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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mr Richard Triggs
Headteacher
St Louis Catholic Primary School
Welshmill Lane
Frome
Somerset
BA11 3AP

Dear Mr Triggs

Short inspection of St Louis Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 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 May 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses at the school. Leaders, including governors, are working on the right aspects of improvement. For example, most recently, leaders have been effective in improving the teaching of mathematics. As a result, pupils can use and apply their mathematical understanding well and solve problems with greater confidence. The governing body has a strong vision. It holds leaders to account increasingly well. Governors are proactive in their visits to the school to test out the impact of leaders' actions.

Leaders were slow to tackle the changes to the national curriculum two years ago and so some aspects of school performance declined. Since this time, leaders' proactive actions have resulted in considerable improvement. Leaders have sought and acted upon targeted support from the local authority and diocese. As a result, teaching and leadership have strengthened to be good. The school has recovered well following the dip in its performance since the previous inspection.

As a result of good teaching, pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2 have increased rapidly in reading, writing, and mathematics this year. Consequently, the proportion of pupils meeting the standards expected in reading, writing and mathematics is now above the national average. The proportion of pupils who exceed this standard has increased markedly.

At the previous inspection you were asked to ensure that learning was at a precise level for pupils so that it was sufficiently challenging. You were also asked to ensure that pupils acted upon teachers' advice to improve their work. You and your team have largely addressed these aspects. Pupils routinely use advice from teachers and their peers to improve their work and so make good progress. Most teachers check pupils' understanding in lessons, through teachers' assessments and by using published and internal data on their achievement. As a result, teachers plan learning that builds on most pupils' individual needs well. Pupils enjoy school. They behave well and demonstrate consistently positive attitudes to learning in class. Pupils spoken to on inspection said that their learning is mostly challenging and they enjoy working in small groups, particularly in mathematics.

You were also asked to improve communication with parents. This aspect requires further work. A number of parents commented that leadership does not tackle concerns quickly enough. Some responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were too variable. Senior leaders know that there is more to do to secure the engagement and satisfaction of all parents. Governors have good capacity to achieve this aim.

Pupils across the school make good progress overall. However, teaching is not enabling a small minority of lower-attaining pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities to catch up quickly in mathematics. You know that this aspect remains a key priority for improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Policies, procedures and training relating to safeguarding meet requirements. The checks you carry out when recruiting new staff are in line with national legislation to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children. The single central record is meticulously kept.

You have recently improved site safety by installing new gates and a school security system. You have also been proactive in commissioning the local authority to review the school's safeguarding procedures. As a result, pupils' records have been strengthened even further. There is a strong culture to keep children safe in the school. All staff spoken to on inspection understand the school's systems for reporting concerns and minimising pupils' risk of harm.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. They report that the teaching they receive about e-safety helps them to keep safe at school. Pupils say they are settled and happy at school. They confirm that when problems arise, adults help them sort these out quickly. Almost every parent reported through the online survey, Parent View, that their child is safe and happy at school.

Inspection findings

- A key line of enquiry to ascertain that the school remained good, was to establish the effectiveness of the teaching of mathematics across the school. This is

because pupils' progress at key stage 2 has not been consistently good in the past. In 2017 pupils' outcomes in mathematics increased rapidly.

- The teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers insist that pupils talk about mathematical concepts and write explanations about their understanding in mathematics. As a result, most pupils can solve problems and reason in mathematics with confidence. However, on occasions a few lower-attaining pupils do not get enough practice in order for new learning to become habitual. In such cases, pupils can be moved through concepts too quickly and so pupils' learning falters. You accurately identify that leaders' checks on teaching and pupils' progress could be refined even more so they take into account pupils' starting points and ensure that no group of pupils falls behind.
- The next aspect I examined was the impact of phonics teaching on early reading and writing in early years and key stage 1. This is because the proportion of pupils that met the required standard in the phonics screening check dipped below the national average in 2017. Phonics teaching in early years and key stage 1 is good overall. As a result, most Year 2 pupils who failed to meet the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check are catching up steadily. However, on occasion, pupils do not use their phonics skills when attempting to spell new words and this restricts pupils' fluency and accuracy of writing.
- My final line of enquiry focused on the impact of leaders' actions to improve pupils' attendance. This is because some groups of pupils have not attended regularly enough in the past. As a result of leaders' actions and external agency support, pupils' attendance has risen gradually. It is now above the national average. Pupils who speak English as an additional language attend well. Disadvantaged pupils' attendance is improving steadily towards the national average.
- I also listened to some pupils read who speak English as an additional language. These pupils use and apply their phonics skills well, they are increasingly fluent in their reading and make good progress overall. However, leaders' tracking of these pupils is not as detailed as it could be and so where pupils' progress slows, leaders do not attend to the issue quickly enough. Consequently, pupils' progress is not yet consistently rapid.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- lower attaining pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities receive work that is consistently matched to their needs so that they catch up quickly in mathematics
- senior leaders' checks on teaching are precisely focused on measuring pupils' progress from their different starting points so that teachers receive clarity about which aspects require further work
- leaders' checks on the progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language are strengthened so that this group of pupils makes consistently rapid progress in reading.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Carrington
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I spoke with you, senior and middle leaders, and the chair of the governing body. I also had a telephone conversation with the director of education at the Diocese of Clifton. I held a meeting with a representative of the local authority.

We made visits to lessons to observe pupils' learning and to scrutinise their work. I looked at pupils' workbooks with the deputy headteacher. I also talked to pupils in lessons and at playtime and listened to their views of the school. I listened to some pupils read.

I considered a range of documentary evidence, which included the school's self-evaluation, development plans, and school performance information. I also looked at monitoring records for teaching, learning and assessment, your analysis of pupils' attendance, and behaviour and safeguarding documentation.

In addition, I took account of 42 responses to the Parent View online survey and the free-text messaging service. I gathered the views of staff through the online questionnaire and through discussions during the inspection.