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Evelyn Ward
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Ward

Short inspection of St Raphael's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 31 January 2017 with Ofsted Inspector Sarah Jones, 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. Since joining the school in April 2016, you have raised the expectations of teachers, pupils and parents. Together with leaders, you have established a caring community where pupils can flourish. Parents told us that your school is 'a really great community' and that 'teachers are very caring'. The mutual respect between staff and pupils is evident in their strong relationships. The pupils' positive attitudes towards learning have been sustained from the previous inspection. The school is expanding from two classes per year group to three. Leaders have managed the many changes in staffing well.

You and your leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced, and you utilise specialist teachers effectively in art, music and physical education to strengthen the pupils' outcomes. Leaders have maintained good provision for the children in the early years, although outdoor activities for Reception children are not sufficiently purposeful and motivating. The progress of the most able pupils is improving well. However, occasionally teachers do not challenge these pupils enough to deepen their knowledge and understanding to maximise their learning.

You, your leaders and the governors have a clear understanding of what remains to be done. You have established a firm base on which the school is continuing to improve. You check up on the progress of the pupils rigorously, enabling you to focus on the most important next steps. Parents are pleased with the positive improvements made. Teachers are confident and share their good knowledge with pupils, because they have received effective training.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The necessary recruitment checks are carried out to ensure that all adults in school are suitable to work with children. Staff, parents and pupils are positive about the way pupils are kept safe at school. Pupils' considerate and well-mannered behaviour enables them to support each other academically, emotionally and socially. Pupils have a good awareness of potential dangers in life. For example, children in the Reception Year could talk about taking care not to fall over.

Inspection findings

- The inspection followed four key lines of enquiry in addition to checking safeguarding arrangements. My colleague and I explored the progress of children in the early years provision, including when working outside. While children do well by the end of the Reception Year, you want to develop their learning through outdoor provision further. You recognise that some of the outdoor activities for children in the Reception do not secure good learning effectively enough.
- We found that indoor learning is strong and teachers are particularly successful in promoting vocabulary and phonics to support the children's language development. Teachers provide children in the Nursery with a wide range of activities that support all areas of learning well.
- We checked up on how well the most able pupils learn, especially in reading at key stage 1 and in writing across the school. These were groups of pupils who did less well than they should in national assessments in 2016.
- We found that the most able pupils make good progress in reading. Teachers provide pupils with books that are appropriately challenging. Pupils use a wide range of skills, including phonics, to help them tackle unfamiliar texts. They have a good understanding of what they have read.
- Pupils' writing is improving rapidly; they know how to use description to make their work interesting. Occasionally, teachers do not expect enough of the most able pupils so that these pupils can deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- We looked at the progress of less-able pupils in reading and mathematics at key stage 2. These pupils did comparatively less well than other pupils in 2016. However, we found that teachers and teaching assistants support less-able pupils well, and that additional resources are made available to help them with their mathematics. As a result, pupils are now making good progress from their starting points.
- In reading, less-able pupils are confident and fluent. Good links are made between reading and writing and a strong focus on learning new vocabulary is boosting their progress successfully.
- We checked how well leaders have improved the curriculum. At the previous inspection, the curriculum was insufficiently broad and balanced. Displays of work

and the pupils' books provide strong evidence to show that leaders have developed the curriculum well. Teachers ensure tighter links between educational visits and topics studied by pupils, which help to extend learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- outdoor activities for children in the Reception classes are purposeful and motivate children to want to learn
- teachers have consistently high expectations of how the most able pupils can deepen their knowledge and understanding in their writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Alison Cartlidge
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspectors agreed to prioritise the following areas with the school at the start of the inspection:

- the progress of children in the early years provision, including when working outside
- the challenge for the most able pupils, especially in reading at key stage 1 and in writing across the school
- the progress of less-able pupils in reading and mathematics at key stage 2
- how leaders have improved the breadth of the curriculum.

The inspectors carried out the following activities to explore these areas during the inspection:

- observed teaching and learning across the school during learning walks with the headteacher and other senior leaders
- met with leaders and members of the governing body
- held informal discussions with parents and considered 31 responses to Parent View, 64 questionnaire responses from pupils and 33 from members of staff
- considered a range of information supplied by the school, including checks on the quality of teaching, the school development plan and records relating to attendance and safeguarding procedures
- listened to pupils read.