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Mr Michael George
Headteacher
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Dear Mr George

Short inspection of St Hugh of Lincoln Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 23 February 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 November 2010.

This school continues to be good.

You have maintained a good quality of education for your pupils since the last inspection. You, your staff and governors have a clear vision for the school that promotes the achievement of every pupil within a caring community based on Christian values. I saw your aim to create 'one family, learning together, valuing everyone, every day' manifested in everyone's work throughout the day. There is a strong culture of nurturing and caring, as well as having high expectations. Pupils learn in a happy, calm, friendly atmosphere. Staff are fully supportive of the direction you set for your school. Pupils are keen to help one another. The older pupils relish opportunities to lead others, such as playing with younger pupils during break as 'play buddies'. The large majority of parents are positive about the school and appreciate the care and support that their children receive. One parent commented that the school was 'like one happy family'. However, a small minority of parents were unhappy about the way leaders had responded to concerns they had raised.

You have tackled the areas for improvement from the last inspection successfully. Standards have risen and by the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is above national levels in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of children in the early years who have secured a good level of development by the end of their Reception year has risen rapidly. Last year, there

was a fall in the percentage of pupils in Year 1 who met the expected standard in phonics (the sounds that letters make). You have taken steps to address this through using precision teaching, which has been so effective in Year 2, to pinpoint the pupils' individual learning needs during Year 1.

Since you became headteacher in 2012, you have rightly concentrated on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Staff have visited other schools to gain new ideas and share good practice. You use your expertise to lead effective teaching strategies, so that most teaching is consistently good, and some outstanding.

You have made good headway in developing a way of tracking individual pupils' progress, to align with the government's recent changes to the curriculum and assessment arrangements. You have sensibly introduced a range of ways to check how well pupils are progressing in reading, writing and mathematics. This helps you to identify pupils who may be falling behind so that you can provide well-targeted support. As a result, pupils currently in the school make good progress. There are a very small number of disadvantaged pupils in the school, and they generally make expected progress, rather than good progress. Leaders have not checked carefully that the additional pupil premium funding is being used effectively to close the gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others in the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

You ensure that procedures for safeguarding the pupils are carried out correctly. Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training and senior leaders hold relevant qualifications. Parents, staff and pupils are united in their view that pupils are safe in school. There are well-planned opportunities for pupils to learn to keep themselves safe, including e-safety. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of the risks associated with accessing or sharing information online. Staff take an active approach to safeguarding, following up concerns swiftly. They ensure that they seek the right advice from other agencies when necessary. All current policies reflect the most recent national guidance and leaders have a clear understanding of their new duties, such as keeping pupils safe from the risks of radicalisation and extremism.

Inspection findings

- Your determination to provide a good education for the pupils at St Hugh of Lincoln School came through strongly during my visit. However, the relatively small staff, including two new teachers this year, coupled with pressure on the budget to reduce supply costs, means that you have been teaching classes as well as fulfilling leadership roles. Some monitoring has slipped and the school's website is not fully up to date, and this needs amending.
- The Chair of the Governing Body joined the governing body in September 2014. He keeps in close touch with you and shows good knowledge of the school's work. Governors provide good support as well as challenge, although their monitoring relies heavily on reports from the headteacher as governor visits to the school are infrequent.

- During our visits to classrooms to observe learning, you identified accurate strengths and areas for development when evaluating pupils' learning. You quickly identified questions you wanted to follow up. These, and other, activities showed me your evaluation of teaching and learning is accurate and robust.
- The teaching I saw across the school was purposeful and clear. Work was set to meet the different needs of pupils. You are nevertheless aware of aspects of teaching which would benefit from further development. For instance, although teachers' marking of pupils' work is thorough, feedback to help them improve their work is inconsistent. Where it was most effective, pupils followed precise and challenging feedback to improve their attainment in mathematics and you are arranging for this good practice to be shared with staff.
- Throughout my visit, I met pupils who were polite, caring and friendly. They showed interest in what they were learning and knew what they were expected to achieve and how they were expected to behave.
- Attendance is above the national average and is improving.
- We saw children in the early years responding well to adults' encouraging approach. Children were using their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make to work out and write words. This shows that children get a good grounding in early reading skills. Pupils in Year 4 were engrossed in reading books which they had chosen to push their reading to the next level.
- Pupils write with enthusiasm and increasing confidence. As we reviewed pupils' English books you correctly identified how achievement could be even greater with some well-targeted advice.
- In mathematics, pupils generally make good progress, developing fluency in number and acquiring new skills and methods appropriately. However, pupils are not routinely showing development of reasoning in mathematics and this limits attainment at the highest levels expected of the new National Curriculum. The mathematics leader has training planned to address this.
- The school's physical environment is attractive and motivating. Classroom displays are stimulating. In the Reception class, the outdoor area is being developed to increase opportunities for role play, including the popular addition of a mud kitchen to promote messy play.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate, honest and detailed. The school improvement plan covers a wide range of activities rather than prioritising the most important areas for improvement. Also, success criteria are not all sharply defined. This makes it harder to be sure how effectively all improvement actions make an impact on outcomes for pupils.
- The local authority provides light touch support for the school. You value the professional dialogue this offers, but their external review is not fully rigorous.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that they:

- closely check the impact of pupil premium funding on the progress of disadvantaged pupils
- set precise success criteria in improvement planning and strengthen the level of monitoring and evaluation

- ensure that feedback to pupils about their work consistently provides clear guidance on how to improve.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Education for the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton, and the Director of Children's Services for Surrey County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Theresa Phillips
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I visited lessons in all seven classes in the school, jointly with the headteacher. I spoke with pupils and looked at some of their work. I observed playtime and met the members of the school council. I met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, members of staff and Chair of the Governing Body. I met a representative of Surrey local authority. I considered the 24 responses from members of staff to their confidential online questionnaires. I took careful account of 50 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 44 responses by free text or letters and conversations with parents waiting to collect their children from school. I looked at documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, information about pupils' learning and progress, minutes of meetings and records regarding safeguarding and attendance.