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Mrs Lisa Ashton
Headteacher
Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School
Fleming Field
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Dear Mrs Ashton

Short inspection of Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 November 2015 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

You and your senior leadership team have sustained and improved on the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have established a reflective and purposeful air in the school and built on positive relationships between staff and pupils based on a strong commitment to the rights of the child. This strongly reflects your mission statement. Your resolute belief that all barriers to learning can be overcome is reflected in the increasing numbers of pupils leaving the school achieving at higher and highest levels.

Pupils have a positive attitude to their learning and to each other. They behave with due regard for each other in classrooms and at playtimes. They take turns, listen to each other and take others' views and feelings into account. They settle quickly in lessons and respond well to the teacher's instructions. As a result, pupils concentrate on their tasks and when their attention does wander they respond well to redirection from the teacher. This is because teachers work hard to ensure lessons are interesting and stimulating and closely match the needs of individual pupils so that no individual is left behind.

Parents are confident in the school leaders, feel well informed about the progress their child is making and believe the behaviour of pupils is good. Documentation reviewed during the inspection confirms that the vast majority of parents find the school an open and supportive place to send their children.

A key characteristic of your leadership is your determination not only to reduce the gaps between groups of pupils who are vulnerable to underachievement and other pupils, but to eradicate them altogether. Pupils, whatever their starting points, make expected progress and many make better than expected progress. Boys are catching up very quickly with girls and sometimes outperforming them. Those from disadvantaged backgrounds likewise. This is due to you and your staff having a sharp focus on the outcomes for these pupils and regularly reviewing how well they are doing. Despite your success in helping all groups of pupils achieve well, this remains a key priority in your drive for further improvement.

As a result of your highly effective leadership, the school has maintained the strengths that were noted at the last inspection. Your determination to ensure that the school continues to improve has driven ongoing improvement to successfully address the areas identified for improvement by inspectors. This has been achieved during a period in which the majority of staff are new to the school since the last inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your senior leaders have a clear focus on, and are resolute about your efforts to keep pupils safe. Safeguarding is a strength of the school and permeates all aspects of school life. All staff receive the required training and additional training keeps staff aware of what constitutes risk. You make sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed. You review case files to ensure best practice is maintained and lessons learned for further improvements. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online and how to deal with other forms of bullying. Pupils say bullying is rare but if it happens it is dealt with quickly and effectively.

Inspection findings

You, your senior leaders and staff are strongly committed to continuous improvement. You have addressed the areas identified for improvement at the last inspection so that both writing and mathematics now match and surpass the outcomes seen in reading in Key Stage 1 when compared to national averages. Where additional issues arise you tackle them swiftly and effectively. For example, the rate of progress across Key Stage 2 writing in 2014 slowed but this was swiftly rectified through robust, well-targeted action. Outcomes in 2015 improved and now match those seen elsewhere.

Pupils make at least good progress across the school. The rate of progress made by pupils in Key Stage 1 has accelerated, especially in writing and mathematics. Improvements to reading have not kept pace with those seen in writing and mathematics. All those who needed to catch up have done so. The progress made by disadvantaged pupils and those vulnerable to underachievement is a strength of

the school and matches and often exceeds that seen by all pupils nationally. By the time the pupils leave your school at the end of Key Stage 2 they have the skills and understanding in reading, writing and mathematics that allow them the opportunity to thrive in secondary education. This is because teachers have responded positively to your aspiration for all pupils to achieve at the highest possible level and now believe in the difference they can make to all pupils regardless of their starting points. As a result, good and better teaching is improving outcomes for pupils. In lessons work is well planned and matched to the needs of pupils. This means pupils enjoy their work, especially in mathematics and writing, and many find it challenging but doable.

You and your leaders use vigorous monitoring to support and challenge staff and hold them responsible for the progress pupils make and what difference their teaching is making. You act to ensure that training and professional support helps teachers meet the particular development needs of individual pupils. These factors, alongside the clearly stated raised expectations of what pupils can achieve, have resulted in teachers stepping up to the mark. Middle leaders are growing in confidence but need to play a bigger role in tracking the quality of teaching in their subject areas and the difference this is making to pupils' learning. They report to governors on a regular basis and have a developing understanding of what needs to be done next to improve teaching.

You and your senior leaders rightly ensure that the quality of teaching and the impact it has on pupils' progress is a focus for monitoring. Your work to minimise and then eradicate gaps between outcomes for different groups of pupils is a strength of the school. You strive to identify where gaps in pupils' learning are emerging as early as possible and you take action in a timely manner. For example, boys' writing, when compared to girls', has emerged as an issue for some pupils in Key Stage 1. As a result, you have started to address this through targeted intervention and support.

Where the standard of teaching starts to fall below that seen in the rest of the school you quickly identify issues and act swiftly to take effective action. As a result, teaching across the school has improved since the last inspection and continues to improve.

Governors have a high level of engagement with the school and challenge you and your senior leaders to improve further. They have taken positive steps to improve their own impact in school. Governors have restructured their committees and ensured the remits for each are clear. They meet regularly and receive reports from visits made by governors and school leaders at all levels. An audit of skills identified gaps in their own understanding and skills, and governors have been committed to addressing these through additional training. As a result, they know the school well, have a secure and detailed view of the effectiveness of the provision and help drive the priorities for further improvement.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- middle leaders continue to grow in confidence and play an even greater role in driving school improvements
- they build on lessons learnt from securing improved outcomes in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1 so that all subjects, including reading, develop strongly.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Brown

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy, some middle leaders and a group of governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. I visited several classrooms with you to observe teaching. I spoke with a range of pupils in lessons and at playtimes and talked to a selected group of pupils about the school. I reviewed information from Parent View. I evaluated recent information about the progress pupils make across the school and looked in pupils' books to ascertain how the accuracy of assessment is established. I reviewed safeguarding arrangements in the school, including looking at documentation and files and at the information provided to parents on the school website.