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Mrs Maria Kemble
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Kemble

Short inspection of St Edmund's Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 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 March 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Parents, staff and pupils are very positive about the school. The overwhelming majority of the 69 parents responding to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said their children are happy at school and make good progress. A typical comment was, 'The school exceeds my expectations and is always adapting and improving.' Many parents singled out the 'forest school', 'a wonderful bonus on a town centre site', the 'varied and exciting regular curriculum, which is further enhanced by an enormous range of extra-curricular opportunities' or the regular 'learning conversations' where pupils, teachers and parents have half an hour to discuss the pupils' progress.

Pupils from the wide range of different backgrounds represented in the school get on really well together. For example, a parent told me how her child is 'welcomed at the Polish club by a friendly group and teacher even though he is not Polish, just very interested in languages'. At breaktime and at lunchtime pupils play well together. Pupils behave well in their lessons. We witnessed this as we toured the school together and staff were unanimous in their view that behaviour is good and well managed. Parents agree with this. For example, a parent told me that 'The school provides a friendly and safe environment for him to learn.'

Respect lies at the heart of your school. Staff told me they feel respected by you and by one another. This is reflected by the mutual respect demonstrated by pupils,

for example in the Year 6 assembly. Pupils listened to their peers respectfully and then gave very mature feedback. There is clear evidence around the school of pupils' effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, through, for example, a visit to a mosque in Cambridge, the promotion of music and enterprising activity to raise money for charity during Lent.

You recognise that the 2016 national test results for pupils at the end of key stage 1 were below the national average. You have taken appropriate action to address the reasons for this. The areas for improvement from the previous inspection report relate to improving the quality of teaching. You showed me that effective work had taken place to spread best practice. Effective practice is shared regularly across the school. Support and training are used successfully to encourage, support and challenge staff to improve.

Following a local reorganisation of education, your school now has its first Year 6 pupils. Therefore, no pupils have yet taken national assessment tests for key stage 2.

Safeguarding is effective.

Governors and leaders are rigorous in ensuring that all safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and are effective. There is regular checking by leaders and governors to ensure that any reported incidents or concerns are followed up in a timely way. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

Pupils feel safe. They are confident that you and their teachers would take any potential bullying very seriously. Very nearly all parents responding to Parent View believe their children are safe. Pupils and staff agree. Attention to pupils' safety and well-being permeates the school. An example of parental comments concerned a medical need, saying, 'this was sorted out by the school within 24 hours!' The parent went on to say how impressed she was at how quickly they had helped her child.

Inspection findings

The following areas were discussed in detail as the focus for the inspection:

- I investigated whether pupils make good progress in key stage 2. Pupils make good progress across a wide range of subjects, especially in French, computing and religious education. Subject leaders have time to plan and monitor the quality of provision while being coached by senior leaders. This leads to effective learning across a wide range of subjects. Teachers are hungry for, and value, feedback from their colleagues. Staff have opportunities to share good practice within and from outside the school – leading to better teaching.
- I checked on what accounted for the contrast in key stage 1 outcomes between the dip in 2016 and the track record of above-average results prior to this. Leaders have analysed the reasons and put in place actions to ensure that pupils

have more opportunities to demonstrate their ability in the work they produce in key stage 1.

- In 2016, the school's outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check fell to below the national average. Therefore, I checked that the teaching of phonics is effective. You and other leaders gave an explanation for the results of individual children accounting for the below-average attainment in the 2016 Year 1 phonics screening check. Despite not meeting the required standard, pupils in key stage 1 had made good progress from their starting points in phonics. The needs of pupils are being met with, for example, support for pupils who speak English as an additional language leading to improvements in reading and phonics ability in Year 2.
- It is clear that phonics skills are used well in the early years. Extra training and help have been given to support the use of phonics in reading and writing beyond the early years. Pupils in the current Year 1 are on track to at least match the national average in summer 2017.
- The information available before the inspection showed that pupils make a strong start in the early years. I checked the reasons for this. Early years teachers have researched good practice from other schools and have been eager to embrace change. The impact of the effective action to improve provision can be seen in the changes to the curriculum, the teaching of writing and assessment procedures.
- You have made a positive contribution to school improvement beyond St Edmund's. In return, teachers explained how they have benefited from their work with colleagues from another school. They have become more reflective practitioners as a result. Joint professional development days and some cross-school subject leadership have increased the school's capacity for improvement.
- Records of the recent local authority visit, combined with our tour of the school and the work in pupils' books, confirmed that the quality of teaching is generally effective and leads to pupils making good progress. The use of specialist teachers for some subjects is helpful in promoting high standards. You acknowledge that teaching could do more to challenge the most able pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils have more opportunities to demonstrate their improving skills in their key stage 1 work
- lessons provide good opportunities for the most able pupils to be challenged.

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

Yours sincerely

Adrian Lyons
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your senior leaders, a group of teachers, the chair and a member of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and a group of pupils. Together with you and the head of school, I made short visits to most classes to observe teaching and to see pupils at work. I observed pupils at break and lunchtime and I heard some pupils read. I reviewed school documents about self-evaluation, development planning and safeguarding, including the single central record. I also considered the 69 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire from parents and 19 responses from staff.