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Miss Anne-Marie Strachan  
Headteacher  
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School  
Plaistow Lane  
Bromley  
Kent  
BR1 3JQ

Dear Miss Strachan

### **Short inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 September 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in October 2010.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since being appointed earlier this month, you, along with your deputy headteacher and middle leaders, have lost no time in developing a clear vision for improvement. Staff and governors share your aspiration to create a 'culture of excellence' so as to provide the best education for pupils. The school is a calm and nurturing environment where staff help pupils to develop well, academically and personally. Without doubt, pupils enjoy being at the school and they enjoy learning. The overwhelming majority of parents think that the school provides a very good standard of education. They particularly appreciate the caring ethos that allows their children to thrive. One parent captured this ethos, stating that 'the school provides a loving, nurturing environment in which [their children] have been able to flourish.'

Behaviour across the school, in and outside lessons, continues to be exemplary. Pupils are welcoming, well-mannered and polite. Their positive attitudes to learning make a notable contribution to their progress in the classroom.

Since the last inspection, leaders have successfully tackled those areas which inspectors asked you to address. Leaders have made significant improvements to the opportunities that pupils have to learn about the main faiths represented in the United Kingdom. Leaders have trained staff so that they regularly check the quality

of pupils' learning and provide useful feedback.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your leadership team ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are robust and fit for purpose. There is a strong culture of safeguarding in your school, backed up by good record-keeping. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the opportunities that they have to learn about staying safe online. They told me that they feel confident that all pupils from different backgrounds, cultures or beliefs are accepted by their peers. They also say that bullying does not happen at the school, but should it occur, they are confident that staff would deal with it quickly. Leaders, nonetheless, need to do more to ensure that pupils have sufficient awareness of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training and that those responsible for safeguarding and recruitment have appropriate and up-to-date qualifications. Governors also receive relevant training. Leaders show vigilance in ensuring that children are not missing in education. Staff regularly discuss safeguarding arrangements at their meetings. Those parents that responded to Ofsted's online inspection surveys are confident that the school is a safe place.

### **Inspection findings**

- The inspection focused on a number of key lines of enquiry, one of which related to the attendance of disadvantaged pupils in the school. Over recent years, some of these pupils have not been attending school regularly. Due to the relatively low numbers of disadvantaged pupils overall, this had a disproportionate effect on figures. Leaders know these pupils well and have identified the different reasons why they have a high absence rate. They are working very closely with parents and other agencies to improve these pupils' attendance. This work is making an impact, although the school recognises that more still needs to be done. Observations of lessons indicate that disadvantaged pupils currently in school are making progress that is similar to that of other pupils.
- We agreed that I would look at what the school has done to address the dip in key stage 2 results in 2015, particularly in writing. Leaders took effective action by introducing new curriculums and employing additional teachers. They have ensured a consistent focus on writing and on developing writing skills throughout the school. They successfully used external help to train teachers, ensuring that reading, writing and mathematics skills are taught systematically. Leaders recognise that there is more work to do in making sure that this focus is maintained and teaching time is used effectively.
- Current school information shows that key stage 2 pupils currently in the school are on track to sustain high standards at the end of Year 6 in mathematics, writing and reading, and in grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- The most able pupils who read to me read with fluency and expression and had good comprehension skills. Less-able readers use decoding strategies very effectively to read unfamiliar and difficult words.

- In 2016, the progress of pupils with higher and lower starting points, while in line with national standards, was not as rapid as that of their peers. Leaders recognise this and have taken effective action to accelerate the progress of these pupils. Teachers now have a clearer understanding of what is needed to raise standards further for all pupils. I saw some excellent examples of effective questioning, with teachers using questioning to check pupils' understanding and to probe them to think more deeply. However, other adults were not always used as effectively as they could be to support pupils who need extra help.
- Governors are clear about the strengths and areas for development in the school. They are informed about the school's work through a range of external reviews and their own regular visits. They support and challenge you well.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching time is used effectively to fully promote learning
- other adults in the class plan and work effectively with teachers to meet the needs of individual pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Jacques Szemalikowski  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher (who is responsible for inclusion, special educational needs and safeguarding) and your curriculum managers for English and mathematics. I spoke by telephone to the chair of the governing body and a representative of the Bromley Catholic Schools Trust. I met with a group of Year 6 pupils, and talked with others at break and lunchtime. I spoke to a number of parents at the school gate. You and your deputy accompanied me on visits to classes, where we observed teaching and learning, spoke with pupils and looked at their work. I attended a whole-school assembly and listened to pupils read from Year 2 and Year 5. I examined a range of documentation relating to safeguarding, including the single central register, child protection records and professional training certifications.

I scrutinised Ofsted's online survey for parents (86 responses) and associated commentary (85 comments). I considered responses to the pupil survey (78

responses) and the staff survey (nine responses). I examined the school's website and reviewed information about pupils' progress, attainment and attendance. I also looked at the school's self-evaluation of how well it is doing, its improvement priorities and assessment information for current pupils.