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Mrs Julia Summers
Headteacher
Our Lady of Lincoln Catholic Primary School
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Dear Mrs Summers

Short inspection of Our Lady of Lincoln Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 July 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. There is much to celebrate about Our Lady of Lincoln Catholic Primary School. The calm and orderly atmosphere, allied to attractive classrooms and tidy grounds, which are so obviously respected by the pupils, set a good standard and make the school a conducive place in which to learn. The school is, justifiably, regarded very well by parents and the pupils.

The school is well organised and runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The pupils are well behaved, feel safe and prosper because the leaders at all levels and the staff generally acquit their roles and responsibilities with some rigour and enthusiasm. All groups of pupils make good progress, including the most able, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and disadvantaged pupils.

Not only do the pupils do well academically, but the school helps pupils to develop also a sense of self-worth and a clear set of values, particularly of tolerance, respect and caring for others. The attention that you give to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, combined with effective teaching, enables the pupils to become thoughtful and responsible young people. This aspect of the school was identified as a strength at the previous inspection; this remains the case.

The staff are very motivated and respond well to leadership that has promoted continuous and progressive improvement at the school since the previous inspection; this remains a characteristic feature of the school.

You have tackled purposefully the areas of improvement identified at the previous inspection. Subject leaders and other members of staff with leadership responsibilities check more frequently now that pupils are learning enough; however, although the staff pay careful attention routinely to the needs of the most able pupils, the pupils are not pushed to reach the highest standards of which they are capable. The subject leaders' work has led to a high degree of consistency throughout the school in the quality of teaching of English and of mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

The pupils feel safe at the school and the parents, understandably, express very positive views about this, as well as other aspects of the school's work. That is because you and your colleagues give appropriately high priority to safeguarding the pupils. The governing body oversees such matters regularly and ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

The school's policies and procedures are operated carefully by the staff, who know and understand their responsibilities. The staff are kept well informed about and up to date with safeguarding matters. The frequent training that they are given helps them to develop suitable skills, as well as providing them with important information, such as the latest government guidance. They are fully aware of the broad range of issues with which they may have to deal.

The members of staff with leadership responsibilities for safeguarding keep relevant files on individual cases carefully and demonstrate close knowledge of the details of each case. The school works well with a broad range of external agencies so that pupils receive the support that they need when required. Your efforts are reflected in hard-won improvements in the pupils' attendance, although important differences remain between the attendance of particular groups.

Inspection findings

- Your approach to improvement is intelligence led. It is based on accurate and detailed analyses of a good range of useful information about the pupils' progress and the work of the school. As a result, you and your leadership team know the school well and ensure that the governing body is kept well informed.
- The actions include making effective use of professional development for the staff, including learning from other schools. Not only have those opportunities sparked the teachers' enthusiasm, but they have led also to practical improvements in their teaching; for example, in mathematics. The mathematics lessons provide the pupils now with good opportunities to apply their learning in different contexts. The improvements that you have made are resulting in more-secure progress by the pupils in this subject currently than has been the case previously.
- You have achieved a high level of consistent practice in teaching throughout the school. As a result, the pupils become increasingly familiar with the

approaches to learning that you have adopted and so their knowledge, skills, and understanding are built up progressively, starting in the early years. For example, the pupils' writing improves steadily from very low levels of skills in this subject on entry to the early years to them becoming competent and confident writers by the end of key stage 2.

- The teaching is based upon accurate assessments of how well the pupils are doing and, in particular, what they are finding difficult. You put a lot of emphasis on making sure that the assessments are accurate, and to good effect.
- The teachers plan learning experiences, tasks and activities thoughtfully. Consequently, the pupils are well motivated, feel suitably challenged, and so focus and concentrate on their work. Their books show sustained effort and, increasingly as they move up through the year groups, considerable pride in their work as a direct result of the things that the teachers do.
- The pupils' attitudes to learning make a significant contribution to their good academic progress. They grow in confidence as learners, understanding how well they are doing and the things that they have to do to improve.
- The teachers and the teaching assistants plan for and exploit successfully a wide variety of opportunities for the pupils to develop their skills and knowledge. Nowhere was this more evident than in the early years, where I enjoyed watching the children play 'phoneme twister', and in key stage 1, where the pupils made constant references to the writing checklists to help them, even when working outdoors because of the frequent and well-conceived feedback that they are given, based on the teachers' incisive assessments.
- In fact, the pupils' progress accelerates as they move up through the school; this is no accident.
- The teachers pay careful attention to providing the most able pupils with suitably challenging work and I saw plentiful evidence of their efforts to increase the challenge constantly. Nevertheless, while these pupils generally make acceptable progress, the school has struggled in the past to enable them to do as well as they might. Some of the pupils know that they could push themselves harder; it is not clear that their teachers are fully aware of that.
- The pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make secure progress and the extent to which they do so is improving. The support for these pupils is well planned by teachers. The pupils' needs are identified assiduously by the special educational needs coordinator. As a result, a substantial part of these pupils' learning happens alongside their classmates.
- You have achieved hard-won improvements in the pupils' attendance. You monitor attendance closely and use a broad range of approaches to promote good attendance.
- The rate of attendance has risen steadily and, at the time of my visit, has reached the latest-known national average for the first time. Clearly, this level has yet to be sustained.
- The level of persistent absence has been too high for some particular groups.

- You have reduced to a low level the actual number of pupils who are persistently absent. You have set the level at which you increase your efforts with individual pupils much higher than the level used generally, in order to catch pupils at risk of poor attendance at an earlier stage than would be the case otherwise. You can show that, when you have taken action with these pupils, their attendance has usually improved, often quite markedly.
- You have secured gradual improvements in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, but these pupils still do not attend as well as others.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the most able pupils are enabled to achieve the standards of which they are fully capable
- the current levels of attendance are sustained, at least, and the remaining differences between the attendance of groups of pupils are reduced to a minimum, or removed altogether.

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

Yours sincerely

Clive Moss

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher, the chair of the governing body and another governor, the designated persons responsible for safeguarding, with members of staff responsible for English, mathematics, and key stage 1, and with the special educational needs coordinator. I made a series of visits to lessons jointly with the headteacher, involving all classrooms and outdoor learning areas. I examined examples of the pupils' work and looked at the teachers' assessments of that work. I held a range of discussions with a wide variety of pupils, informally when observing breaktimes and during lessons, and formally with a group of the most able pupils. I observed the pupils' behaviour around the school at the start of the day, at breaktimes, and during lessons. I met with parents at the beginning of the school day, looked at the views of parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and other information about parents' views collected by the school. I examined a range of documents, including safeguarding records and

policies, the latest achievement information for the school, including the school's current assessment information, the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation summary, records of meetings of the governing body, and information relating to the pupils' attendance and behaviour.