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Mrs Helen Ahmed
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Dear Mrs Ahmed

Short inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School Leigh

Following my visit to the school on 14 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 provide clear and consistent leadership. You and your deputy headteacher work effectively together. You understand the school well and your evaluations are based on strong evidence. You use this information to produce clear school improvement plans. Staff and governors understand the improvement plans and these plans will help to move the school forward.

Leaders and governors use the opportunities from collaborative work with the neighbouring school, and schools within the collaboration, to help to drive improvements. Staff from the schools work together to share ideas and to learn from one another. Leaders also use this arrangement to ensure that teachers are looking accurately at what pupils know and can do.

You and your team have taken effective action to tackle the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. Leaders have ensured that additional adults have the necessary training to support pupils in a range of areas. You deploy additional adults well, and their interventions have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. Teachers follow the school's marking policy. However, you acknowledge that there are times when teachers do not identify errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling in subjects other than English. This lowers the quality of work seen in these books.

Pupils demonstrate good behaviour for learning. They say that they can get on with their work and that teachers support them to improve. Pupils demonstrate

resilience, particularly in reading in Year 5 and Year 6, where pupils work with challenging texts.

Pupils behave well at all times. There is little disruption in lessons. Pupils say that sometimes they fall out on the playground but that adults deal with this quickly. Your Christian values are evident in the care and consideration that pupils show towards one another and towards adults. Pupils say good morning and hold doors open for one another and adults. Older pupils look after and support younger pupils very well. Pupils work well together and are supportive of one another. They live by the 'give me 5' philosophy of fairness, kindness, love, friendship and happiness.

As a result of the carefully planned curriculum, pupils know how to keep themselves safe. Teachers ensure that they teach pupils how to stay safe on the road, near water and what to do if approached by a stranger. Pupils have a good understanding of different world religions. You promote British values effectively and prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. You recognise that pupils do not have the same understanding of wider world cultures and have already begun work to address this.

Pupils value the additional opportunities they are given. They participate in a wide range of after-school activities. Teachers ensure that the broad curriculum enhances pupils' wider experiences. For example, pupils' enthusiasm while learning to play the violin was a joy to watch, with pupils moving to the music as well as playing.

Safeguarding is effective.

Governors ensure that all policies and procedures are in place, including checks on teachers and governors. Training for staff is comprehensive and up to date. All adults know the pupils well and are vigilant to any signs that there may be a concern. Adults report any concerns to you and you follow up concerns swiftly. Leaders engage well with parents to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Governors take their responsibilities around safeguarding seriously. Consequently, all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a high quality.

Inspection findings

- A key line of enquiry for this inspection was related to leaders' actions to increase the proportion of children reaching the expected good level of development at the end of Reception. The majority of children start school with skills and abilities below those typical for their age. An increasing proportion reach a good level of development, so that this is now almost in line with national averages.
- Leaders continually develop the provision in early years so that it is exciting and stimulating. Adults support children to develop their growing independence. Teachers and other adults check and monitor children's progress carefully and design activities based on this information to develop children's knowledge and understanding further.

- Your teachers provide a stimulating environment that is filled with language. This, along with adults' skilful questioning, enables children, including those who speak English as an additional language, to develop good language skills. There is no difference in outcomes for boys and girls.
- Children behave very well in the early years. They are eager to learn and listen well. For example, a group of children were looking for sounds outside. They persevered until they had found enough sounds to make a word. The children then excitedly showed adults the words they had made, using their growing understanding of phonics. However, you acknowledge that adults' teaching of phonics does not build swiftly enough on what children already know and can do. As a result, children's progress slows and some children do not start Year 1 with a strong understanding of basic phonics.
- Adults give children too few opportunities to write independently in Reception. This, coupled with teachers' slow delivery of phonics, means that children's progress in writing is not as rapid as it could be.
- Another line of enquiry was focused on the rate of progress of disadvantaged pupils in mathematics. Current disadvantaged pupils make good progress in mathematics from their starting points. The difference between their attainment and that of others nationally diminishes as pupils get older.
- In mathematics in key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils make the same good progress as other pupils, particularly with basic calculations. Leaders recognise that they could do more to enable middle-ability pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, to reach the higher standards. Teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to investigate numbers and to explain their mathematical thinking in order to reach these higher standards.
- I also looked at the rate of progress in reading and in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Pupils read fluently and with expression. They enjoy reading and have a range of favourite authors. Teachers plan exciting reading lessons that engage pupils well. For example, when reading about Pandora's Box, the teacher gave pupils a box labelled 'caution'. Highly effective questioning relating to the story enabled pupils to discuss the possible outcomes of opening the box. Having chosen to open the box, pupils agreed to take the forfeit of extra homework. Your teachers use their good subject knowledge to question pupils effectively about what they have read. Your focus on effective questioning in reading lessons is paying dividends. A greater proportion of pupils than previously in key stage 1 and key stage 2 are reading at the higher standards.
- Pupils make good progress in writing. The most able pupils in Year 6 are beginning to write with flair, for example 'While I nervously raced down the corridor, I could hear creepy messages being whispered in my ear.' However, you recognise that teachers do not teach grammar, punctuation and spelling consistently well. Pupils do not routinely apply their knowledge of grammar, punctuation and spelling in their writing across the curriculum. Teachers do not ensure that pupils continue to apply previously taught aspects of grammar and punctuation in their current writing.

- I also considered how well leaders identify any additional support that pupils may need. The inclusion manager and pastoral support team know pupils and families well. They quickly identify where pupils would benefit from additional support and put support in place from highly effective adults. This support means that pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points.
- I also looked at what leaders are doing to improve attendance. Leaders track and monitor attendance effectively. Where pupils' attendance dips, leaders work to improve this through discussions with parents. Leaders reward good attendance and explain how important it is for pupils to attend school regularly. As a result, pupils' overall attendance is in line with national averages, and the attendance of those pupils who do not attend school as regularly as they should is improving.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a greater proportion of middle- and higher-ability pupils reach the higher standards in mathematics by:
 - giving pupils opportunities to investigate numbers and talk about their mathematical thinking
 - moving pupils on quickly during a lesson to deepen their understanding
- grammar, punctuation and spelling are taught consistently well and pupils use their growing knowledge of these when writing in all areas of the curriculum
- the teaching of phonics in Reception is adapted to ensure that children learn at a faster pace and so make better progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Tanya Hughes
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this short inspection, I met with you, members of your leadership team, teachers and governors. I spoke with a representative from the local authority and from the archdiocese. You and I visited classes to observe learning and looked at work in pupils' books. I met with pupils throughout the day and spoke with eight parents in the playground before school. I considered the 25 responses and the 20 free-text comments made by parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent

View. I also considered the 11 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 43 responses to the pupils' questionnaire. I heard several pupils read and observed pupils in the playground and in the dining hall. I conducted a detailed review of safeguarding, including checking the school's policies, procedures and record-keeping. I talked with you, other staff and governors about how the school ensures that children are kept safe. I also considered a range of other documentation, including school improvement planning and information about pupils' progress and attainment.