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13 June 2016

Mr John Cooper  
Headteacher  
Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School  
Bath Road  
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West Yorkshire  
WF16 9EA

Dear Mr Cooper

### **Short inspection of Holy Spirit Catholic Primary 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 the school was judged to be good in November 2010.

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

You and your leadership team have maintained the good quality of education in the school. The ethos of your school comes through loud and clear. Pupils are well cared for and looked after, and are developing into well-rounded individuals. You are a highly visible presence in and around school. Consequently, you have an accurate sense of what is working well and what needs to improve. Parents comment on how you and other teachers can be seen in the playground at the start and at the end of the day. This reassures them and gives them confidence that they can raise any issues that they may have.

You have developed a wide range of ways to check that the quality of teaching continues to improve since the time of the last inspection. Focused 'drop ins' to lessons, reviewing pupils' work and talking to pupils about their learning are all helping you to identify strengths in teaching and areas that can be improved.

The recent introduction of agreed 'minimum standards' is also helping to improve the quality and impact of teachers' marking and feedback to pupils. Pupils say that they like the way that teacher feedback shows how they can improve. There are clear signs that pupils are responding well to this feedback and improving their work. Outcomes overall are continuing to rise, especially in Reception and by the end of key stage 2.

Neither you nor your leadership team shy away from the fact that the school can be

even better. You have rightly prioritised the need to improve how well younger pupils achieve in their phonics screening check (letters and the sounds they make).

The governing body is currently in a period of transition, due to a number of longstanding governors having recently retired. However, the new governors, including the new chair of governors, bring with them a wide range of experience, particularly in education. This is helping them to quickly get to know the school's strengths and priorities, and to carefully check the progress that leaders are making in improving the school further. The school website contains a number of key policies which are not fully up to date. It is not clear when they will be reviewed, amended or ratified by governors.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your leadership team make sure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. As a result of a strong vision and the ethos within the school, all staff see it as their responsibility to keep children safe. Staff value safeguarding training as this helps them to remain vigilant to any potential concerns. Recent online training has raised awareness of how to spot potential signs of radicalisation or extremist behaviour.

Pupils confirm that they are well looked after. They are well aware of potential dangers and risks that they may face, including knowing how to cross the road safely and how to remain safe when on the internet. Bullying is said to rarely happen, but pupils and parents confirm that, when it does, it is dealt with quickly and effectively. Continued efforts to improve attendance are starting to pay off, and attendance is improving and persistent absence is falling. Unauthorised absences appear higher this year, but this is due to your zero tolerance approach to authorising parents who take their children on holiday during term time.

### **Inspection findings**

- The curriculum provides pupils with a wealth of opportunities to develop as well-rounded young people. Pupils learn to play musical instruments, take part in the choir and can be involved as liturgical ministers. There are vibrant after-school clubs including dance, circuit training and a range of competitive sports.
- The quality of writing is improving. Pupils have been involved in selecting a wider range of reading books to help and inspire them to want to write. This approach is starting to open up pupils' imagination and some impressive examples of extended writing were seen both in literacy and in religious education exercise books. There are fewer opportunities to develop writing in science, history or geography.
- Useful new ways of checking the progress key stage 1 pupils are making in their phonetic understanding have been introduced. Leaders are keeping a watchful eye on making sure that this area of learning improves. School

assessment information suggests that phonics outcomes are set to improve.

- Leaders know their school well, and the school self-evaluation is accurate and well considered. Leaders have identified sensible priorities and have suitable and appropriate plans in place to improve the school further. However, even more emphasis should be placed on making sure that the most able pupils make even more progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The vast majority of pupils show very positive attitudes to learning. This is due in part to the changes that have been made in rewarding good behaviour. Through the use of the 'Golden Rules', reward stickers, gold certificates and prize draws, the vast majority of pupils are responding positively, and usually behave well in and around school, concentrate and work hard in lessons.
- The majority of parents are positive about the school. They say that school leaders know each and every child, communicate effectively with parents and feel that their children are developing well. A few parents commented that they felt their children could be set more challenging work, including homework.

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

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- outcomes in phonics improve so that they are at least in line with the national average in key stage 1
- governors review and amend policies in a timely manner and make sure they are included on the school website
- more opportunities are provided for pupils to write at length in other subjects including science, geography and history
- when set, homework is suitably challenging for all pupils so that they can make better progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Smith  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection I met with you, your literacy and numeracy coordinators, the special educational needs coordinator and the Reception teacher. I also met with a group of key stage 2 pupils, three governors, a group of parents and your local authority learning partner. Together with you and your assistant headteacher, we visited all classrooms to observe teaching and look at pupils' work. Consideration was given to 22 free text responses from the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) and three responses to the staff survey. I evaluated recent information in relation to pupils' progress throughout the school, the school self-evaluation document, the school development plan and your arrangements for checking the performance of teachers. I also reviewed documentation and records about how you keep pupils safe.