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Elizabeth Harris  
Headteacher  
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Dear Miss Harris

### **Short inspection of Holy Family Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 11 October 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 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 have successfully created a calm and welcoming ethos. There is a culture of high expectations among staff. Almost all parents agree that pupils are taught well. You lead the school with a strong conviction, shared by staff and governors, that together you can make a difference to pupils' lives.

Parents and pupils recognise your caring approach and speak enthusiastically about the 'family feel' of the school. Pupils feel safe and secure. They are unfailingly polite to adults and kind to each other. Pupils feel valued, as do their families. Many travel a considerable distance so that they can still attend the school. Work funded by the pupil premium to develop the emotional well-being of some disadvantaged pupils has led to them managing their feelings more constructively. Consequently, they participate in learning more purposefully and make better progress.

You, senior leaders and governors know the school well. The rigorous monitoring of teaching and careful tracking of pupils' progress enables you to plan action to tackle issues as they arise. This includes keeping the improvement of teaching and learning continually under the spotlight. Leaders have tackled rigorously a decline in pupils' progress and attainment at key stage 2. Pupils' progress is now increasing rapidly and attainment is rising.

The leadership team has tackled robustly the areas for improvement identified during the last inspection. You use the partnership with the local authority judiciously to provide an external independent view of the school's performance and improvement. Governors use their detailed understanding of the school to question leaders closely and challenge them to improve teaching and pupils' outcomes further.

Together with other school leaders, you have met well the challenges of teacher recruitment and turnover. The latter is largely caused by promotion opportunities elsewhere or relocation to less expensive areas. Guidance and support systems enable teachers new to the school to quickly become effective practitioners.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have developed a very strong culture of safeguarding which threads through all aspects of the school's work. You and your staff are very aware of the risks faced by your pupils and have tackled unflinchingly some serious problems. Your own experience and expertise as a trainer in safeguarding for the local authority have led to a review of the school's response to the 'Prevent' duty. This, and having four other trained safeguarding officers, means that there is constant attention paid to pupils causing concern. Frequent training and guidance ensure that staff are vigilant in looking out for concerns.

Staff, parents and governors speak highly of the way the school understands its families and responds to their individual needs. The support the school provides for those going through challenging times is greatly valued by the families involved. You bring in outside agencies very swiftly to help deal with concerns. Governors check that safeguarding processes are implemented rigorously..

Teachers provide much training for pupils and guidance for parents on how to stay safe online. Key members of staff check carefully the whereabouts of pupils when they leave to go to school elsewhere, including abroad. They also check absence rigorously, particularly for pupils identified as likely to be at risk. Case studies show how you are able to quickly identify concerns over potential risks of female genital mutilation, sexual exploitation or radicalisation and take appropriate action swiftly.

### **Inspection findings**

- During my visit, I checked to see whether the school has arrested the recent slowing of pupils' progress in mathematics at key stage 2. My conclusion is that you have dealt with this as a matter of urgency and with success. Pupils' progress is rising across the school. Your data and my scrutiny of their work show that pupils made good and increasing progress last year and that this continues.

- The new calculation policy supports teachers in understanding how to develop efficient methods of calculation. Observations of learning show that pupils are accurate when calculating mentally or in written form. For example, Year 6 pupils were able to work out the lowest common denominator and use this to put several fractions in order of magnitude..
- Your analysis of test papers has helped identify aspects where teachers need to place renewed emphasis. This includes helping pupils untangle what they have to do in complex word problems. Teachers often give pupils the opportunity to explore ideas through simple investigations and word problems linked to skills they are developing.
- Teachers expect pupils to explain their answers to sharpen their reasoning. The most able Year 6 pupils say that they find their work challenging and that this 'helps us to learn better'. They know they can try out ideas, select harder work if they feel they have mastered a skill and are not afraid to learn from their mistakes. This needs to be more consistent across the school. At times, pupils undertake many questions practising a skill they have already secured. This takes time away from looking at more challenging material. It does not always lead to them securing their reasoning or deepening their understanding.
- Subject leadership is making a difference to performance in mathematics, as it also is in other subjects. Leaders check teachers' performance regularly. Targets set are supported by working with a colleague to tackle areas for development. The subject leader provides model lessons which help new teachers develop their expertise. Well-attended and much-valued workshops give parents a better insight into how they can help their children's learning.
- The previous inspection raised concerns about how well governors scrutinised attainment and progress. During my visit, I checked on the impact of adaptations to their working practices. The governing body has undergone changes in its leadership and also in the rigour with which it checks the school's performance. The success with which it has tackled this can be seen as the governing body is moving confidently towards achieving the quality mark for governance.
- Governors are now well informed about the school's strengths and where they want to see improvement. Visits to see the school at work, training and the scrutiny of data mean that the questions they ask of leaders are pertinent and incisive. An audit of their skills means that governors are now undertaking roles most suited to their expertise and interests. They recognise the challenge of staff recruitment and are clear about how the headteacher seeks continually to improve the quality of teaching. They challenged the school over the decline in progress in mathematics and have the evidence to show that the corner has now been turned.
- The governing body checks carefully that pupil premium funding is leading to increased progress of disadvantaged pupils. They know that this is diminishing or eliminating differences in attainment with other pupils nationally.
- Teachers were not always using assessment information to set challenging tasks for pupils at the last inspection. I checked this as a focus when in lessons, looking at pupils' work and when talking with them. I judge that the school has tackled this successfully and retains it as a focus for staff development.

- Changes in procedures mean that teachers are now taking greater ownership for analysing assessment data for pupils in their classes. They focus sharply on what pupils have learned and where there are gaps that need filling.
- Leaders provide training and guidance for teachers on how they can plan lessons and activities that move different groups of pupils forward in their learning. This has raised their expectations of what pupils can do. As a result, the most able pupils are now consistently challenged to work at higher levels. Those who have fallen behind expectations for their age are helped to catch up.
- I also identified reading as an area of focus for my visit. Your analysis of key stage 2 test results in 2016 identified that some pupils struggled with the higher order reading skills such as interrogating texts for meaning. Teachers are tackling this robustly through sessions devoted specifically to developing reading skills and when using texts to promote writing.
- Pupils develop a great love of reading. They talk with interest about books and authors they like. These are often challenging and thought-provoking for their age. They explain how books fire their imaginations. Some Year 6 pupils said they find that films of the books they read do not always live up to the picture they have in their minds. Pupils also described how they study a book for a period of time to stimulate their writing. This helps them to gain an insight into how high-quality writing is structured.
- Attainment in phonics rose last year for Year 1 pupils. Most pupils reached the standard expected for their age. The Year 2 pupils I listened to read fluently, even those whom teachers had identified as being behind expectations for their age. All used their skills well when faced with tricky words, including one less able pupil making a valiant attempt at 'armoured'.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that teachers:

- provide regular opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning and deepen their understanding of new mathematical ideas
- encourage pupils to challenge themselves in mathematics so that they feel comfortable to learn when they make mistakes.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and your deputy headteacher, as well as other members of staff with leadership responsibilities. I met with three members of the governing body including the chair. I had a meeting with a local authority adviser and a telephone conversation with a representative of the diocesan education board.

You accompanied me when I visited parts of lessons in all year groups. I also observed pupils as they moved around the school. I conducted a scrutiny of pupils' books for mathematics from last year. I met with two groups of pupils and heard four of them read. I spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school and took account of the 28 responses to 'Parent View', the Ofsted online questionnaire. I considered the school's analysis of recent pupil performance. I evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep children safe and records of training and safeguarding checks.