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Mrs Veronica Gosling  
Headteacher  
St John Vianney Catholic Primary School  
Mount Nod Way  
Mount Nod  
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West Midlands  
CV5 7GX

Dear Mrs Gosling

### **Short inspection of St John Vianney Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 24 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 October 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 provide strong leadership, which is securing more sustained improvements. Since the previous inspection, leaders and governors have strengthened and maintained good teaching and planned very effective training and professional development of staff. This is resulting in good and outstanding teaching across the school so that an increasing number of pupils reach or exceed age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. The most able pupils are achieving well throughout the school as a significant proportion of pupils in every year group exceed age-related expectations in English and mathematics.

You, your staff and governors foster a strong ethos, culture and community spirit with the church and wider community. You engage with parents and the church community very well. Parents are right when they say that the school takes exceptional care of pupils. Leaders and governors make an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their time in school and are exceptionally well behaved, polite and courteous to others. Many pupils told me that they enjoy school very much because they know that they can be trusted to take on responsibilities. There are extensive opportunities for pupils to develop personal skills through membership of various councils and taking on additional roles to support and care for other pupils. They also told me that they form long and lasting friendships and that the

staff care very much for their safety and welfare. The parents I spoke to confirmed this and one in particular, reflecting the views of most, stated, 'The headteacher and her staff value our children and do a great deal for them, I feel very privileged and am so grateful.'

The staff work closely with a very skilled governing body. Regular monitoring of pupils' progress correctly pinpointed the reasons why some pupils did less well in mathematics last year compared with previous years. Leaders and staff recognise that mathematics lessons did not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to use reasoning skills to tackle problems efficiently and logically. You are all, rightly, focusing on problem-solving as a core priority. Teachers have already implemented improvements. We observed these improvements in lessons during the inspection, which included problem-solving tasks that are now more challenging and varied.

The early years provision has improved enormously since the previous inspection and is now very strong. The percentage of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception is well above average. In addition, there is highly effective planning which helps children transfer from Reception into Year 1. This is building further capacity for sustained improvement as pupils in key stage 1 achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. National assessments also show that the strong foundations laid in the early years enable Year 1 pupils to reach well above average standards in phonics (the sounds that letters represent).

You and your governors appointed a highly effective and very well-qualified coordinator to manage provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability. Pupils who have additional learning needs achieve very well as a result and are catching up rapidly with their classmates. Special educational needs provision is monitored and managed very well. This too is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

In response to a recommendation at the previous inspection, you and your colleagues have focused successfully on improving the way teachers use assessment. Your staff continue to improve and refine assessment information as part of the revised national curriculum without levels. These changes help teachers analyse how well pupils are doing. However, you recognise that further improvements are needed to assessments to identify as early as possible any pupils who fall behind and to gauge how much progress pupils make.

The school development plan and subject action plans set out the right priorities for improvement. These priorities were identified through regular and robust monitoring of lessons and pupils' work. The development plan sets out clear measures of success to gauge progress, but does not identify who is monitoring or evaluating each of the planned actions. This makes it difficult for governors to hold leaders to account for their evaluations or to be sure that evaluations are accurate by checking with other staff and leaders.

You and your staff plan a stimulating and engaging curriculum for pupils. This is having a very positive effect on their academic and personal development. There is a well-established tradition of sporting excellence, creative arts and music, as well

as a strong focus on science and outdoor education. Excellent use is made of the extensive school grounds and wild areas. A thriving gardening club provides opportunities for pupils to nurture and grow vegetables, flowers and shrubs. As a result, pupils develop a strong sense of responsibility and care for the world around them. This is enhanced by a very well-managed pupil 'eco-council' that contributes extremely well to the school community and local environment.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

All safeguarding procedures and policies are fit for purpose. Safeguarding and staff vetting procedures are robust and include all staff, visitors, volunteers and governors. Governors undertake systematic reviews of the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures. Risk assessments are carried out to make sure that pupils are safe when engaged in outdoor activities and educational visits. Pupils also contribute through the school's elected 'safety committee', which reports any potential hazards or safety concerns. The committee recently carried out its own 'safety survey' and reported this to leaders and governors. Parents trust the staff and believe that pupils are safe in school.

### **Inspection findings**

- There has been good progress since the school's previous inspection. You and your governors have recruited highly effective teachers and trained newly qualified staff who have settled into their roles very well. You have strengthened leadership further with the promotion and appointment of a very capable deputy headteacher and a strong special educational needs coordinator. In addition, there is highly effective leadership of the early years which has seen a remarkable improvement to teaching and learning in the Reception class since the previous inspection.
- You are an ambitious school leader who has earned the respect and admiration of pupils and families. Leaders and staff value and praise pupils for their achievements and provide a curriculum that successfully fosters pupils' academic achievement and outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils thrive on the many and varied opportunities they have to contribute to the management of the school. They make a significant contribution to the church and local community. Pupils told me, for example, that they really enjoy opportunities to be elected to the school council, safety committee, house committees, or to volunteer as playground buddies, librarians, eco-council members or members of the school and church liturgical committee.
- You and the deputy headteacher responded immediately after seeing that some pupils did not achieve as well as they should in mathematics last year. Teachers are responding very well to more focused training, support and changes to the way mathematics is being taught. These changes have secured some immediate improvements and I could see this during our joint observations of lessons and the work in pupils' books.
- Improvements have been monitored very well by the deputy headteacher who leads by her excellent example when teaching mathematics. Currently, pupils across the school are achieving well in mathematics.

- Pupils achieve well in reading and writing and this is evident in pupils' work and the many and varied examples of writing across the breadth of the curriculum displayed in classrooms and corridors around the school. The most able pupils reach standards that are well above age-related expectations in reading and writing.
- The most rapid improvements to pupils' writing are currently in the early years and key stage 1. We observed Reception children writing independently about 'going on a bear hunt', which builds very well on their knowledge of that particular story book.
- During our joint observation in the early years, I was very impressed by the range of stimulating activities provided for the children. We went on to see improvements to children's reading and writing as teachers in key stage 1 build on these strong early years foundations into Year 1. Here too, writing standards are improving very well and this is being sustained in Year 2 and beyond.
- I was delighted to see the very youngest children from the Reception class carrying small logs to the local wildlife area as part of their science and literature work. The children were clearly very excited as they plodded 'into the forest on a bear hunt' in their wellingtons, some of them chatting happily with their friends during their 'exploration'.
- The curriculum is enriched with many and varied subjects and activities that energise pupils and encourage them to develop enquiring minds and to enjoy learning about the world around them. For example, key stage 2 pupils regularly experience excellent outdoor science activities, such as when investigating the habitats of bugs and small animals.
- Teachers and support staff are adapting well to the new national curriculum without levels. Your close links with other schools within the local 'unity' cluster are helping teachers and leaders to check and moderate assessments about pupils' work and progress.
- Leaders and governors are getting to grips with different ways of analysing pupils' progress and performance. The progress of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is being monitored very well. However, you all recognise that the assessment information you gather does not always include a clear enough analysis of any gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. You are all working hard now to focus more on establishing measures of pupils' progress to provide sharper analyses of their achievement.
- The school is managed very well by a skilled and competent governing body. Governors promote the school's core values very well. You and the governors have earned the respect and admiration of parents and the school community for the very good work you do and for your determination to strive for continuous improvement. The governing body supports and challenges school leaders, who regularly keep governors well informed.
- The school development plan provides a clear route map to monitor improvements. You make sure that regular checks are made using the plan to gauge how well things are improving. There are clear measures of success in the plan that your staff, leaders and governors use to gauge how much progress is being made.

- Your self-evaluation of teaching and pupils' outcomes is accurate, but the development plan does not set out clearly enough who is monitoring or who is evaluating each action set out in the plan. For example, the same leader may be doing both activities which does not provide opportunities for cross-checking with other staff or leaders to ensure that evaluations of teaching and pupils' progress are accurate.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is a continued focus on raising standards further in mathematics, particularly to improve pupils' problem-solving skills
- they build on the start made on implementing revised assessment systems without levels, and to make sure that leaders and teachers check how much progress pupils make and how best to identify gaps in pupils' learning
- the school development plan sets out who is monitoring or evaluating the impact of actions taken; this is to provide an objective analysis of how well teaching and standards are improving and to check the impact of the school's actions on securing improvement.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the archdiocese of Birmingham and the director of children's services for Coventry. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, the deputy headteacher and some senior teachers in charge of subjects, including the coordinator in charge of special educational needs provision. I reviewed and discussed with you and the deputy headteacher your school self-evaluation document. We visited every class together to observe teaching and learning and spoke to pupils during lessons. I also spoke to pupils during lunchtime and met a group of pupils to discuss their views about the school, their work and progress as well as how safe they feel in school. I spoke to some parents at the start of the school day and considered responses sent by text to Ofsted's West Midlands regional office, as well as the 41 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. I met with three members of the governing body, including the chair, as well as the local authority's school improvement partner to discuss the school's performance. I scrutinised some examples of assessment information about pupils' attainment and progress and checked safeguarding staff vetting procedures.