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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs P Speed
Headteacher
Great Crosby Catholic Primary School
The Northern Road
Sefton
Crosby
Liverpool
Merseyside
L23 2RQ

Dear Mrs Speed

Short inspection of Great Crosby Catholic Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 December 2017 with Deborah Bailey, Ofsted Inspector, 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 April 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 and your leadership team have not only maintained standards but have continued to improve provision despite the extensive building work and the instability in staffing in recent years. This is commendable. A positive ethos is evident in all aspects of school life. As a result, teaching and learning are purposeful and pupils achieve well.

You and your senior leaders maintain a successful focus on providing the best possible education for your pupils. You regularly analyse assessment information and consider ways to improve other aspects of pupils' education, particularly their emotional well-being. Governors have an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the quality of education through their effective system for monitoring the work of school staff. Governors use their skills, along with additional training, to ensure that they fulfil their roles and responsibilities effectively.

Pupils enjoy school and the wide variety of clubs which the school offers. They also feel well looked after and are proud of their responsibilities, for example as 'playground pals'. The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, are very supportive of your work. Those spoken to during the inspection praised how approachable and friendly you and your staff are. One comment from parents included, 'The management team at Great Crosby are exemplary, not only a school but an

extension of the family.'

At the last inspection you were asked to ensure that teachers plan activities which precisely meet pupils' different needs, particularly for the most able. You have successfully addressed this point. The appointment of three middle leaders who are responsible for teaching and learning has introduced more effective monitoring and moderating activities. As a consequence, new methods of assessment and good-quality training have meant that teachers more closely match tasks to pupils' abilities. However, we agreed that there is more work to do to increase the proportion of middle-ability pupils who reach the higher standards at the end of each key stage. You have already identified this as an area for improvement and plans are in place to address this.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are of a high quality. The safety and care of pupils is at the centre of all you do: processes and procedures are effective. Staff receive regular updates from you and the safeguarding team. Training is focused on issues that may arise in the locality so that staff can recognise and report any safeguarding issues.

You know families well and work effectively with outside agencies to ensure that the most vulnerable families and pupils are kept safe. Parents are informed of safeguarding updates through the school website. Pupils I spoke to during the inspection said that they know who to go to if they have any worries and stated that they felt very safe in school. The vast majority of parents responding to Parent View agreed that pupils are kept safe in school.

Inspection findings

- We agreed a number of areas of focus for this inspection. The first of these was to consider how well writing is taught across the school. Since September, the new curriculum team for English has taken decisive steps to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress in writing. There are clear improvements to the way in which pupils' work is assessed and how this is used to match the teaching of writing to pupils' needs. Pupils respond positively to the way writing activities are linked to their reading. A good example of this is when Year 1 pupils wrote a menu for the 'The Scarecrow's Wedding'. Pupils say that they enjoy writing and have opportunities to apply their skills in a range of subjects. As a result of these changes, current pupils make better progress from their starting points and are more confident and competent writers. Your assessment information and work in pupils' books show that pupils' outcomes in writing are improving. However, you agreed that there is more work to do to improve spelling across the school, particularly in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- The next area we looked at was how you are improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. You instigated an effective programme of monitoring which helps you to evaluate more accurately the needs of this group of pupils. As a result, teaching is now more clearly matched to pupils' needs. Governors are knowledgeable and are closely involved with the school. They are effective in their monitoring and evaluation of the impact of leaders' actions to improve the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Your most

recent assessments show that the difference in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils is diminishing. Work in pupils' books also confirms that this is the case.

- Some of the disadvantaged pupils also have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. You and other staff know each of these pupils extremely well and have a clear understanding of the barriers they face in their learning. Consequently, you are able to support each pupil in a personalised way and current pupils make at least good progress. You ensure that appropriate support is in place for vulnerable pupils and their families and this also results in improved outcomes.
- The final area we considered was the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders have worked hard to address the weaker attendance of this group of pupils. The attendance leader monitors individual pupils and targets those with low attendance by providing individual support and rewards. You and the parent support adviser have identified the different reasons why these pupils have a high absence rate. You work closely with parents to overcome any barriers to regular attendance. As a result, the attendance of this group of pupils has improved, alongside the improvement in their progress and attainment.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers provide more challenging tasks so that a greater proportion of middle-ability pupils exceed the expectations in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of each key stage
- they embed the recent improvements in spelling across the school so that pupils' outcomes in writing improve.

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

Yours sincerely

Simon Hunter
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Throughout the inspection inspectors spoke to pupils, both formally and informally, about their work and school life. Inspectors met with you, your two assistant headteachers, the attendance leader, the English curriculum team and the safeguarding leader to discuss improvements in their areas of responsibility. Inspectors looked at learning in pupils' books.

Inspectors reviewed documentation which included your evaluation of the school's

strengths and weaknesses and the school development plan. Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day and considered 101 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

Inspectors visited classes along with your assistant headteachers to observe pupils' learning. I met with governors to discuss aspects of school leadership and management. Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding, including the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff. I also completed a review of the school's website.