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Mr John Daley  
Headteacher  
St Gregory's Catholic Primary School  
Albert Road  
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Dear Mr John Daley

### **Short inspection of St Gregory's Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 13 September 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 May 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 leaders have continued to ensure that pupils who attend this school are taught well and make good progress. Pupils are happy at this school and you and your staff know each and every one of them well. It is like stepping into a happy and safe home for the pupils.

You and your leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This is because you take an honest and transparent approach to school improvement. You and your leaders act and lead in the best interests of the pupils. You have rightly identified that you would benefit from opportunities to learn from other schools that have improved from good to outstanding.

Since the last inspection you have worked hard to address the areas for improvement and these improvements are clear to see. Children make a good start to their education at St Gregory's. The proportion of children who enter Year 1 with well-developed skills and abilities in all areas of learning is much higher than the national average. There are wide opportunities for children to be stimulated through play inside and outside the classroom. Parents are very much involved in developing children's skills. Teachers are continuing to use assessment information ever more

effectively in lesson planning to meet the needs of the pupils. You acknowledge that while this is much improved, the assessments could be sharper to clearly and specifically identify what it is that needs to be done in order to improve.

You and your teachers have focused your efforts on the writing skills of pupils and particularly on improving spelling, punctuation and grammar. Writing across all year groups has improved. However, the strong writing skills seen in pupils' work in English were not always evident in other subjects. You acknowledge that the high expectations of teachers of pupils' writing in English is not consistently applied in all subjects in order for pupils to exceed expected levels.

You are resolute in wanting to move the school forward and you show no complacency. It is important that the ambition and passion, shared by your leaders, governors and staff, are underpinned by a tenacious attention to detail when considering your school improvement plan. You recognise the need to be very specific in the areas that need developing and in the actions required to improve within an appropriate time frame.

Governors are astute and hold you to account with a friendly firmness. They ask the right questions of you and are unafraid to challenge you. They support you in your vision and desire to ensure that St Gregory's is the best it can be. The governors are assiduous in ensuring that pupils' achievement is given priority. However, they do not always exercise this rigour in all aspects of their statutory duties. For example, some documents and information on the website are out of date and need removing or updating.

The pupils at your school are delightful and well mannered. They are brimming with enthusiasm and they know exactly what helps them to learn best. They are articulate, confident and engaging. You and your leaders have already identified that these pupils are not yet challenged enough to ensure that a greater proportion achieve the highest available standards across reading, writing and mathematics.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

As soon as visitors walk into the school it is clear that pupils are kept safe. There are clear procedures for visitors and the single central record ensures that all the necessary checks have been carried out. There are signs and posters around the school which remind pupils of what to do and who to speak to if they have any worries. All the pupils spoken to say that they feel safe. Your record-keeping is thorough.

Leaders and staff are there to welcome pupils at the start of the day and to see them off the premises safely. This is welcomed by parents as the nearby road can be busy at times. You are currently in the process of ensuring that all the policies and practices relating to safeguarding are being updated in the light of recent statutory changes. Importantly, you are also ensuring that staff understand these changes.

## Inspection findings

- The children in the early years are busy in their learning and enjoyment is clear. The children were confident in their speech and articulated well in discussion with adults. One child was very animated when explaining how the builders on site were emptying skips with 'rubble' from the roof. The behaviour is good and it is clear that there are established routines already in place creating a calm, purposeful atmosphere.
- Assessment procedures are comprehensive and frequent. Tracking records demonstrate that assessment is accurate. However, assessment practices do not always identify specifically what needs to be done in order to improve pupils' learning.
- It is evident that pupils achieve well and that they make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 1. The proportion of pupils who meet the expected standard in phonics is very high. The achievement of pupils at key stage 2 is similarly good, although in 2016 the achievement of pupils in writing did not match your previously accurate assessments.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve particularly well at the school. Disadvantaged pupils often achieve better than non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.
- Pupils' attendance is very high and no pupils are persistently absent. The monitoring of attendance and punctuality is very thorough.
- Pupils behave very well around the school. Records of behaviour are comprehensive and any incidence of misbehaviour is swiftly followed up.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive and supportive of the school. The response to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, was very high and almost all parents would recommend the school to others. It is clear that parents are considered an integral part of pupils' progress in learning.
- The curriculum is wide and imaginatively built around topics and themes. Pupils particularly enjoy science, art and history. It was clear from the work sample that pupils' subject knowledge is developed well but the depth of skills and understanding is not always consistently embedded.
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely and they are supported in this by parents who are asked to spend 10 minutes reading with their children every day. Many of the pupils spoken to said how much they enjoyed reading. When listening to pupils read, it was clear that they have been taught in a systematic way. A number of pupils read with convincing excitement and expression. There are lots of appropriate books made available to pupils. The parents' association has been very supportive in the purchasing of books for the school.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- pupils' writing is as strong across the curriculum as it is in English
- planning documents and analyses from assessment information are very specific as to what needs to be done to improve learning further
- the proportion of pupils reaching the highest standards across reading, writing and mathematics improves through greater challenge in lessons.

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

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Jones  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During this short inspection I met with you, senior leaders and five members of the governing body, and I was able to speak to a representative of the local authority. With you, I conducted a learning walk, visited all classes and had the opportunity to speak to pupils and see their work. I listened to some pupils read and met with a group of pupils throughout the day. I spoke with a number of parents at the school gates and took account of 24 free text comments and 66 responses to Parent View. There were no responses to the online staff questionnaire or the pupil questionnaire. I also scrutinised your assessment information, school improvement planning, behaviour and attendance logs, a number of case studies, the single central record and other safeguarding procedures and practices.