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12 September 2016

Ms Catherine McLaughlin
Headteacher
St Mary's Catholic Primary School (Maltby)
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Dear Ms McLaughlin

Short inspection of St Mary's Catholic Primary School (Maltby)

Following my visit to the school on 13 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 November 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 and your staff work tirelessly to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to learn well, enjoy their learning and make good progress. The atmosphere within the school is one of respect and kindness to all. Pupils are happy in this exciting learning environment. They speak about how the teachers help them and make learning fun. You have ensured that leadership is shared so that there is a joint responsibility and accountability for how safe pupils are and the quality of education they receive. You have supported another local school, on a part-time basis, at the request of the Diocese. During your absence you and the governors took appropriate steps to ensure that the effectiveness of leadership was maintained.

Since becoming an academy in July 2013 you have recruited a new deputy headteacher. You have ensured that she has the skills and attributes necessary to ably lead the school and already plays a successful role in bringing about improvement.

Since the last inspection you have ensured that the school continues to improve. You have invested financial and human resources in improving achievement in reading, as identified at the last inspection. Your investment in a commercial scheme to support younger pupils in learning to read has enabled pupils to gain good levels of learning in early reading skills. You have improved the quality of

teaching across the school so that pupils are able to make progress that is better than that of other pupils nationally.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils say that they feel safe. This is because leaders and managers take appropriate steps to keep pupils safe. The designated safeguarding lead is proactive in communicating with other agencies when the need arises. She keeps a careful record of all incidents and stores them appropriately. Safeguarding is discussed at every governors' meeting to make certain that all aspects of safeguarding, such as recruitment checks, staff training and site safety are fit for purpose and are effective. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in a range of circumstances. They have a very secure knowledge of what cyber bullying is and how they should deal with it, such as keeping any unwanted messages so they can let trusted adults deal with incidents.

Inspection findings

- Pupils talk about their school with pride. They enjoy coming to school and comment on the friendships they have. Parents are extremely positive about the school's work. All parents who responded to the Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View would recommend the school to another parent. The inspector agrees with the parents' view that the school is well led and managed and that their child makes good progress.
- Pupils behave well and older pupils take on roles of responsibility at breaktimes to make sure that everybody is happy. Pupils are reassured that if they have concerns they are immediately and appropriately addressed by adults in school. Relationships are good and staff, including the headteacher, know their pupils well. Pupils who are new to the school say that although they were anxious about starting a new school, they quickly settled in and made new friends.
- Children join the Reception class with skills that are lower than those typically expected for children of their age, particularly speech and language skills. Children make good progress from these low starting points because the early years leader provides a stimulating environment which includes several role play areas. She has also involved speech and language professionals so that pupils can learn communication and language skills at a faster rate. These younger pupils quickly start learning letters and the sounds they make. They are taught through a structured programme so that their development from low starting points is well supported. When they are ready, they learn to read and write through a commercial scheme which is taught in very small groups so that their individual needs are well met.
- As pupils move through the school they continue to make good progress so that by the time they leave they have reached standards that are broadly in line with other pupils nationally. In mathematics pupils make good progress; their learning is reinforced through a range of problem-solving and practical experiences. When teachers mark books in

mathematics they draw pupils' attention to misconceptions they have made so that they are able to improve their work.

- School leaders recognise that pupils' progress in writing is not quite as rapid as progress in mathematics. In some classes pupils do not make enough progress in writing to ensure that they catch up quickly enough. Evidence in books and lessons shows that not all teachers are giving pupils appropriate feedback so that they know how to improve their writing. The current marking policy lacks clarity and in some classes this causes confusion in its implementation.
- You and your governors have ensured that pupils' progress in reading is good and more frequently better than that of other pupils nationally. A wealth of literature to engender a love of reading is available across the school and the pupils read extensively during the school day. From an early age pupils learn to read in small groups with well-trained staff. This and other strategies you have implemented has helped more pupils make more than expected progress than other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding generally make better progress than other pupils in the school and other pupils nationally. Senior leaders have carefully considered how this funding is used and ensured that it is spent effectively. Some of this funding has been used to allocate more teaching assistants to support learning. They do this extremely well. Teaching assistants successfully help these pupils learn as they work with them in small groups or individually, inside or outside the classroom.
- Senior leaders have an accurate picture of the quality of teaching within the school. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject coordinators regularly review the quality of teaching and learning. They use the information gained from these activities to take action that ensures that teaching continues to improve. Senior leaders have understood the importance of accurate assessment information and have therefore invested much time in developing external moderation through links with a range of other schools and the local authority. All of these moderation processes have confirmed the accuracy of the school's own assessments.
- School leaders have taken action to improve rates of attendance across the school. Several different strategies, such as the use of rewards and closer monitoring of absence, have improved attendance so that it is now in line with other schools nationally.
- Governors have recently commissioned a review of governance so that they can be sure that they are supporting and challenging the school leadership effectively. They are knowledgeable about their school and receive regular reports from the headteacher to inform them about safeguarding, the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Governors are well trained and challenge the school appropriately.
- The movement into the new trust has supported the school well. The school was already in a learning community which consisted of five other schools. This community has become even more valuable since the school became part of The Holy Spirit Umbrella Trust. Senior leaders have found that they can more effectively support learning, for instance

by deploying more teaching assistants and by sharing the cost of training events. Regular liaison with other schools in the trust helps improve the quality of teaching and learning with the sharing of good practice. The Diocese completes an annual evaluation of the school and offers appropriate support if needed. They are also available for other support should the school consider that they need it.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the progress pupils make in writing accelerates so that pupils can catch up from low starting points
- the marking policy is reviewed and its implementation monitored to make sure it supports pupils in knowing how they can improve their work, especially in writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Jo Sharpe
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and the leader of the early years. I also met with several representatives of the governing body. I held discussions with groups of pupils and spoke to pupils informally at different times of the school day. I met with parents, considered the responses from Parent View (Ofsted's online survey) and written comments made by parents and staff. We discussed your current school self-evaluation and the school development plans. We visited classrooms together and discussed the quality of teaching in the school. We scrutinised a number of pupils' books in a range of subjects from all the classes in school. I also reviewed a range of documents including those on the school's website and those relating to safeguarding and pupils' recent progress.