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8 September 2017

Mr Harry Rowan
Executive Headteacher
Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School
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Dear Mr Rowan

Short inspection of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 18 July 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 December 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Under your determined leadership, with the support of the leadership team, the school has continued to improve and has gone from strength to strength.

You have created a skilful leadership team that is capable of leading and managing the school on a day-to-day basis. This has enabled you to undertake a more strategic role and to successfully lead and manage both of the schools in your federation.

You understand the needs of the school well and are very clear about what needs to be done to bring about improvement. For example, you have taken successful action to improve writing across the school. The school improvement plan accurately prioritises key issues. These link directly to performance management targets for all staff.

All parents that I spoke to and those who responded on line to Parent View gave very positive views of the school. Comments such as 'Staff are very approachable and will always take time to talk', and 'My children love coming to school and would like to attend at the weekend' reflected well the high esteem with which the school is viewed within the community.

It was clear, when I spoke to staff, that they are enthusiastic and caring and are proud to work for the school. They are clearly determined to deliver the very best possible

provision for pupils in the school. They spoke warmly of the leadership team and the opportunities given to them to develop and improve, both as a staff team and as individuals.

Pupils who attend the school are polite and friendly to each other and to visitors. Comments such as 'I was scared before I came to the school that I wouldn't fit in and make friends. When I arrived I made friends with everyone in my class and now have more friends than ever before' confirmed the open and friendly welcome given to all newcomers to the school. This also clearly demonstrates the school's success at preparing pupils for life in modern Britain.

Pupils concentrate in lessons, showing good and often very good attitudes to learning. Your behaviour records confirm how well pupils behave and show few recorded incidents. Pupils themselves also judged behaviour in school to be good and confirmed that very little learning time is lost through incidents of difficult behaviour.

The quality of teaching and learning was judged to be good overall at the previous inspection. However, you were asked to improve the quality of teaching and learning in key stage 1 and ensure that pupils take more pride in their work. The quality of work in pupils' books is strong across the school. However, progress overall is less strong in some year groups. You are aware of this and acknowledge that more needs to be done to bring about further improvement in the consistency of teaching and learning overall.

Disadvantaged pupils make good progress alongside others in the school. Recent information collected by school showed that this group is making better progress than others particularly in key stage 2. The diligent work carried out by the school's special educational needs coordinator has ensured that funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effectively targeted to meet pupils' individual needs. As a result, this group make similar progress to others nationally.

Early years has undergone significant change since the previous inspection and the Nursery and Reception classes now work much more closely together in the newly refurbished unit. The effectiveness of this closer working partnership is clearly reflected in the year-on-year increase in the numbers of children reaching the nationally expected standard at the end of their time in Reception. You also, quite rightly, recognise that in order to speed up further improvement in children's outcomes, more work is needed to improve the provision for outdoor learning. This will also bring about improvements in the organisation and quality of learning in the Nursery class.

The governing body knows the school well and members visit on a regular basis. They have a wide range of skills, and notes from meetings show that governors offer consistent and knowledgeable challenge as well as support. The chair of the governing body has a long association with the school and has a good understanding of the journey that the school has undertaken.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding practices and protocols meet statutory requirements. Records and confidential information are maintained safely and appropriately and written records are of a good standard.

Staff spoken to were quick to explain how safeguarding underpins the work of the school and how keeping children safe is a key priority for all. The regularly updated training that staff access has ensured that they are knowledgeable about what to do in the event of an incident occurring. Pupils I spoke to explained clearly and carefully how school keeps them safe and ensures that they know how to keep safe outside school, particularly when using the internet.

Inspection findings

- A key focus for my visit was to evaluate how effectively leaders are improving outcomes in the early years. In 2014, the proportion of children reaching the expected standard was just 37%. In 2016, the proportion had risen to 57%. Un-validated results for this year suggest that the proportion has risen to closer to the national average for 2016. This shows an upward trend overall.
- You are clear, and I agree, that children often start in Nursery with skills and knowledge lower than may be expected for their age. Since the last inspection, your focus on bringing together Nursery and Reception classes as one unit has undoubtedly contributed to the continued overall improvement. The much-improved building and outside area have enabled staff to increase the opportunities that children have to play and learn. However, at the time of the inspection, you and your leadership team agreed that more work is needed to accelerate the progress made by children by matching the quality of learning in the outdoor area to that if learning provided indoors.
- The recent appointment of a new early years leader has brought the team closer together. This has had an impact on children's outcomes, particularly in the Reception class. Her plans for improvement now focus firmly on developing the provision in Nursery where progress is slower. However, these plans are currently at an early stage of development.
- The previous inspection report asked the school to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning was improved, particularly in key stage 1. This became a key focus for this inspection. Standards achieved by pupils in key stage 1 have improved, as work in books clearly reflects. The school's progress information shows that standards have risen in line with improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. However, the quality of teaching and learning remains inconsistent in a small number of areas within the school. This slows pupils' progress over time. Leaders are aware of this, and their plans to improve teaching further are clearly reflected in the school improvement plan.
- The progress made by girls was a further inspection focus. This was because last year girls made less progress than boys, particularly in reading. Current school progress information shows that girls are making equally good progress to boys

across the school.

- A further inspection focus was on progress made in key stage 2, particularly by most-able pupils. Information provided by you and early evidence from externally marked national testing show that this year's Year 6 pupils have made strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Work in books shows that this progress made by the most able pupils also confirms their good progress over time.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- planned changes to continue to improve the quality of provision within the early years are implemented in a timely manner
- the quality of teaching and learning is closely monitored in order to improve consistency in all classes.

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

Yours sincerely

Marian Thomas
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you and your senior leadership team. I held meetings with staff, pupils and members of the governing body. I also met informally with parents at the school gates and took into account views expressed in parents' comments made by text and on Parent View.

You and members of the leadership team accompanied me as we observed learning in classrooms across the school and looked at work in pupils' books. I also scrutinised a range of safeguarding and other documents relating to pupils' behaviour and the curriculum.