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Miss Christine Reilly
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Reilly

Short inspection of St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 November 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 November 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You know the school well and have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas needing further work.

You have increased the proportion of pupils reaching the national averages. Children make rapid progress in the early years. They achieve skills above those typical for their age. In key stage 1, pupils continue to make good progress. They attain above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. This good progress also continues in key stage 2. At the end of key stage 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above the national average. This is also the case for grammar, punctuation and spelling and science.

The school provides a bright, calm and welcoming environment. There is a sense of community throughout the school. Pupils are happy and proud to be a part of the school. They enjoy the provision that you and your staff provide for them.

Pupils enjoy learning about many different subjects. They also take part in extra-curricular activities. These range from sport to music and drama. The school's curriculum supports leaders in preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. Pupils' behaviour and conduct are good. At times, they are exemplary. Pupils listen respectfully to staff and work well, both independently and together.

The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan interesting and engaging learning activities. They provide many opportunities for pupils to write at length. Pupils appreciate the challenge of the problem-solving tasks teachers set in mathematics. They take pride in their work and are keen to do well.

You have a detailed and accurate understanding of how well individual pupils are learning over time. You check and record pupils' progress meticulously. Leaders use this information to identify any gaps in pupils' learning. Focused discussions, between leaders and teachers, ensure that pupils receive any extra support they may need to make faster progress.

The governing body plays an important role in improving the school's effectiveness. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths. They are equally aware of the areas leaders are working hard to improve. You provide governors with detailed reports about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Governors verify this information during visits to the school. The governing body checks how effectively leaders use the extra funding provided for specific groups of pupils. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are looked after well. Disadvantaged pupils are provided with any extra support they need to help them make good progress.

You have taken action to address the areas identified for improvement at the last inspection. For example, you have raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers use accurate assessment information to plan activities better-matched to pupils' needs. The most able pupils are engaged in their learning and are challenged more than they have been in previous years. They speak with enthusiasm about the harder work teachers provide for them.

You have improved the effectiveness of middle leadership. Middle leaders are confident in and enthusiastic about the roles they play. They have an accurate view of their respective subjects. Middle leaders use a range of evidence to check on the quality of teaching. They take effective action to accelerate pupils' progress where it is slower. Middle leaders recognise and appreciate the culture of increased accountability you have created. You, and other senior leaders, provide them with valuable support.

You recognise, however, that although most pupils make at least good progress, variations remain in the progress made by boys and girls. You also understand that the proportion of pupils who achieve higher standards in their learning is not as high as it should be. Furthermore, you acknowledge that attendance rates are not consistent across different groups of pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Your safeguarding records are of a high quality. You have created a climate within the school where safeguarding is a collective responsibility. The procedures you have established help to ensure that pupils are safe and secure in school. You provide

detailed training and weekly updates for staff and any volunteers. This ensures that if they need to, they are aware of what action to take. Staff confidently explained to me what they do if they have a concern.

Pupils told me that they feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. This includes when working online. Parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the school's own parental survey, agree that their children are safe and cared for well.

Inspection findings

- In 2017, the proportion of pupils passing the Year 1 phonics screening check increased. Pupils achieved well above the national average. In previous years, the boys had not attained as highly as girls in phonics. Teachers have effectively engaged boys in their phonic skill development. In 2017, the boys achieved the same high standards as the girls.
- Leaders have taken effective action to improve pupils' reading. They have identified that pupils' inference and comprehension skills are less well developed than their fluency skills. This was made apparent when I listened to pupils' reading during the inspection. Teachers are now providing pupils with effective techniques to develop these more sophisticated reading skills. This was seen to be particularly effective in English in Year 6. Pupils were provided with well-structured resources to deepen their understanding of the text they were reading.
- In 2017, pupils' attainment by the end of key stage 1 in reading rose to above the national average. The school's assessment information indicates that pupils currently in Year 2 are also on track to attain well in their reading. However, the boys do not consistently make the same rapid progress in reading as the girls. Similarly, the boys do not attain as highly in reading as the girls. However, more boys currently in key stage 1 are beginning to make better progress and attaining more highly.
- Last year, the proportion of pupils in key stage 2 who achieved a greater depth in reading and in writing fell. Senior leaders have identified this as an area for improvement. They have provided bespoke training to refine teaching approaches in these subjects. Teachers are making better use of pupils' assessment information to plan activities to challenge pupils. Occasionally, however, teachers do not provide pupils with the harder work fast enough. When this happens, pupils do not make the rapid progress they should.
- The proportion of pupils who achieve higher standards in their learning is increasing. Many pupils are now attaining at greater depth, with some reaching even higher standards. This is especially true for the most able pupils. However, attainment gaps remain between the number of boys and the number of girls who reach the higher standards.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in any single year is too small to report on their comparative achievement. However, senior leaders make effective use of the pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Overall, these pupils

make good progress.

- Pupils' absence overall is below the national average. However, the absence rate of disadvantaged pupils is higher. Leaders are taking action to improve this.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching consistently provides both boys and girls with opportunities to make accelerated progress
- teachers maintain a strong emphasis on challenging pupils, especially boys, so they achieve a greater depth to their learning, especially in reading and writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Vondra Mays
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher, and middle leaders. I also spoke with the vice-chair of the governing body over the telephone. You and I made a series of visits to lessons. I spoke with a group of pupils, listened to pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 read and examined samples of pupils' work.

I also considered a range of documents. These included the school's self-evaluation, the school's improvement plan, records relating to pupils' attendance and information on pupils' attainment and progress.

I looked at how effectively leaders and governors use the pupil premium funding. I examined the school's website to check that it meets the requirements on the publication of specified information. Safeguarding practices were also reviewed.

I considered the views of 10 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and an email from a parent. There were no free-text responses. I also reviewed the school's own parental survey and considered the 19 pupils' responses and the 14 staff responses to Ofsted's online surveys.