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8 June 2017

Mrs Lindsay Gamble
Headteacher
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Primary School
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Dear Mrs Gamble

Short inspection of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 24 May 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 October 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 taking up the post of headteacher in September 2014, you have been supported by the governors to develop a new and strengthened leadership team including a deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher. Together you have created a positive learning culture within the staff team by sharing responsibilities, increasing accountability and giving staff ownership of systems and routines. As a result, staff morale is high and you take collective responsibility for improving the education that pupils receive. You are committed to pupils achieving strong academic outcomes but also developing as well-rounded individuals who are able to make a positive contribution to society. Over time, outcomes have remained consistently in line with the national average at the end of key stages 1 and 2, and are showing an improvement. In 2016, at the end of key stages 1 and 2, the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard was well above national figures in reading, writing and mathematics. You acknowledge that there are still some aspects of pupils' achievement which could develop even further. For example, you are keen to increase the proportion of pupils who exceed the expectations at the end of each key stage. However, your realistic self-evaluation means that there is a relentless drive for improvement and a continued determination to succeed.

You have ensured that pupils have access to high-quality learning experiences through the vibrant and inspiring curriculum which leaders have recently developed. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the curriculum experiences and opportunities, and demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils' high attendance, which is well above the national average, is testament to their enjoyment of school and the value they see in their education. As one pupil said, 'I can't wait to get out of bed to get to school each morning.' Leaders and teachers actively promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. This is exemplified by the way in which pupils are confident to share their ideas and justify their opinions. They demonstrate respect for each other and are flourishing as individuals.

Governors are well placed to support the school and shape its strategic direction. The co-chairs are new to their role but are determined to develop their knowledge and skills to provide an increasing level of challenge to leaders. Additionally, leadership support through the local authority and other networks provide external validation of your school's self-evaluation. You have also been keen to develop further leadership capacity within the school. Making effective use of teaching assistants' expertise and establishing subject teams to develop the curriculum have meant that all members of staff play a part in school leadership. Consequently, leaders have made good progress in tackling the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection and there is good capacity for further improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have created a vigilant culture of safeguarding throughout the school. You and the governing body have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed, clear and up to date. Robust systems are in place for the recruitment and induction of new staff. Staff are clear about safeguarding procedures as a result of the induction and effective training they continue to receive.

Pupils behave very well and say there is rarely any bullying. They feel safe and well cared for in school and parents strongly agree. The curriculum provides opportunities to support pupils in being safe. Consequently, pupils talk confidently about how to stay safe online and what they would do if someone was being unkind to them at school. Pupils are incredibly supportive of each other, demonstrated by the caring attitudes shown when they cooperated together in a mixed-age group.

Inspection findings

- You have a very clear view about the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning as a result of the regular checks you make along with other senior leaders. You have eradicated some weaker teaching that existed and was resulting in differing outcomes between cohorts of pupils. Leaders' actions are having a positive effect on more rapidly improving the rate of progress for these pupils in order for them to catch up quickly. The main strength of your monitoring of teaching and learning is the focus on each individual's achievement through careful tracking and assessment. This allows leaders and teachers to have professional discussions about how to most effectively meet the needs of each pupil.
- At the regular pupils' progress meetings, teachers identify pupils' precise next steps and where any additional support is required. This is enabling all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, to make good progress due to the tailored support they receive. For example, each morning before the start of school, identified pupils receive additional support and intervention. You have also established a robust performance management system. Not only is it effectively holding staff to account for pupils' outcomes, it also allows staff to develop an area of interest and share it with others. This is enabling staff to develop as leaders and to take responsibility for their own continued development.
- At the previous inspection, leaders were tasked with raising achievement in mathematics so that it matched that in English. Since then you have introduced improved approaches to the teaching of mathematics. Teachers now use assessment more effectively to match tasks precisely to pupils' needs. Additionally, where teachers identify any gaps in pupils' learning, teaching assistants provide a pre-teaching session so that pupils quickly catch up and can then participate in the lesson with their peers. Teachers have also received training to support their subject knowledge and this has resulted in a particular focus on developing pupils' reasoning skills. The mathematics team of leaders was able to demonstrate the impact of its actions in the work in pupils' books. Examples of pupils explaining their reasoning and solving more complex problems are increasingly evident. Pupils are now more involved in their learning, and understand when they are ready to move on and how to challenge themselves further. Consequently, attainment and progress in mathematics are now in line with those in reading and writing. Mathematics attainment at key stages 1 and 2 in 2016 was above national figures for pupils achieving and exceeding the standard.

- The English subject team has been instrumental in raising the profile of reading, and ensuring that reading has remained a strength of the school. Teachers and leaders have identified an excellent range of high-quality texts which link to the wider curriculum. These books are inspiring pupils to read, and bring to life pupils' learning across the curriculum. The reading environment is very strong throughout the school. Topic displays incorporate a range of non-fiction books and recommended books for each age group are displayed in an equally enticing way. Pupils, therefore, are passionate about their love of reading and talk with enthusiasm about class novels and reading with younger pupils.
- There was a slight dip in the proportion of pupils who met the phonics standard in Year 1 in 2016. Leaders quickly identified that pupils who speak English as an additional language needed extra support. Action has since been taken to support these pupils in Year 2. Likewise, leaders have taken action to make sure that pupils who speak English as an additional language make more rapid progress from the moment they begin school in Reception.
- Since the last inspection, outcomes in the early years have remained consistent. However, nationally, outcomes have risen. This has resulted in the proportion of children who reached a good level of development by the end of Reception dipping to just below the national average in 2016. You recognised that the early years was an improvement priority and took action to deploy your deputy headteacher to lead this key stage. The deputy headteacher took prompt action to adapt the provision to meet the changing needs of children in Reception, 50% of whom now speak English as an additional language. Effective leadership and investment in training, resources and the environment have resulted in increased opportunities for communication development. The team uses accurate assessments to tailor the children's learning to their needs and interests. Parents agree that children flourish in the positive environment and culture you have established. You are now keen to embed all of the changes made in order to support an increasing proportion of children to reach a good level of development.
- The proportions of pupils who met the expected standard at the end of key stages 1 and 2 were well above the national figures for reading, writing and mathematics in 2016. However, the proportions who exceeded the expectations, while above national figures at key stage 2, were much closer to the average. You have rightly identified that a priority for leaders is to improve standards even further so that some of the most able pupils benefit from increasing challenge and a greater proportion are able to exceed the expectations. Pupils enjoy the challenge they receive in lessons and they demonstrate very positive attitudes to their learning. Their books show how they regularly self-assess their work against the teacher's criteria. This supports them in knowing what features to include to reach even higher standards. Therefore, pupils have high expectations of themselves and are taking greater responsibility for their own development as learners.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- an increased proportion of pupils achieve a good level of development at the end of Reception and exceed the expectations at the end of each key stage in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Godfrey
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, senior leaders, subject teams, a representative from the local authority, three members of the governing body and a representative from the diocese. I evaluated documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, information about pupils' progress, monitoring records, attendance records and information about safeguarding. I spoke with a range of parents and carers and considered 35 responses from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I met with a group of pupils from a range of year groups. You and I visited classrooms together to observe teaching and learning, and scrutinised pupils' work in books. I also listened to pupils read.