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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mrs Anita Gallagher
Executive Headteacher
St Joseph's Catholic Junior School
Pitman Street
Camberwell
London
SE5 0TS

Dear Mrs Gallagher

Short inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 28 March 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 January 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. In January 2014, the school joined a hard federation with the infant school. This change in governance provides your school with a skilled group of individuals who offer their expertise to support and achieve the vision and mission of the school. Governors visit the school often and acquire an accurate view of its strengths and areas to improve. They support and challenge leaders well by drawing on their expertise and experience to hold leaders to account for pupils' performance.

You, together with the head of school, have worked effectively with leaders and governors to tackle successfully all the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. The school's own assessment information shows that pupils are currently making faster progress in reading and mathematics than previously.

There are clear systems in place for checking and improving pupils' work. The impact of these is seen in pupils' writing and the range of high-quality work on display around the school and in pupils' books. You and other leaders effectively monitor the quality of teaching regularly.

Leaders have used the local authority's assessment system to monitor pupils'

progress. However, this has not served you well in terms of helping to track pupils' progress over time and across year groups. As a result, although leaders rightly track pupils' learning in lessons and through book monitoring, you still do not have an accurate picture of pupils' overall progress from one term to the next across all subjects. You recognise that there is more work to be done to ensure that teachers' checks on pupils' progress are consistently accurate.

You have worked effectively with staff, governors, pupils and other partners to create a welcoming school. Parents and carers appreciate the work that you and your staff do to develop their children's learning. For example, parents value the home-school learning sessions that you offer in reading and mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

Senior leaders, including governors, have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. They fulfil their statutory duties well to ensure that pupils are kept safe from harm. They have ensured that safeguarding training is up to date and that staff are knowledgeable about the Secretary of State's most recent statutory guidance. This includes national and local priorities such as extremism and child sexual exploitation. As a result, the staff understand their responsibilities and carry these out extremely well, particularly with regard to identifying potential signs of female genital mutilation. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding liaise closely with vulnerable families. They use the support of external agencies when pupils are potentially at risk of harm.

Pupils I spoke to during the inspection told me that they feel safe in school and know whom to speak with if they are worried. Pupils learn about how to keep safe when out of school and while using the internet. The systems that you have in place for checking the suitability of staff to work with children before appointing them are thorough and robust.

Inspection findings

- I first examined the effectiveness of leaders' actions to accelerate the progress of boys in reading. In the 2016 key stage 2 tests, girls performed better than boys, and boys did not perform as well as their peers nationally.
 - Pupils, particularly middle-ability boys in Years 3 and 6, read well. They are enthusiastic about the new books in the school library.
 - A sample of pupils' reading records in Year 3 and Year 6 showed the positive dialogue parents have with teachers about their child's reading. This reflects a growing culture that encourages positive reading habits.
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- In class, an appreciation of stories and storytelling enables pupils, especially

boys, to immerse themselves in texts. Pupils typically commented, 'My teacher makes me imagine that I am part of the story,' and, 'I want my teacher to read to me all day.' Pupils' effective engagement with reading good-quality texts has helped them to develop a love of reading. As a result, pupils' progress in reading is improving steadily.

- I then looked at the effectiveness of leaders' actions to ensure that pupils achieve as well in mathematics as their peers nationally. In 2016, boys made better progress than girls in mathematics.
- Work in books, especially those belonging to girls, shows that teachers have high expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving. Pupils are provided with guided support in lessons to help them to tackle challenging activities. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and promote a love of mathematics. Teaching in mathematics is focused on developing pupils' problem solving. Pupils are clear that they are 'really challenged in mathematics'. This is contributing to an improving picture of progress and attainment in mathematics.
- I focused on how pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are taught in all subjects so that the most able pupils are suitably challenged. During your recent 'maths week', teachers planned activities across a range of subjects that effectively extended the mathematical skills of the most able pupils. Teachers use effective questioning skills to challenge the most able pupils to apply their literacy skills effectively.
- Lastly, I considered how effectively leaders ensure that teachers' checks on pupils' work are accurate and helpful in planning for pupils' next steps. The school's information on current pupils' progress and attainment showed a downward trend. However, this did not match evidence gathered from observing learning in classrooms and work seen in pupils' books. Inspection evidence shows that pupils have made good progress this year in a range of subjects.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is an effective assessment system in place that accurately tracks pupils' progress
- teachers make accurate and consistent checks on pupils' progress and achievement.

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

Yours sincerely

Lando Du Plooy

Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held a number of meetings with you, governors, senior and middle leaders and a representative from the local authority. You and other senior leaders accompanied me on a series of short visits to classrooms where we observed learning, spoke to pupils and looked at work in their books. I also listened to Year 3 and Year 6 pupils read. I checked the school's website, and looked at policies, the school's self-evaluation and summary improvement plans, external reviews of the school's work, minutes of governors' meetings and records of pupils' attainment and progress. I also took into consideration responses to Parent View and responses from pupils who took part in the Ofsted online surveys.