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Mrs Helen Moreton
Headteacher
Holy Family Catholic Primary School
Seacrest Avenue
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Dear Mrs Moreton

Short inspection of Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 25 January 2017, 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. The standard of pupils' writing has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils of all abilities are now being helped to write in a number of subjects, for a range of purposes, using an increasingly wide vocabulary and a growing command of grammar, punctuation and spelling. You also have effective strategies to enable pupils who are experiencing difficulties with phonics to make greater progress.

You and your deputy work very well together and provide very effective leadership for the school. You have a detailed knowledge of your pupils and of the strengths and areas for development in their learning. We agreed that closer monitoring of the progress made by groups of differing prior attainment would enable you to have a more precise view of the school's improvement priorities. We also agreed that it would be helpful to provide parents with more information on the curriculum.

The governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and the areas for development. They provide you and your colleagues with stringent challenge as well as strong support.

You have a committed staff, all of whom say that the school is well led and managed. They all enjoy working at the school and are proud to do so.

Pupils and parents also have a high opinion of the school. All the parents who responded to the online questionnaire said that they would recommend the school to another parent and their responses to individual questions were overwhelmingly positive. The parents to whom I spoke during the inspection were all very happy with the school. A recurring theme was the 'family atmosphere' that has been created in the school and the way that staff go out of their way to help the children.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. The consistent application of your behaviour policy ensures that children behave very well in lessons, in the corridors and in the school grounds. They relate well to each other, to staff and to visitors to the school and are very polite and helpful. In discussions, they express their views clearly and listen carefully to each other's ideas. They show great respect for their environment, which is kept meticulously clean and in very good order by the site manager and his colleagues.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Staff and governors have received appropriate training and the staff who spoke to me knew precisely what to do if they ever had any concerns about the safety of a child.

The pupils who met with me all said that they feel safe in school and when travelling to and from school. They know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and social media because they have been taught to do so by their teachers and by visiting speakers. Pupils are also taught how to keep themselves safe on the roads, near railway lines and when dealing with electricity. The school holds regular fire practices and the pupils know what to do in the case of fire. They say that bullying rarely happens. If it does, it is dealt with effectively. Pupils know whom to contact if they are worried about anything and they spoke very positively about the support that they receive in such circumstances. These comments echo the very positive responses to the online pupil questionnaire. Parents and staff are also confident that pupils are safe at the school.

You have a 'zero-tolerance' policy towards bullying of any sort and each incident is investigated and recorded. Your records show that any allegations of racist comments have been followed up, not only with the pupils but also with parents. The fact that there have been no repeat offenders shows that the actions you take have been successful. You place considerable emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of a range of cultures. You also teach the importance of respect for all people, regardless of their backgrounds or status in the school or the wider community.

You work closely with a range of external agencies to support pupils and families who need additional help. Safeguarding is a high priority for you and you are not afraid to make unpopular decisions when there is a potential risk to a child.

Inspection findings

- The previous report identified the need to raise achievement in writing. You and your colleagues have tackled this area successfully. For the last four years, the results of national assessments have been in line with or above the national averages. Work in pupils' books shows that the additional help that you are giving the less able pupils has led to clear improvements in the accuracy of their spelling and punctuation and the range of vocabulary that they use. Pupils of all abilities are being encouraged to read a far wider range of books than previously and this is having a positive impact on their writing. They adapt their writing to different purposes and are able to bring their writing to life, for example by imitating accents and dialects in the dialogues that they produce. The recent revisions to the school's curriculum are providing pupils with increased opportunities to write on a wider range of subjects.
- The progress made by pupils between the ages of seven and 11 was significantly above average every year from 2013 to 2015. In 2016, it was in line with the national average. You attribute this to the nature of the cohort and the increased demands of the national tests. You check on the progress of boys, girls and disadvantaged pupils. However, you have not consistently checked on the progress of pupils of low-, middle- and high ability within those groups.
- Since the previous inspection, results in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 have been above or well above average. In 2016, however, the results for the small group of disadvantaged pupils were below average. You are providing focused, additional support for these pupils now that they are in Year 2. As well as daily reading and phonics sessions, you have arranged one-to-one support and nurture groups to help them build their confidence. The work in their books and observation of lessons show that they are making clear progress, although there is a way to go to reach the expected standard at the end of the year.
- In 2016, overall results in mathematics were above the national figure. However, high- and middle-ability pupils, especially girls, did not perform as well as their counterparts across the country. You have revised your approach to the teaching of mathematics to focus more closely on groups of pupils of varying ability. Your analysis of pupils' progress shows that this is having a positive effect.
- The governors are knowledgeable and committed and have a wide range of expertise which has been extended further as a result of the recent audit of their skills. They have undertaken appropriate training, including the required training on safeguarding. Governors have established a clear cycle for reviewing all policies to ensure that they are up to date. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and the areas for improvement. The governing body provides regular challenge to you and your colleagues and holds the school closely to account.

- The pupil premium funding is used to provide a range of appropriate support for disadvantaged pupils. Your figures show that this is reducing the difference between these pupils' achievement and that of other pupils nationally. However, it is not easy to identify whether the rate of improvement is in line with your intentions.
- You have used the physical education and sport premium funding well to provide a wide range of activities that are very popular with the pupils. However, there is no indication of how many pupils you expect to take part in such activities or how well you expect them to achieve.
- The school's curriculum is taught through a combination of themes and individual subject teaching. You have recently invested in new resources to help ensure greater coherence in the planning of thematic work. Information on this is provided on the school's website. However, parents are not provided with sufficient information on the schemes of work for those subjects, such as music and Spanish, that are taught by visiting specialists.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders check not only on the progress of groups of pupils but also on the progress of low-, middle- and high-ability pupils within those groups, so that they all consistently perform as well as their counterparts nationally
- they have a clear understanding of what is to be achieved through the use of pupil premium funding and physical education and sport premium funding, in order that they can measure the impact of these resources
- parents are provided with information on what is to be taught in every subject during the year.

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

Yours sincerely

Aelwyn Pugh

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held meetings with you and with other members of staff, including the deputy headteacher and the mathematics coordinator. I met four members of the governing body and had telephone conversations with representatives of the Lancaster diocese and the local authority. I visited lessons with you to observe teaching. Pupils' work was reviewed and I met with a group of pupils chosen at random from Years 3 to 6. I reviewed the 45 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. A discussion about safeguarding was held with you and the learning mentor. I reviewed the 45 responses to Parent View, and the 14 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. I also spoke to parents as they brought their children to school.