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Isobel Gaffney
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Dear Ms Gaffney

Short inspection of Rosary Roman Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 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 May 2012.

This school continues to be good.

You have developed a strong and effective leadership team, who share your high aspirations. Leaders, including governors, have an accurate picture of the school's effectiveness. Together, you work with a clear sense of purpose to raise standards and ensure the school provides a good quality of education for all pupils.

Since the previous inspection, you have taken clear action to strengthen the quality of teaching. You have established a culture in which teachers work collaboratively to share good practice and learn from each other. Leaders monitor the quality of teaching carefully to provide additional support and challenge when it is needed.

Improvements in teaching have ensured that the majority of pupils make good or better progress across the school. In the 2016 statutory assessments, the progress of Year 6 pupils was, overall, significantly above the national average in all subjects. Pupils' progress was particularly strong in mathematics and, as a result, they achieved above-average standards. This is because the teaching of mathematics provides frequent opportunities for pupils to tackle demanding problems which extend their skills and understanding.

The majority of disadvantaged pupils also make good progress. This was particularly evident in the 2016 key stage 2 outcomes, where disadvantaged pupils made above-average progress in reading and mathematics. However, in key stage 1, there is still work to be done to ensure that teaching sufficiently challenges all groups of pupils in reading and writing. This is particularly the case for the most

able pupils and for disadvantaged pupils with low prior attainment. Your current plans for improvement show that you are giving high priority to these aspects of the school's work.

Leaders and staff have fostered a positive climate for learning. Pupils encourage each other and are ready to learn from their mistakes. Their enjoyment of learning is tangible and the majority attend school regularly. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. You acknowledge that this needs to improve quickly to ensure it does not impact negatively on their progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff have been made aware of the school's procedures for reporting concerns about a pupil's welfare. This includes the steps they must take if they are concerned about the behaviour of an adult in the school. Leaders have carried out all the necessary checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work in the school. The governors audit the school's single central record of these checks to ensure that procedures for staff recruitment meet statutory requirements. Leaders have ensured that safeguarding records are detailed and of high quality. These records show that leaders act promptly to ensure that vulnerable pupils receive protection when they need it. Effective partnerships with external agencies and families contribute to the accurate assessments of pupils' needs. Consequently, they receive the right level of support to promote their safety and well-being.

Pupils state that they feel safe in school and that staff help them when they are worried. The responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, show that the vast majority of parents who replied feel that their children are safe, happy and well looked after in school. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum helps pupils to develop a good awareness of how to keep safe in different situations, including when they go online. For example, when preparing for an assembly on online safety, Year 6 pupils explained clearly how to reduce the risks they may face when using the internet.

Inspection findings

- For the first line of enquiry, I explored the progress made by disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1. The 2016 assessments showed that, overall, the majority of pupils made good progress from their starting points. However, disadvantaged pupils with low prior attainment made slower progress than their peers. Consequently, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who achieved the standard expected for their age was significantly below the national average.
- You have identified that, in order to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, the teaching of reading needed strengthening in key stage 1. Leaders and staff work with a shared sense of purpose to develop pupils' reading skills. This includes running workshops to help parents support their child's reading at home. All pupils in key stage 1 take part in daily small-group reading sessions led by an

adult. This regular reading contributes well to the development of pupils' phonics skills and their enjoyment of reading. Pupils read fluently, accurately and are confident when tackling unfamiliar words.

- You recognise that there needs to be greater emphasis on the development of pupils' comprehension skills in key stage 1. Our visits to lessons showed that staff do not always question pupils to check if they understand what they have read. Pupils are not consistently challenged to explain their thinking or go back to the text to check if their ideas were correct. This has reduced the clear impact of leaders' work to speed up rates of progress in reading in key stage 1. You are right to make this a priority for the school.
- My second line of enquiry explored pupils' achievement in writing. The 2016 statutory writing assessments show that, overall, pupils made strong progress. However, comparatively, pupils' achievement in writing was not as strong as it was in reading and mathematics. This was particularly the case for boys in key stage 1 and for disadvantaged pupils with average prior attainment in key stage 2.
- Improving writing outcomes for all groups of pupils is a key focus for leaders and staff. You have ensured that teachers are clear about the standard of writing that is expected in each year group. This has raised teachers' expectations about the quality of writing pupils need to produce. An effective partnership with five local schools is helping teachers assess pupils' writing with greater accuracy. As a result, the teaching of writing is now matched more precisely to what pupils need to learn next.
- The impact of leaders' actions was evident during my visits to lessons as well as the work I saw in pupils' books. Younger pupils are confident using their phonics knowledge to record their ideas. Well-chosen resources help pupils choose adventurous vocabulary and begin their sentences in different ways. Teachers provide precise explanations and examples so pupils know how to make their writing successful. However, some teaching in key stage 1 could be more challenging, particularly for the most able pupils. Occasionally, too much emphasis is placed on the quantity of work produced rather than its quality. As a result, some pupils are still not consistently producing writing that reflects their very best capabilities.
- For the third line of enquiry, I considered leaders' work in improving attendance. Last year, attendance overall was broadly average. However, absence for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was in the highest 10% nationally. Disadvantaged pupils' attendance was also lower than average.
- You are determined to ensure that no groups of pupils are disadvantaged by poor attendance. Weekly leadership meetings ensure that absence rates are tracked closely and that concerns are identified promptly. Careful analysis of pupils' needs ensures that families receive bespoke support when concerns arise. Close partnerships with external agencies strengthen the quality of support provided.
- School information shows that attendance is improving for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, although it is still below the national average. Despite the school's actions, absence rates for disadvantaged pupils have not reduced. Leaders have rightly identified this as a priority and have put

in place a number of strategies to tackle this. It is too soon to evaluate whether these strategies are improving rates of attendance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- levels of attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities improve swiftly
- the teaching of writing is sufficiently challenging in key stage 1 to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve according to their capabilities
- in reading, pupils of all ability groups in key stage 1 are challenged to explain their thinking in greater depth.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah Murphy-Dutton
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

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

- leaders' work to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1, with a particular focus on those pupils with low prior attainment
- the extent to which leaders are improving outcomes in writing so that all groups of pupils achieve the standard of which they are capable
- leaders' actions to improve the attendance of different groups of pupils.

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

- meetings with you and other school leaders, including a discussion with representatives from the governing body
- a meeting with the school's improvement partner from the local authority
- a meeting to review the school's current attendance information and the action taken by staff to reduce rates of absence for different groups of pupils
- visits to classrooms to observe learning and to review work in pupils' books

- listening to pupils read in Year 2 and Year 3 and talking to pupils about their attitudes to learning and behaviour in school
- analysis of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys, including 80 responses from parents, 42 responses from pupils and the four staff responses
- scrutiny of documents related to safeguarding and child protection.