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Mr Peter McQuillen Strong
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Dear Mr McQuillen Strong

Short inspection of Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 31 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 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 effective leadership team have continued to drive improvements across the school. You are highly respected by your colleagues because you set high expectations and lead by example. You make best use of the strong partnerships created across a variety of schools. Recent work on analysing performance for a group of schools has enabled you to devise useful tools to support improvement work, both in your own school and with other headteachers. Regular monitoring work, both in your own school and in other schools, results in a cycle of continued improvement for pupils.

You know your school well. You have an accurate view of the strengths and areas that need further improvements. You constantly strive to provide the best possible outcomes for all your pupils. At the previous inspection, inspectors identified areas for improvements about raising standards and quickening the pace of learning. You have successfully addressed these recommendations, while managing many changes to the teaching team.

Pupils' outcomes have improved over time. From their starting points, children in the early years make good progress. Phonics attainment is now a strength of the school. Pupils' progress in reading remains around that seen nationally. Progress in writing presents a more mixed picture, although pupils' attainment in spelling and grammar work is above that seen nationally. Your focused determination has

ensured that standards have continued to rise, particularly in mathematics, where progress is outstanding.

You recognise the need to develop all your staff team, both to provide leaders for the future and to support new colleagues. Four of your teachers are currently undergoing assessment to become specialist leaders of education, further strengthening your leadership capacity. Alongside this, you have provided excellent induction arrangements for your newly qualified teachers, as well as ongoing training and development, which have enabled them to hit the ground running. Staff development is a key strength of the school and morale is high.

Regular monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment provides a detailed analysis of strengths over time. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together. Pupils display high levels of engagement and are interested in their work. Learning behaviours are good because teachers ensure that relationships are positive and set high expectations. Parents agree that their children are happy and feel safe in school.

Leadership of mathematics is strong. Your assistant headteacher demonstrates a sound understanding of why outcomes are so strong, and has already implemented further improvements to build on current success. The new English leader receives support to help her develop the skills required in order to lead her subject well. Work with more experienced leaders has resulted in the implementation of a new writing assessment system. All teachers are now using this to ensure that they know exactly what pupils need to do to reach the expected standard.

Governors play an active role within the school. They have the school's interests at heart and spend time working with pupils. They demonstrate a commitment and willingness to provide support and challenge to leaders. However, they do not always check the impact of the actions taken by leaders aimed at improving the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors make sure that safeguarding arrangements are effective. You have created a culture of vigilance to ensure the safety of pupils within the school. Governors recognise the importance of safeguarding arrangements, and have further strengthened procedures and practice through external verification. Regular staff updates through emails, alongside training, ensure that staff remain up to date in their knowledge of how to keep pupils safe. Your training on the 'Prevent' duty has led to you recognising and acting on the need to keep pupils safe from radicalisation. The appointment of new staff follows correct safeguarding procedures. As a result, effective safe recruitment is firmly in place.

Inspection findings

- You provide inspirational leadership to the school. Regular monitoring and feedback are used routinely to help staff improve their performance and to recognise where they have particular strengths. Performance management systems are fully in place. You know the school well and, consequently, have identified appropriate areas for development, rooted in secure evidence. You are ambitious for both staff and pupils. As a result, you have created a culture of success, where everyone shares your 'can do' attitude and vision.
- Leaders make good use of the additional funding provided through the pupil premium. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points in reading and mathematics. Their progress in writing also shows improvements over time.
- Leaders check that assessment information is accurate through carrying out checks in books and working with other schools. As a result, teachers are becoming more confident in their use of assessment. New tracking procedures are being refined to ensure that they give leaders, including governors, the information that they need. Some leaders are more confident in interpreting the information than others. Further refinements to these tracking systems are still needed, however, in order to check the progress of groups of pupils from their starting points more precisely.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, covering a range of interesting topics and themes. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the different visits and visitors, which enhance their learning. These opportunities provide pupils with a range of topics on which to write. Pupils enjoy a wide range of lunchtime and after-school clubs, which further enhance curriculum provision.
- Previous work to improve reading across the school has resulted in changes to the teaching of reading. Pupils read daily with work based around a class book, through which much of the comprehension is based. Attitudes to reading are positive and pupils are exposed to high-quality texts. Younger pupils read regularly with adults. The most able pupils read with understanding and fluency. Less-able readers apply their phonics skills to help them sound out unknown words. Across the school, pupils are making good progress in reading.
- Pupils' written work is neat and well presented. Pupils write regularly and for a variety of purposes. Links with class reading books and topics are carefully planned so that writing is meaningful. Pupils apply their learning from grammar and spelling work in their independent writing. Revised methods to record assessments of pupils' writing skills and abilities now give teachers more useful and accurate information about which areas pupils need to address in order to improve their writing as they move throughout the year.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- governance is strengthened by ensuring that governors check the impact of actions taken by school leaders to bring about further improvement
- tracking systems are refined so that the information provided supports leaders in their monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes of groups of pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Lunn
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders. I also met with two members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. I interviewed your middle leaders, three newly qualified teachers and your child protection lead practitioner. I heard pupils read and looked at a range of books to assess the quality of writing. We visited classrooms together and discussed what we had seen. I considered the responses from the online questionnaires, for parents, staff and pupils. I also reviewed a range of documentation, including those on the school's website and those relating to pupils' current progress and safeguarding.