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Miss Karen Bathe
Headteacher
Holy Family Catholic Primary School
Marlowe Avenue
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Dear Miss Bathe

Short inspection of Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 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 October 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education since the school converted to academy status.

You are successfully leading the school with the determination and passion needed to ensure its continuing success. You communicate your high expectations very clearly and, as a result, those working with you are inspired to achieve high standards. You are supported by a strong leadership team that exhibits the qualities required to ensure the school's future success. Leaders work together very successfully to ensure that the school is developing well. Their work is underpinned by an exceptionally strong capacity for improvement. For example, as well as securing continued improvement at Holy Family, you have enabled your deputy headteacher to take on a temporary acting headship to assist a school in a neighbouring authority.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is a very high priority for you and all the staff and governors. Staff have a very clear understanding of their responsibilities for ensuring pupils' safety. Regular training ensures that all staff are fully informed about their role in monitoring pupils' safety and well-being. As a result, staff are vigilant in carrying out their responsibilities. All concerns are investigated carefully and, when necessary, external agencies are involved to reduce the risk of harm occurring. Detailed records are maintained of all incidents arising, which helps staff to monitor pupils' development.

Health and safety issues are also taken very seriously around the school. School leaders ensure that pupils' safety is a high priority. The building and the classrooms are well maintained and all safety checks are completed regularly. The school monitors visitors to the school carefully to ensure that they are fully informed about the school's expectations and safety procedures. All parents responding to the online Parent View questionnaire are confident that children are safe at this school.

Pupils are suitably proud of their school and take good care of the equipment they use. During the inspection, older pupils were observed using their initiative sensibly to tidy away resources so that the equipment was ready for the next lesson and did not cause a hazard.

Inspection findings

- Your strong leadership plays an important part in the school's continuing success. By working closely with your senior team and the governing body, you have a very clear overview of the school's work. You know where the school is doing well and you articulate its strengths accurately. You have also identified where further improvement is required and can demonstrate good impact in raising standards further. For example, the early years provision has been strengthened and improved so that children are being provided with good opportunities to learn. Similarly, the decision to restructure the leadership of the early years and amalgamate the role with key stage 1 is helping to ensure that children move smoothly from one key stage to another. The educational impact of these changes can be seen in the rising standards that children are achieving. Since your appointment as headteacher, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has steadily increased to be well above the national average. Your determination to ensure that children make a good start to their education is certainly being successful.
- Importantly, standards at the end of key stage 1 have also improved and are now significantly above the national average in reading and writing. Similarly, by the end of key stage 2, pupils are prepared well for their transfer to secondary school. Disadvantaged pupils achieve in line with other pupils and there is little difference between the attainment of girls and boys.

- Despite these successes, you are working closely with your staff to bring about further improvement. You have rightly identified that Year 1 pupils have not achieved highly enough in the phonics screening check. You have already initiated action to ensure that phonics is taught regularly to help pupils acquire the necessary skills to sound out unfamiliar words and develop their early reading skills. You are currently tracking pupils' progress in order to evaluate how well the changes are working. The emerging evidence is positive as standards look set to rise this year.
- The school improvement plan prioritises raising standards, improving the quality of teaching, promoting high standards of behaviour and strengthening the quality of leadership and management. While the plan highlights the different actions being taken, in some places it lacks clarity and does not set out precise success criteria that can be used to fully evaluate progress and impact.
- The improvement plan also includes measures to increase the attainment of the most-able pupils. You have recognised that this group of pupils is capable of achieving higher standards than has been the case in previous years. You are working with subject leaders to develop teaching that increases the level of challenge in lessons so that pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- As headteacher, you are providing the right balance of support and challenge to subject leaders to strengthen their contribution to the school's improvement work. As a relatively new team taking on additional responsibilities, team members are fully committed to playing their part in aiding the school to improve. You use the school's performance management procedures appropriately to hold your team members to account for the impact of their work in improving pupils' achievement. In addition, governors are also checking subject leaders' effectiveness at implementing improvement priorities. To do so, subject leaders meet with governors to provide an analysis of pupils' performance and to explain what actions are being taken in response to their findings.
- Governors are fully committed to the school and they play a key role in supporting its improvement plans. They are extremely knowledgeable and have a very clear overview of how well the school is performing. They use their regular meetings to hold you, as headteacher, and other school leaders to account for the effectiveness of your work. The clerk of governors provides the governing body with excellent support and guidance. She maintains very detailed records of all meetings and also acts as a mentor to newly appointed governors. In this role, she guides new governors by helping them to quickly understand their duties so that they can contribute fully to the work of the school.
- There is a positive sense of purpose across the school. Staff are proud to work at the school and morale is high. Teachers and teaching assistants are motivated to ensure that pupils achieve their potential. By working as a team, they have developed a curriculum that uses a range of topics that capture pupils' interests and stimulates their engagement with learning.

- Pupils enjoy school. They are excited by the different subjects they study. They get on well together, both in the classroom and around the school. They behave well and display good manners. Work in pupils' books shows that they are making good progress overall. While the overwhelming majority of pupils take pride in their work, there are some inconsistencies in teachers' expectations of what pupils produce. At present, subject leaders are not monitoring the quality of pupils' work in their respective subjects closely enough to ensure that all staff fully implement the school's presentation policy.
- Pupils do not see bullying as an issue that affects them in school. They talk confidently to explain that teachers resolve any disputes that do arise quickly and fairly. Attendance levels are good and pupils' rates of persistent absence are lower than average. Nevertheless, the school is vigilant in monitoring pupils' absence and takes action when necessary.
- The school's religious character plays a central role in the everyday life of pupils and staff. The school's Christian beliefs and values contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are very welcoming and respectful to others. Those joining the school quickly make friends and feel valued.
- Parents are very supportive. One of the noticeable features of this inspection was the exceptionally large number of parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire. Parents value your leadership and recognise the dedication and hard work that you and your staff provide. Almost all parents who responded to Parent View praise pupils' behaviour and a very large majority are pleased with the progress that their child makes. Parents are also very positive about how the school responds to any concerns raised. Families are well informed, via the school's regular newsletters, about events and developments that are taking place. Parents are also able to gain access to a wide range of information about the school's work on its website. However, some of this information is not current and does not fully comply with the expectations of what the school needs to report, as set out in your academy funding agreement.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- strengthen the effectiveness of the school improvement plan by ensuring that agreed actions are linked precisely to pupils' outcomes
- continue to monitor and evaluate the quality of phonics teaching to ensure that pupils make good progress and achieve highly in the phonics screening check
- further challenge subject leaders to improve the attainment of the most-able pupils and the presentation of pupils' work in their respective subjects
- improve the accuracy of information published on the school's website.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the diocese of Clifton, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Swindon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ken Buxton
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met you, many of the staff, and three governors, including the vice-chair of the governing body. I also met with the school's external educational consultant. During the day, you and I visited every classroom to observe teaching and to see pupils at work. I also met with a group of pupils to discuss their views about the school. In addition, I reviewed information about pupils' progress and other relevant school documentation, including minutes of recent governing body meetings and numerous reports about the school's effectiveness. I also scrutinised a wide range of the school's safeguarding documentation and records. In addition, I took account of the views of 108 parental responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. I also noted the written comments from 13 parents about the effectiveness of the school's work. I also reviewed the 178 responses from pupils and the 19 staff responses to their respective questionnaires.