to achieve many external awards in recognition of the depth of study pupils achieve in the wider curriculum. The school has held the gold Artsmark in recent years and middle leaders feel that they are well on the way to securing the platinum standard.

Pupils were very proud to tell me why they deserve their gold award as a Rights Respecting School. This award encourages schools to place the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child at the heart of its ethos and curriculum. The school's work on developing its Catholic ethos and pupils' good character shines through pupils' conduct and behaviour. Pupils speak with such confidence about 'the rights of all children to rest and play'. Pupils help others achieve this in their roles as active sports ambassadors and playground buddies. Pupils' care for others, and their eagerness to make a positive difference as citizens, is a strength of the school. One parent said: 'All the staff of the school should be proud of the children they educate – children with good manners, pride, respect and good morals.'

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff have been given regular training and they know how to keep pupils safe. The school works effectively with other professional partners when pupils need additional help.

The multi-academy trust makes sure that all the proper checks are made when staff are recruited. The school business manager keeps detailed records of additional checks made by the school, and the chair of the governing body makes frequent visits to scrutinise this record.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including staying safe online. Pupils say there is no bullying in school, but they are proud to serve as anti-bullying ambassadors to ensure that this remains the case.

### **Inspection findings**

- The mathematics leader has good subject knowledge and he articulates a very clear strategy for a new way of planning the mathematics curriculum. This approach has resulted in increasing pupils' confidence in mathematics, leading, in turn, to rising standards of attainment and progress in key stage 2.
- Key stage 2 pupils have a competent and increasing level of mathematical fluency. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills to reason and problem solve. Teachers use assessment well to ensure that learning needs are met, so that pupils make even better progress.

Pupils' pride in their work, and their neat presentation, helps them to avoid making careless errors across columns in formal written methods of calculation.

- Teachers' and teaching assistants' subject knowledge in the teaching of phonics is good. Adults in lessons ask questions that widen and deepen pupils' understanding of vocabulary. Pupils have fun, learning quickly in each phonics session. The quality of phonics teaching in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 is consistently high and pupils are making progress in phonics that is at least good.
- The English leader has good subject knowledge and she has increased the range of reading material on offer. Key stage 2 pupils enjoy this wide variety of reading texts and activities. The teaching of reading includes well-established classroom routines, and pupils apply themselves diligently to reading fiction and non-fiction texts. Pupils work independently with confidence and maturity and they are making good progress in developing their inferential reading skills.
- The standard of written work that pupils produce is high. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation. Many pupils write with a fluent, joined style and their spelling and punctuation are generally accurate. Pupils' writing is of high quality both within English lessons and across the wider curriculum. Pupils are given the opportunity to write in a range of genres in all subjects and the standard of writing in religious education is particularly high.
- Middle leaders are effective in other subjects. For example, leaders know that geography outcomes are good through pupils' own work and through their achievement of externally accredited awards. Pupils demonstrated their knowledge of human and physical geography in other cultures to achieve the International School Award. Pupils were inspired by a charity which arranges for people in developing countries to have clean, safe water to grow their own key-hole garden linked to water conservation. Pupils also used their harvest thanksgiving collections to provide clean water in Africa and to donate food locally through the Crowle foodbank.
- The school's own records show that, currently, pupils across the school are making good progress in all subjects. Evidence gathered during the inspection supports this evaluation. Following your own regular lesson observations and monitoring activities, you have asked teachers to make sure that the most able pupils are given even greater challenge in some lessons. This, you intend, will enable the most able pupils to make even better progress.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- continue to improve the rate of progress pupils are making across key stage 2
- ensure that the most able pupils are given even greater challenge in all lessons.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Nottingham, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North Lincolnshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tracey Ralph  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection you and I observed lessons together in every year group. Pupils' work in all year groups and in all subjects was scrutinised alongside senior leaders. I met with a focus group of Year 5 and 6 pupils, that included members of the school council.

Meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher and with subject leaders. I also met with four governors and the director of performance and standards from the St Therese of Lisieux Catholic Multi Academy Trust. I also met with a representative from North Lincolnshire Local Authority at your request.

Various documents were evaluated, including the school improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation document, monitoring records and governors' meeting minutes.

Safeguarding documents were reviewed alongside the school business manager and the designated safeguarding leader. The 42 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, were also taken into account along with comments made personally to me by several parents bringing their children to school at the start of the day.