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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Justin Dachtler
Headteacher
St Teresa's Catholic Primary School
Montacute Road
Morden
Surrey
SM4 6RL

Dear Mr Dachtler

Short inspection of St Teresa's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 February 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 February 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Pupils have continued to make good progress across the school. Your dedication and commitment to enabling all pupils to achieve their best means that you have not been complacent in driving further improvements. Your meticulous monitoring of all aspects of the school's work means that you identify swiftly and accurately the strengths and any areas that need to be improved. For example, you recognised recently that some groups of pupils were not making as much progress as others. You acted promptly, taking appropriate action to ensure that all pupils receive the right support and challenge they need to fulfil their potential. The school's own assessment information for this year indicates that pupils' rates of progress continue to be good and that no groups are falling behind.

You are mindful of the importance of sustaining strong leadership in your school and have rightly focused on developing a highly capable team of senior and middle leaders. Together you ensure that teachers receive the information, training and guidance they need to sustain a high quality of teaching. Your strong leadership is reflected in your valuable work for the local authority and the diocese to support leaders of other schools.

The school's Roman Catholic affiliation underpins all aspects of school life. It is reflected in the core values of love, trust, teamwork and ambition. You use the

example of the school patron, St Teresa of Lisieux, to exemplify the importance of small acts of kindness to others. This clearly has had a strong impact on pupils who described to me how they feel safe at school and how they appreciate helping each other. The large majority of parents who completed the online survey, Parent View, agree that their child is looked after well and feels safe at school. Pupils' attendance at school is above average.

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 training is up to date and the single central record indicates that required checks are made of staff. The school maintains close communication with families to support those who need to improve their punctuality and attendance and works with outside agencies effectively when needed. Governors are mindful of their responsibilities regarding safeguarding and have ensured they are up to date with the latest statutory requirements.

Inspection findings

- At the last inspection, inspectors noted that an area for improvement was to strengthen the role of middle leaders in the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. This has been a continued priority for you, especially given a high turnover of staff. We agreed this as a key line of enquiry for this inspection.
- You have established a productive cycle of monitoring the quality of teaching, involving other senior leaders and middle leaders. You achieve a careful balance of valuable training and guidance for leaders while maintaining your complete oversight of the strengths and areas for improvement across the school. You ensure that teaching and learning is a regular focus in leadership meetings.
- Middle leaders are increasingly involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for development within their responsibilities. They gain valuable leadership development opportunities by working with experienced senior leaders, as well as working with outside support, attending training and sharing good practice within and between schools. Their work is starting to have an impact, for example in increasing teachers' confidence in the more complex areas of the mathematics curriculum.
- Leaders' regular monitoring of the quality of teaching rightly takes into account assessment information about pupils' progress and work in their books, as well as visits to lessons. Leaders effectively check that teachers swiftly follow up the feedback given to them so that improvements are made. This is exemplified by the improvements made, when needed, to the development of teachers' questioning skills to deepen pupils' thinking and boost their use of technical vocabulary, or in teachers meeting the school's expectations for assessment in pupils' books.
- You ensure that all teachers are clear on your high expectations as these are helpfully set out in the school's teaching and learning handbook. This emphasises the importance of consistency of good practice across the school. Combining this

with appropriate training opportunities and support for teachers and leaders, you make sure the quality of teaching and learning is rarely less than good.

- We agreed that most pupils make good progress across all year groups in the school. However, your frequent close scrutiny of information about pupils' progress indicates that not all pupils make the progress of which they are capable. We agreed a second key line of enquiry regarding the progress of groups of pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, those who speak English as an additional language, and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. We also agreed a third key line of enquiry about the progress of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, because their levels of progress, while above national levels, are not as high as those of pupils from lower starting points. This is especially the case in reading and mathematics.
- You have put in place a comprehensive tracking system to enable the early identification of pupils who are falling behind and have a clear view on the support they need to help them to catch up. While leaders focus rightly on the individual circumstances and needs of pupils, you scrutinise patterns and trends across groups of pupils, to enable appropriate strategies to be put in place to help pupils overcome specific barriers to their learning. This includes intervention groups before and after school, valuable sessions to support emotional literacy and specialist teaching assistant support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Workshops for parents introduce new aspects of the curriculum and enable them to know better how to support their child's learning at home.
- You have successfully introduced a new scheme for teaching mathematics. This has already improved attainment at key stage 1 and this year is beginning to have a positive impact as it becomes established at key stage 2. The associated training for teachers means they are well placed to improve pupils' reasoning skills, problem solving and their appreciation of mathematics at a greater depth. The routine of pupils' completion of assessments at the end of every lesson allows rapid follow-up if pupils have found specific areas difficult, to help them catch up.
- You recognise that the most able pupils have not been challenged sufficiently in lessons to enable them to make the progress of which they are capable. Senior leaders have raised expectations of teachers' routine incorporation of challenge in their planning. Teachers structure different levels of support and challenge for pupils effectively. Pupils understand what they need to do to be successful in their learning and move on to further challenge as soon as they are ready. However, work in pupils' books and conversations I had with pupils indicate that they sometimes find challenges quite easy, and are ready to move on to more complex tasks and texts sooner.
- Teachers are establishing routines for pupils to read daily. Pupils' completion of reading journals introduced this year demonstrates how often they read and the development of their comprehension skills and improvement of their spelling, punctuation and grammar. You have clear and effective strategies in place to develop pupils' use of vocabulary and technical language. This is especially

helpful for pupils who speak English as an additional language, who make good or better progress, often at rates faster than their peers.

- Your launch of a new reading scheme has been successful in promoting pupils' enjoyment of reading and increasing the opportunities they have to read more frequently. Pupils enthusiastically described to me why they chose particular books and ways in which they have used non-fiction books to support their learning. Some pupils would like even more opportunities to read in class.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all pupils receive the challenge they need in order to make rapid progress, particularly the most able pupils.

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 Merton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Carter-Fraser
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I held meetings with you and other school leaders, governors, and a representative from the local authority. I held a telephone conversation with a representative from the diocese. I met with a group of pupils and listened to pupils read. I visited all classes accompanied by you and the assistant headteachers. I held informal conversations with pupils and staff around the school. I met with a parent on their request. I took into account the views of pupils, staff and parents in surveys completed for this inspection. I looked at a wide range of school documents including the school's self-evaluation, records relating to the safeguarding of pupils, records of the monitoring of teaching, and achievement information.