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Mrs Pauline Burnside
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Burnside

Short inspection of St Patrick's RC Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 January 2016, 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 July 2011.

This school continues to be good.

You have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have steadily improved the proportion of children reaching expected levels at the end of Reception class to above the national average. Pupils' above average performance in the Year 1 phonics check (letters and the sounds they represent) has been sustained. You have increased the proportion of pupils reaching and exceeding expected levels at the end of Key Stage 1. Despite a dip in pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2014, you significantly improved the standards reached by pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 in 2015 in all subjects to well above the national average. These improvements demonstrate the impact of your good leadership and the capacity for improvement in the future.

You have the trust and confidence of staff, governors, parents and children. They recognise that you provide a strong role model and communicate your high expectations clearly. Despite some recent changes in staffing, you have worked tirelessly to minimise the impact of these changes on the educational experience of pupils. Parents and children value your approachability and the culture you have created where staff go the extra mile to meet every pupil's needs.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to improve teaching by sharing the most effective teaching practice across the school. You were also tasked with ensuring that teachers' feedback helped pupils to improve their learning. You have provided opportunities for staff to share each other's practice and to link with teachers in

other schools to learn from their work. You have reviewed the policy for marking and feedback and monitored this closely to ensure that it is consistently implemented by all staff. Pupils report that feedback from their teachers is helping them to make progress, particularly in writing and mathematics, and this is evident in their workbooks. As a result of your work, teaching continues to be consistently good across the school.

Additional funding has been used effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils at each key stage. You have increased teaching assistant support and targeted it carefully to close gaps in pupils' attainment. In 2015, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils reaching expected levels for their age at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 exceeded the national average for all pupils.

You are clear about the strengths and areas for development in the school. You have maintained a firm focus on improving the quality of education, even at times when leadership capacity in the school was reduced due to staff absence. With the support of the local authority and the diocese, you secured temporary leadership support which enabled you to tackle aspects of the curriculum where pupils' performance was weaker. This resulted in improvements to the mathematics curriculum and standards in the subject rising sharply across the school. You have now appointed a new leadership team and are appropriately focused on developing their leadership skills so they can support you in rapidly driving improvements in the school.

While your pupils make good progress during their time at school, you correctly identified that some more-able pupils were capable of making progress even more quickly to reach higher levels of attainment in the Reception Year and by the end of Year 2. You have increased the proportions of pupils reaching the higher levels by the end of Key Stage 1 over the past three years. You recognise that this can improve further, particularly in reading, and that more children are also capable of exceeding the expected level by the end of the early years.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All staff receive training and guidance relevant to their role and checks are carried out to ensure the suitability of adults to work with children. Appropriate records are maintained of child protection concerns. The curriculum places a strong emphasis on pupils' safety and your work over the past year to raise the profile of online safety has ensured that pupils have a clear understanding of the risks associated with social media. All parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, indicated that their child felt safe at school and the pupils who talked to me during the inspection confirmed this.

Inspection findings

You have systematically improved teaching across the school. You undertake regular checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' work and revisit these to ensure that

there have been improvements to areas you identified for development. You have reviewed the school system for providing feedback to pupils on their work. Pupils appreciate the guidance they are given and enjoy the stamps that teachers use in their books. Pupils make good use of the time provided to correct and improve their work and this has accelerated the progress they make in their learning. You have increased the support provided by teaching assistants in classrooms and have ensured that teachers understand their role in directing this support precisely. During the inspection, in all classes, teaching assistants made a striking contribution to the learning of groups of pupils, including some of the most-able pupils.

You know the school and each cohort of pupils well. While introducing a new system of assessment, you have taken great care to ensure that teachers' assessments of what pupils can do are consistent and accurate. As a result, teachers are able to identify gaps in pupils' achievement accurately and plan successfully to address them. You have taken swift action to address gaps in pupils' attainment which have emerged across the school, for example in mathematics at the end of 2014. Leaders reviewed the calculations policy and provided support for teaching staff to improve their subject knowledge. This resulted in a significant increase in the standards reached by pupils in mathematics by the end of 2015, with every pupil in Year 6 exceeding the nationally expected level.

Your work to develop the quality of teaching has resulted in steadily improving outcomes for pupils in all key stages. You correctly identified in your self-evaluation, however, that not enough pupils were reaching the highest levels of attainment quickly enough so that they enter Key Stage 2 working securely above the expected level for their age. You have begun to address this and the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in Year 2 in 2015 increased. Pupils' workbooks show that, at times, the most-able pupils are still not challenged to achieve as well as they can. You acknowledge this and recognise that more pupils should exceed the expected levels at the end of Reception and at the end of Key Stage 1.

You have worked with the education welfare service to improve pupils' attendance, particularly for those who are disadvantaged, and this is now close to the national average for all pupils. Leaders have also reviewed the behaviour policy in school and pupils report that teachers manage behaviour much more consistently. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour are rare. Pupils show respect and tolerance to others as a result of the strong focus you place on these qualities in your curriculum for personal and social development and religious education. Pupils are happy at school and 100% of those who responded to the questionnaire during the inspection said they would recommend their school to a friend.

Over the past 18 months, you have appointed a new leadership team who have already begun to take action to develop the quality of teaching and the curriculum in school. Middle leaders have introduced a new approach to the teaching of writing, including pupils' application of skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Pupils' workbooks show that this is improving the accuracy of their writing. In the early

years, the leader has provided effective support to a new teacher to ensure that the school's expectations of the quality of teaching are maintained. You recognise that your leadership team need to develop their skills in planning for the longer-term strategic improvement of the school and this is a focus of your school development plan.

Governors know the strengths and the areas for development in the school. They conduct regular checks on the work carried out by teachers and leaders. A recent report by the governor with responsibility for teaching and learning provided a succinct evaluation of the newly introduced marking and feedback policy. Governors challenge the headteacher over aspects of school performance, such as financial planning. They recognise that they need to ensure that targets set in the school development plan to improve outcomes for pupils are more precise so they can hold teachers and leaders to account for this aspect of the school's work.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- teaching is challenging the most-able pupils to make more rapid progress to reach the higher attainment levels at the end of the early years and Key Stage 1
- targets set to improve outcomes for pupils are more precise so that governors can keep a careful check on the impact of leaders' work
- the newly established leadership team develop the skills they need to support the headteacher fully with strategic school improvement.

Yours sincerely

Claire Brown
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection, I discussed the work of the school with you and the deputy headteacher, with middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Board and another governor. I met with the local authority adviser and conducted a telephone meeting with a diocesan representative. I scrutinised a range of documentation about the school's performance and the school development plan. I examined information about the safeguarding of pupils. I considered the 23 responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, eight responses received to the staff questionnaire and 16 responses from pupil questionnaires. I visited all classes to observe teaching and learning, including jointly observing teaching with you. I considered samples of work in pupils' books and talked to pupils about their experiences in school.