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Mrs Anne Norris  
Acting headteacher  
The Rosary Catholic Primary School  
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B8 3SF

Dear Mrs Norris

### **Short inspection of The Rosary Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 26 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 March 2011.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have ensured that the school is not standing still and continues to improve although you and other leaders are in an acting capacity. You have continued to promote the ethos of the school where pupils from different faiths and backgrounds work harmoniously with each other and have high aspirations for the future. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the values promoted by the school. The can-do culture of the school means that all staff share a clear vision of improvement and aspiration. Pupils know that whatever their starting points, they can succeed.

Assessments show that standards have risen in reading, writing and mathematics, especially for younger pupils who get off to a flying start in early years and Key Stage 1. This has been achieved through consistently good teaching and effective support. As a result:

- Children in early years make very rapid progress from their very low starting points
- Pupils do very well in their phonics outcomes in Years 1 and 2

- Standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils in Key Stage 1
- By the end of Year 6 pupils have achieved expected standards for their age and are well prepared for secondary school.
- The attainment gap is closing for disadvantaged pupils by the end of Year 6.

Pupils spoken to reflected the ethos and values of the school and confirmed the school was a harmonious community. They were unanimous that they feel very safe and well looked after. They are confident in talking to adults if they have concerns and said the sanctions are effective in dealing with any incidents of misbehaviour. There are no exclusions. Pupils are well informed about different faiths and, through direct experience of visits to places of worship, know about the similarities and differences between major faiths.

The last inspection commended the strong leadership and shared commitment to improvement among staff and you have maintained this. Inspectors noted that children's language development in early years needed to accelerate and that pupil progress in Key Stage 1 needed to improve, and you have achieved this.

You recognise that the school is not yet outstanding. Standards at the end of Year 6 are not as high in reading and writing as they are in mathematics and the proportion of pupils exceeding national expectations in reading and writing needs to be higher.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders work tirelessly to maintain a culture where all staff are vigilant in making sure pupils keep safe. Safeguarding arrangements are appropriate and the recording and reporting of information are very detailed. Staff and governors are well trained. Governors are well informed of their duties and are up to date about what they need to do to check that the school meets all its requirements.

### **Inspection findings**

- Different groups of pupils are all making good progress from their low starting points, especially those who are learning English as an additional language, who are making very rapid progress. They are integrated well into lessons and leaders make sure they hear consistently good role models of spoken English from the very start of their education.
- Leaders check regularly and in great detail how well pupils are doing. They are quick to identify any emerging trends or patterns where pupils have fallen behind and to put measures in place to address this.
- Leaders have significantly improved the provision for children in early years. Consequently there is a year-on-year improvement in the proportion of children at age-related expectations who are well prepared to move on to

Key Stage 1. In particular, children have a rich range of opportunities to support emerging writing for a real purpose, for example making shopping lists or preparing a menu in a café.

- Adults in early years ask challenging questions of children and get them to self-correct their work. Children from a very early age are making choices about their learning and taking responsibility for tidying up.
- Standards in Key Stage 1 have continued to improve over the last five years and are now higher than nationally. A strong focus on teaching phonics has led to a high proportion of children reaching the expected standard by the end of Year 1.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have been maintained even though, with each new cohort, pupils' starting points are lower as a higher proportion of pupils join the school with little or no English.
- Pupils do particularly well in mathematics and the spelling and punctuation tests in Year 6, where pupils' gaps in written English are less of a barrier to achievement.
- Leaders have an accurate view of what the school does well and where it needs to improve. They also know the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and draw on evidence from pupils' books and outcomes to evaluate the quality of teaching.
- To develop the school even more, leaders and governors have looked to external partners to review aspects of the school's performance in order to be challenged to improve further.
- Governors are highly knowledgeable and strategic in their thinking. They have managed the headteacher vacancy well to ensure continuity of leadership and are highly ambitious for the school. They are extremely experienced and have expertise in the fields of business and education. They ask leaders challenging questions about outcomes of pupils.
- Pupils have numerous opportunities to practise their literacy skills through other subjects such as science, where they write up their experiments in a structured format with hypotheses and conclusions.
- In Year 6, pupils are developing their understanding of how to structure a balanced debate in writing and the key vocabulary needed to support their arguments. They write at length with sustained concentration. Teachers have successfully engaged boys in writing through the recent study of *Macbeth*.
- A small proportion of pupils spoken to, or who responded to the survey, said that at times their work is too easy and not challenging enough.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- standards in reading and writing are as high at the end of Year 6 as they are in mathematics
- pupils are sufficiently challenged to enable more of them to exceed the expected rate of achievement for their age, especially in reading and writing.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Birmingham City Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection I met you and your acting deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher as well as other members of staff including the science coordinator, senior secretary and business manager. I met five members of the governing body including the chair and vice-chair. I took part in four lesson observations with you and observed pupils as they moved around the school. I met with a group of 11 pupils from Years 1 to 6. I took account of 15 responses to Parent View, a letter from a parent, 85 responses from staff and 10 responses from pupils to questionnaires. I considered the school's analysis of recent pupil performance and evaluated other records including those concerning keeping pupils safe. I conducted a book scrutiny of their work in science.