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Mr Nick Benzie
Headteacher
St Patrick's Catholic Primary and Nursery School
Coronation Avenue
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Dear Mr Benzie

Short inspection of St Patrick's Catholic Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 4 May 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in May 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You, your deputy headteacher and other senior leaders work effectively together to provide good-quality leadership to the rest of the staff. Clear lines of responsibility mean every aspect of the school's life is managed well so that your pupils thrive and make good progress in learning. As a team, you have a good understanding of your school's strengths and areas for development. You demonstrate a strong commitment to tackling areas for improvement quickly so that pupils make the progress they should.

As one parent put it: 'St Patrick's has a welcoming feel as you enter... It is a happy, safe environment that encourages all children to fulfil their full potential'. The pupils and staff team echo this sentiment. In lessons and around your school, there is a harmonious atmosphere, pupils work happily together in classrooms and at play. During the inspection, many pupils, including very young children, spoke confidently and enthusiastically with the inspector about their learning. During a visit to the Reception class 'restaurant', the inspector was 'well fed' by a group of excited children after choosing items from the menu. This caring ethos is a result of the well-established and effective systems for supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural growth effectively. Pupils enjoy coming to school to learn.

The curriculum you provide is broad and balanced. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their skills in music, physical education and a wide variety of other subjects. The learning environment is well cared for and sets the tone for your high expectations of behaviour and attitudes to learning. Pupils' work is celebrated both in the corridors and in the bright and interesting classrooms. Pupils know they are valued and behave accordingly.

You and your team know each pupil well. You carefully track their progress and plan effectively to overcome barriers to learning. Pupils with special educational needs or disability are cared for well. The special educational needs leader is effective in ensuring there are positive working relationships with external agencies. This means pupils get the support they need quickly. As a result, pupils make good progress from their starting points. Barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils are also addressed effectively. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to their peers and attainment gaps are closed. However, published assessment data for 2015 show the attainment of boys at the higher levels in reading and writing was not as good as girls' attainment. You have already identified these attainment gaps and are addressing them urgently with your team. Current school data suggests these gaps have closed considerably this year and that boys and girls are achieving similar outcomes in mathematics, reading and writing in all year groups.

There was also a similar picture in the attainment of boys at the end of the Reception Year in 2014 and 2015. Girls' outcomes were much better than boys' outcomes across the seven early learning goals. In addition, the attainment gaps for boys and girls were wider than the gaps between boys and girls nationally. You and the early years leader have recognised this weakness and taken action to close the gaps this year. Current data suggests an improvement for 2016. Boys' and girls' attainment is now similar. Although the indoor environment in the early years setting is bright and well resourced, this is not the case for the outdoor area. Opportunities for learning, exploring and investigating outside are not well developed. As a result, children do not get the chance to follow their interests and imaginations as well as they should in this area.

Your planning for school improvement correctly identifies pertinent areas for development. This is based on your sound analysis of assessment information. You and other senior leaders ascertain which staff team would be best to take the necessary actions for improvement. This ensures that everyone takes responsibility for improving the school. However, not all the actions identified within your plan are precise enough for you to identify sharp, measureable targets for success. This limits the effectiveness of your actions. It also hinders the governing body from holding you to account as effectively as it could.

The governing body visits the school regularly to check the quality of pupils' learning and progress. Governors are fully committed to ensuring high standards at the school. The governing body knows the areas for development well. The governing body uses the available assessment data to help it challenge and question school leaders appropriately.

Safeguarding is effective.

You place a high priority on safeguarding your pupils. You ensure leaders and staff receive regular training in child protection. The governing body has taken its duty to ensure that staff have a sound understanding of what radicalisation and extremism mean in its widest sense. You have also taken steps to train staff in current high-profile issues, such as female genital mutilation. You and the designated lead for safeguarding keep up-to-date records relating to pupils in need and their families. You work closely with external agencies to keep your pupils safe. You carefully analyse the attendance of different groups of pupils. The effective use of the welfare officer addresses any concerns you may have with regard to the absence of pupils. As a result, attendance is high. You have ensured that a high number of staff have current training in paediatric first aid. Parents agree that their children are safe at the school. Pupils say they feel safe. Pupils also say that they trust the adults who take care of them and know someone whom they feel they can trust to share concerns.

Inspection findings

- Leaders' self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate. Consequently, planned actions for improvement are appropriate and prioritise raising the attainment of all groups of pupils.
- The headteacher has served the school community for many years. He is well respected by pupils, staff and parents alike. He has maintained a good standard of education at the school. He continues to be committed to achieving further success in the coming years.
- In 2015, the proportion of pupils making expected progress and more than expected progress in mathematics, reading and writing was in line with or slightly above the national average at the end of key stage 2. Pupils' attainment was significantly above other pupils nationally in mathematics, reading and writing combined at Level 4. At the higher levels, attainment for boys and girls varied. Girls' attainment in all three subjects was above other girls nationally. The attainment of boys at this level was similar to all boys nationally. However, it did not mirror girls' attainment in school.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide well-planned activities that support pupils to make good progress in their learning. For example, in the Year 5 class, there was a buzz of excitement when pupils were learning about decimals and fractions. Pupils were using their 'steps to success' with understanding and self-motivation. Pupils' gains in learning were palpable as they explained their answers to each other. This excitement in learning is mirrored in other classrooms. Where teachers' own skills need developing, school leaders are quick to address these with coaching and professional development.
- Pupils are proud of their school. Their behaviour and attitudes reflect the caring ethos of the school. They wear their uniforms smartly and take great

care when presenting their work. Their classrooms are tidy and well ordered. This has a significant impact on their learning and progress because the pupils know what is expected of them and choose to cooperate with their teachers to achieve success.

- During this year, the school has experienced some instability in staffing. This has understandably caused some concerns among the parents. Not all parents felt that they received enough information about staff changes. However, school leaders acted appropriately and urgently to address a series of challenging circumstances. Leaders are monitoring the attainment and progress of those classes carefully. Current data suggests that any adverse effects to pupils' learning are rapidly being tackled.

- The school works closely with other schools in the South Nottingham Catholic Academy Trust. The trust has recently undergone some changes in its structure. As a result, systems for checking the performance of schools within the trust have been strengthened. The headteacher is held to account through an executive board that checks the attainment and progress of pupils and ensures financial solvency for its schools. The headteacher believes this accountability is effective, appropriate and supportive.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- school improvement planning identifies sharply focused actions with clear, measureable targets linked closely to pupils' outcomes

- the governing body is able to hold school leaders to account more fully through monitoring activities linked to measureable improvement targets

- children in the early years have greater opportunities to learn, explore and develop their critical thinking skills in the outdoor area.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of South Nottingham Catholic Academy Trust, the director of education for the Nottingham Roman Catholic Diocese, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Nottingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jan Connor
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and other school leaders. We discussed the school's plans for improvement and self-evaluation. We also discussed the progress of different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs or disability. I met with the chair of the governing body and the vice chair. I held a telephone conversation with the chair of South Nottingham Catholic Academy Trust. I toured the school visiting all of the classrooms. I observed teaching, spoke with pupils and looked at the work in their books. I observed pupils' behaviour both in class and around school. I took into account the 10 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, and the five free text responses to Ofsted. I also considered the 13 responses to the pupils' questionnaire and the seven staff questionnaire responses. I considered a range of school documentation, including assessment information about the attainment and progress of pupils. I checked the single central register of recruitment checks and other documentation relating to safeguarding.